Mesopotamia ‖ Empire Building

## Goals & Objectives

Goals

Students will understand the important elements of empire building.

Students will be able to experience the benefits of trade, conquest and economic development in a simulation game.

Objectives

Students will be able to connect at least three strategies used to win the game to the strategies used by the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia to build empires.

Students will be able to complete all four tasks given.

## 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.

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.

3. Understand the relationship between religion and the social and political order in

Mesopotamia and Egypt.

## Common Core Literacy Standards

RL6.1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL6.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular

details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

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## Driving Historical Question

### What elements are important to the development of an empire?

### In what ways is the development of empire good? In what ways is empire development bad?

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

To introduce the topic of empire building, the teacher will show the students several maps on the overhead that illustrate the territories of many empires of the past. These empires will include the Babylonian, Assyrian and Persian empires. I will also include empires based in other areas of the world such as the Roman empire and the British empire. The teacher will then lead a short class discussion on how these empires where built.

How did these empires obtain such vast power?

How did they control these enormous land areas?

The teacher will then explain that these questions will be address in the next few days. He will then tell the students that we will be simulating societies interested in empire building as a way to learn about the important elements that contribute to the development of empires.

### Vocabulary (Content Language Development) ‖ **Time:**

province

caravan

astronomer

interval

route

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

This lesson will engage students in a simulation that will allow students to experience a variety of aspects of ancient life including, trade, conquest and obtaining resources. The simulation is a shortened variation of a class game called Empire. This game groups students in small groups that complete tasks and make strategic decisions (on a game board) that will move them along the path of civilization. Each group will strive to move through the various levels of civilization:

clan

tribe

village

city-state

empire

These levels are attained by accumulating civilization points. Civilization points are earned by completing tasks, obtaining resource goals and collecting coins.

The objective of the game is to reach the level of empire. This requires students to obtain the needed civilization points required for the designation of empire. To obtain these points students must: complete group task assigned by the teacher, obtain the right resources to reach your resource goals and obtain enough coins from territories conquered.

Tasks

The tasks will be made up of questions addressing a particular reading or a review of past material relating to this unit. When a group completes their task they receive 50 civilization points.

Resources

Each group will receive a different resource list and strive to obtain the resources on the list. They can do this by landing on a resource square on the board or by trading resources with other groups. Note: The amount of resources you have doesn't matter, what matters is how close you are to obtaining the resources need (resource list) by your group. You receive five resources for every time you land on a resource space.

Coins

Students earn coins by conquest. Each area of land (square) they conquer, they receive coins. For every ten coins they receive ten civilization points. Your push pin (army) must stay in the square to receive coins for it.

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

Set Up

The teacher will begin the class by introducing the game and its objectives to the class. Students will then be grouped in fours. Each group will obtain a resource list and five push pins (all one color) to attach to the wall game board. The wall game board is a map of ancient Mesopotamia. It is covered by a square grid that makes about 50 square spaces, each with a designated number of coins associated with it. The higher the coin amount the more valuable the land is. Each group will put all five push pins on their "home space". Each push pin represents a group of warriors or army from the clan. If they go into a certain area (square) they conquer it. If they go into an area that another group already occupies, they battle for the territory. Battles are settled with a coin toss if there are equal amounts of pins from each team on the square. If not, the team with the most pins (armies) automatically wins the battle and that team obtains the territory.

Some of the squares are resource squares. If a group lands on this square they obtain this resource and receives more each day (if the game is carried on for more than one day). These resources can be saved to obtain fulfill the resources list or traded to obtain the needed resources to fulfill the resource list.

The teacher will also set an egg timer for ten minutes. This timer will go off every ten minutes and each group will receive coins for their territory and resources for their resource holdings. This means that where ever your pins (armies) are at, you will benefit every ten minutes.

Again, civilization points are obtained by completing tasks, obtaining resources on the group resource list and collecting coins from territory obtained. Once a group obtains 100 civilization points, they enter the next level of civilization. For example, if the group is a "clan" and they earn 100 civilization points, they are promoted to "tribe".

Procedure

Each group will start by rolling two dice. They may move any of the five armies (push pins) they have, but only the number of times on the dice. If they land on a resource space, they collect five of those resources. These five resources are given every ten minutes that the game goes on. If they land on an open space, they receive the number of civilization points on the square every ten minutes (or every day for the long version) of the game. At any time a group can offer to trade their resource cards for other groups resource cards. This is a good way to try and fulfill the resource list given at the beginning of the game. The more items you obtain on the resource list the more civilization points you get. Students can ask for the civilization points at any time in the game. Once a group has reached 100 civilization points they obtain the next level of civilization (example: from clan to tribe). A group will have to do these 4 times in order to win the game as an empire.

### Lesson Closure ‖ **Time:**

To close the lesson the teacher will engage students in a class discussion. The discussion will address all the strategies that helped each group advance their civilization. These strategies will include:

* obtain as many resources as possible
* make wise trades with surplus resources (ones you don't need)
* conquer as much valuable land (high coin value) as possible

Students will relate the value of these strategies in the game to the value of these strategies in the real lives of ancient Mesopotamian societies. This connection of what works in the game and what works in real life should be emphasized. The teacher will call on students randomly and ask several questions including:

* Why do you think the areas on the map closest to the rivers are more valuable?
* What does the coins obtained by the conquered territory represents? (taxes, economic activity)
* Why would some groups require some resources over others?
* Why would trade be necessary?

### Assessments (Formative & Summative)

Students will be assessed by how well they are completing the tasks and how well they participate during the class discussion. If I think some groups are not completing the tasks adequately, I may pause the game and review the material that students are confused about. I may also put a stop to the entire game if students are not able to complete the tasks. The class discussion is when I assess how well the students are making the connections between the lessons of the game and the lessons of ancient civilizations.

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

The game itself can help ELs and students with certain special needs to obtain content knowledge through a entertaining and stimulating way. Much of the knowledge obtained in this lesson comes from the game play rather than other content delivery methods that rely on the English language. This will help ELs relate the content knowledge to the knowledge obtained through game play.

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

Mesopotamian map game board

5 sets of colored push pins

Resource cards

Resource lists