Mesopotamia ‖ Early Civilizations: Mesopotamia

## Goals & Objectives

Goals

* Students will understand the agricultural techniques used to create food surpluses that eventually led to denser populations and the development of cities.
* Students will understand why river valleys were important to the development of early civilizations.

Objectives

* Students will be able to list at least 4 agricultural techniques or tools (plow, sickle, threshing sledge, and sieve) used to make ever larger food surpluses. They will also describe how these ideas changed the lifestyles of the people who used them.
* Students will be able to list at least 3 benefits and 3 costs of switching to an agricultural based society from a hunter/gatherer society.

## California State Content Standards

6.2 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Kush.   
1. Locate and describe the major river systems and discuss the physical settings that supported permanent settlement and early civilizations.  
2. Trace the development of agricultural techniques that permitted the production of economic surplus and the emergence of cities as centers of culture and power.

## Common Core Literacy Standards

WHSS-1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.  
 b. Support claim with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.  
WHSS-4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

## Driving Historical Question

### How does a food surplus help develop complex civilizations?

### Are civilized societies better than hunter/gatherer societies?

### Name five achievements of early civilizations?

### Lesson Introduction (Anticipatory Set/Hook/Accessing Prior Knowledge) ‖ **Time: 10 min.**

The teacher will start the unit with a quick class discussion reviewing the achievements of the Agricultural Revolution and its impact on villages and settlements (previous unit). The teacher will then introduce the term**civilization** to the class. After answering any questions relating to the term, the teacher will write two questions on the board. What are the most important things in your life? And what are essential elements of a good life?

Students will then make a list of important elements of life. This list should include a variety of things including food, shelter, friends and Facebook. The teacher will then ask students to number each item by importance. This will allow students to prioritize the elements of their own lives and connect future content with prior knowledge.   
After this activity, the teacher will hand out the vocab list for the lesson. The teacher will define the terms in the list while allowing students to contribute their own opinions of what the terms mean.

### Vocabulary (Content Language Development) ‖ **Time: 5 min.**

* civilization
* food surplus
* irrigation
* merchant
* artisan
* scribes
* priest
* appease
* class structure
* empire

### Content Delivery (Method of Instruction) ‖ **Time: 30 min.**

The teacher will deliver a lecture on the common characteristics of early civilizations with an emphasis on early Mesopotamian civilization. These elements include an agricultural based economy, social divisions, complex governments, religion and a writing system. The lecture will also point out some of the benefits and costs of the civilizing process.

### Student Engagement (Critical Thinking & Student Activities) ‖ **Time: along with lecture**

Guided notes will be filled out during the lecture presentation. These notes highlight all the important ideas about early civilizations and their common characteristics. These notes also allow students to meet the learning objectives by having them list several agricultural techniques that allowed civilized life to develop.

### Lesson Closure ‖ **Time: 5 min.**

The lesson will close with a double entry journal. On one side students will need to list some of the benefits and costs of civilized life. They will be expected to list at least three benefits and three costs. They will also be expected to include at least two benefits or costs that they think are important but were not addressed in the lecture presentation.   
Then on the other side of the journal, the students will describe how they feel about these benefits and costs of civilized life. The following questions will write on the board and the teacher will explain that students should think about these questions while filling out the second part of their journal entries.

* How are these benefits enjoyed by you and your family?
* How are the costs endured by you or people you know?
* Would you be better off without certain elements of civilized life?

### Assessments (Formative & Summative)

**Formative**: The teacher will check student’s initial background knowledge by engaging students in the lesson introduction discussion. Further understanding and comprehension will be assessed during the lecture presentation by asking students critical thinking questions.  
  
**Summative**: 'The lesson closure double journal entry will provide the teacher with information about how the students understand the benefits and costs of civilized life. The teacher can receive this information by collecting the journal entries or by browsing them as he/she walks around the room. This will allow the teacher to see how effective this lesson is at delivering the lesson objectives.

### Accommodations for English Learners, Striving Readers and Students with Special Needs

The lecture presentation and guided notes includes a variety of pictures that provide content information without the use of complex language. This will help ELs, striving readers and students with disabilities to comprehend the content information delivered in the lesson.  The presentation and guided notes also includes boxed charts and lists to organize and compartmentalize the content information. This allows ELs, striving readers and other students to see a visual description of how they can categorize the information without the use of language. For example, the social structure matrix gives the students a visual description of the different social classes observed in early civilizations. 

The teacher will also utilize a vocabulary list that defines academic and content terms in the lesson. The teacher can also apply certain lecture techniques that could improve comprehension for all students. This could include slow talking and pointing to pictures when they relate to content.

### Resources (Books, Websites, Handouts, Materials)

* Paper and pencil for lesson introduction
* Guided notes sheet
* Student journals