



Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

The Question of Identity: Ethnicity, Language, Religion, and Gender, Before Islam - Mesopotamia

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Lesson Plan 1: The Role of Women in Ancient Mesopotamia

General Description of Lesson Plan: Development of a short (2-3 page) essay using primary and secondary sources.

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Subject Area(s): World Studies

For Grade Level(s): 9-11

Time Needed: Two class days of computer lab time, or two evenings of research time for students with Internet access outside of school. Two class days of discussions in groups of three.

Outcomes/Objectives:

Students will reference images of artifacts from ancient Mesopotamia and excerpts from the *Instructions of Shuruppak* in order to compose an outline and an original essay regarding the role of women in ancient Mesopotamia, particularly focusing on religious, social, and economic aspects of ancient Mesopotamian life.

Materials: Internet access or color printed copies of artifacts associated with this module.

Suggested Procedure(s):

There are four main skills this assignment seeks to develop: Peer deliberation, Peer instruction, cooperative development of an outline, and finally, synthesis and production of a unique essay.

Each student will be given a list of six artifacts/excerpts to view and from which to prepare notes. The guiding question for every article or excerpt is, “What does this piece of evidence have to say regarding the role of women in ancient Mesopotamian society?” Students will be put into groups of three.

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 1: The Role of Women in Ancient Mesopotamia

This essay project resembles a DBQ essay from the AP US History test, but incorporates research, prewriting, and cooperative learning elements into the assignment. The twelve pieces of information are images 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 13 included in the image resource bank associated with this module, and lines 49, 61-62, 124-125, 208-212, 248-249, and 254 from the *Instructions of Shuruppak*, a link for which (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.5.6.1#>) is included in the Learning Resource section of the module under Primary Sources. Each student should receive three images and three excerpts as his/her initial research assignment.

Make group, image and reading assignments according to the following chart:

		Image	Image	Image	Lines	Lines	Lines
Group 1	Student A	2	6	7	49	61-62	124-125
	Student B	6	7	8	208-212	248-249	254
	Student C	8	12	13	61-62	124-125	208-212
Group 2	Student A	6	7	8	61-62	124-125	208-212
	Student B	7	8	12	248-249	254	49
	Student C	12	13	2	124-125	208-212	248-249
Group 3	Student A	7	8	12	124-125	208-212	248-249
	Student B	8	12	13	254	49	61-62
	Student C	13	2	6	208-212	248-249	254
Group 4	Student A	8	12	13	208-212	248-249	254
	Student B	12	13	2	49	61-62	124-125
	Student C	2	6	7	248-249	254	49
Group 5	Student A	12	13	2	248-249	254	49
	Student B	13	2	6	61-62	124-125	208-212
	Student C	6	7	8	254	49	61-62
Group 6	Student A	13	2	6	254	49	61-62
	Student B	2	6	7	124-125	208-212	248-249
	Student C	7	8	12	49	61-62	124-125
Group 7	Student A	2	8	12	49	208-212	248-249
	Student B	8	12	13	254	61-62	124-125
	Student C	13	6	7	208-212	248-249	254
Group 8	Student A	6	7	13	61-62	124-125	254
	Student B	7	13	2	49	208-212	248-249
	Student C	2	8	12	124-125	254	49
Group 9	Student A	6	8	13	61-62	208-212	254
	Student B	8	13	7	124-125	248-249	49
	Student C	7	12	2	208-212	254	124-125

In these groups each student has been assigned 3 images and 3 readings out of the 12 total options. When students meet with other group members to share their findings, they will discover that each of them has something in common with each of the other members, but

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 1: The Role of Women in Ancient Mesopotamia

that no three have the same item. Also, each has two items that neither of the other has. From each student's list of six items, two are held in common with one group member, two with the other, and two with neither. Each pair must work to ensure they have similar content, and then educate the other member about their findings. Each individual must educate the other two about things the unique items. Educators are very welcome to develop their own groupings of these artifacts and excerpts, but the chart above provides some groupings, which correspond to the given guidelines.

Once students have a good understanding of the artifacts and excerpts they are working with, they are to set about developing a preliminary outline for a 2-3 page paper on the roles of women in ancient Mesopotamian society. This will be graded and returned, and then the essay will be due.

Evaluation/Assessment Strategies:

Each student will be asked to compose a single thesis statement from their content and discussions, and to submit an outline using at least six of the pieces of information, including at least two that were not in their original list of six. The organization of the above outline and strength of the thesis and the degree to which the evidence in the outline supports it will be assessed. Each student will then be required to type up their paper for final submission.

A note on the rubric: A standard writing rubric for an argumentative essay should suffice for the final part of this project. If students need extra encouragement to get their work done, their individual research work can be submitted initially, graded or evaluated, and then handed back when students meet in groups, and their group efforts can be observed and grades can be given for that portion. Thus students could receive one single grade, or three separate assignment grades.

Use these guiding questions to spur discussion in your classroom:

1. How do artifacts or excerpts from primary sources indicate the different gender roles in ancient Mesopotamia?
2. How do these artifacts or excerpts support the information included in "The Question of Identity"?
3. How can a student use primary sources to support an academic argument?

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 1: The Role of Women in Ancient Mesopotamia

Evaluation Rubric:

The Role of Women in Ancient Mesopotamia

Teacher Name: _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Focus	Topic/subject is clear, though it may or may not be explicitly stated.	Topic/subject is generally clear though it may not be explicitly stated.	Topic/subject may be vague.	Topic/subject is unclear or confusing.
Organization	Organizational structure establishes relationship between/among ideas/events.	Organizational structure establishes relationships between ideas/events, although minor lapses may be present.	Organizational structure establish some relationship between/among some of the ideas/events. The structure is minimally complete.	Organizational structure does not establish connection between/among ideas/events. The overall structure is incomplete or confusing.
Vocabulary	Exhibits skillful use of vocabulary that is precise and purposeful.	Exhibits reasonable use of vocabulary that is precise and purposeful.	Exhibits minimal use of vocabulary that is precise and purposeful.	Lacks use of vocabulary that is precise and purposeful.
Conventions	Conventions scale is 1-2 →	Conventions scale is 1-2 →	Exhibits REASONABLE CONTROL of grammatical conventions appropriate to the writing task: sentence formation; standard usage including agreement, tense, and case; and mechanics including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.	Exhibits MINIMAL CONTROL of grammatical conventions appropriate to the writing task: sentence formation; standard usage including agreement, tense, and case; and spelling. mechanics including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 1: The Role of Women in Ancient Mesopotamia

Sentence Fluency	Demonstrates skillful sentence fluency (varies length, good flow rhythm, and varied structure).	Demonstrates reasonable sentence fluency.	Demonstrates minimal sentence fluency	Sentence fluency is lacking.
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