



Empires To Nation States in the Ancient Middle East Before Islam

Geoff Emberling, Chief Curator, Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago

Lesson Plan 1: Political and Geographic Dimensions of an Empire of the Ancient Middle East

General Description of Lesson Plan: Students will examine some of the maps and artifacts of the empires of the ancient Middle East in an effort to characterize them and compare and contrast them to modern states.

Created By: Howard Wright, Hinsdale South High School, Hinsdale, IL

Subject Area(s): World History, World Geography, maybe even Comparative Government.

For Grade Level(s): 9-10

Time Needed: Following the reading of their textbook material on Mesopotamia, 2 to 3 class periods might be used to complete this lesson. In addition, students may read the background essay of this Module for homework. Then, the research extension may take 2 to 3 days of homework to complete.

Outcomes/Objectives:

Students will become familiar with some of the geography of the Middle East and the locations of those ancient empires, identify some of the characteristics of the empires of ancient Mesopotamia and examine the style of government and some of the activities of these empires.

Materials: Modern Map of the Middle East juxtaposed with the historic maps in their textbook:

Visuals from the Oriental Institute Webliography (#7) for additional images and research; Images from the Module -- 1. Uruk; 7. Head of King; 9. Ramses; 11. Sargon; 14. Babylonia.

Suggested Procedure(s):

Students will have already read the chapter in their World History Textbook on the ancient Middle East. Now they will have a chance to examine some of the artifacts that illustrate that textbook narrative. What geographical and political themes have emerged?

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Then, students will examine the modern map of the Middle East from the Module, comparing it to the historical maps of the area in their textbook. What observations can be made from comparing and contrasting these maps?

For homework, students will read the essay from the Module, focusing on the stages of empire building and the story in the ancient Middle East. Students will compare/contrast the content of the Module to their previous textbook reading and identify some figure, some empire or specific item from the Module that is of interest to them.

In a whole class discussion, students will be invited to ask questions about the Module reading, whether the reading added to their understandings of the ancient Middle East and what was interesting to them (5 – 10 minutes).

Then images from the Image Resource Bank from the Module (and any additional images from the Oriental Institute website) will be examined using the “Think—Pair—Share” strategy: first students will examine the images and list their own observations (2 – 3 Minutes); the students will share their own observations with a partner (2 – 3 Minutes); then students will share their collective observations as a whole class (5 – 10 minutes).

What do the images suggest/illustrate about the nature of government in the ancient Middle East?

From the readings, maps, images and discussion, what aspects of government transcend time?

As a culminating/evaluation activity, students will follow up on the figure, empire or specific item they selected when they did their reading, with a short research project. Students should find two source of information on that topic, and develop a two-page report, include a bibliography. Sources should be from the supporting links provided in the Module. The report should explicitly connect the themes of this lesson with the person, empire, or topic chosen by the student.

Evaluation/Assessment Strategies:

The quality of the class discussions

The report -- see rubric below

Use these guiding questions to spur discussion in your classroom:

1. Where were the ancient Middle Eastern empires located? What factors contributed to their development?
2. What distinctive characteristics did they possess?

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Evaluation Rubric:

Research Report: Ancient Middle Eastern Empires

Teacher Name: _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Quality of Information	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
Analysis	Provides an effective analysis that answers all aspects of the question, thoroughly addresses counter-arguments, includes significance and impact, as well as change over time.	Provides analysis but may not devote equal weight to all parts of the question; somewhat addresses significance and impact.	Some analysis present but superficial; does not sufficiently address all parts of the question.	Little or no analysis present; describes rather than analyzes.
Sources	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.
Organization	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well-constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized.
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	A few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.