
Ancient Mesopotamia

Middle School, 6th Grade

Project READI Curriculum Module
Technical Report CM #19

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Project READI operated as a multi-institution collaboration among the Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago; Northern Illinois University; Northwestern University; WestEd's Strategic Literacy Initiative; and Inquirium, LLC. Project READI developed and researched interventions in collaboration with classroom teachers that were designed to improve reading comprehension through argumentation from multiple sources in literature, history, and the sciences appropriate for adolescent learners. Curriculum materials such as those in this module were developed based on enacted instruction and are intended as case examples of the READI approach to deep and meaningful disciplinary literacy and learning.

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Ancient Mesopotamia Module: Deepening Close Reading from a Historical Lens

This module further supports students in reading texts closely with a historical lens. This module also deepens students' understanding of claims-evidence relations and of historical frameworks. Students will determine what comprises reasonable and unreasonable inferences about ancient cultures based on textual evidence. Students will build from these inferences to construct an argument that includes a claim supported by evidence from multiple sources and that takes into consideration aspects of life categorized as social and economic. Students will draw parallels with ancient Egypt in understanding the importance of proximity to water as essential for ancient survival and for life to flourish in ancient civilizations.

Essential Questions:

- (1) Why did people settle in ancient Mesopotamia and why did life flourish there?
- (2) What was life like for ordinary people in ancient Mesopotamia?

Day 1-2

Focus: Introduction to ancient Mesopotamia inquiry and addressing why people settled in ancient Mesopotamia and why life flourished there (first essential question)

Texts:

- Map of Fertile Crescent (excerpt from 2012 Britannica online for kids: <http://kids.britannica.com/elementary/art-87351>). (D1-2.a)
- The Geography of Ancient Mesopotamia (excerpt from World History of Ancient Civilizations by Douglas Carnine, Carllose Cortes, Kenneth Curtis, and Anita Robinson. Published by McDougall Littell). (D1-2.b)

Materials: Chart paper, markers

Activities:

- Unpack essential questions: (1) Why did people settle in Ancient Mesopotamia and why did life flourish there? (2) What was life like for ordinary people in Ancient Mesopotamia? Also unpack description of culminating task: Write a historical argument comparing and contrasting several aspects of life in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Mesopotamia. (See Appendix A, Scaffolds for Middle School Historical Inquiry Modules)

[Teacher comment: Students will naturally notice that the questions are the same as the Ancient Egypt module (Project READI Curriculum Module CM#18), which will lead students to develop arguments for the culminating task comparing and contrasting Ancient Egypt and Ancient Mesopotamia.]

- Closely read (Appendix A, pgs. 3-7) map of Fertile Crescent (D1-2.a) to make predictions and to confirm/disconfirm predictions about where big cities develop.

[Teacher comment: This map actually does not have the word "Mesopotamia" on it. During discussion about the map, students will say, "Is this Mesopotamia? Where is Mesopotamia?" I let that confusion linger and add questions to the question chart, knowing that when they read The Geography of Ancient Mesopotamia, they will read that Mesopotamia is the area between the Tigris and Euphrates River, which is part of the Fertile Crescent. This allows students to figure something out through close reading rather than just being told by me. Students will draw from their knowledge of Egypt to say things like, "I think the big cities will be near the rivers, because people need to live by water." "I wonder if these rivers flood like the Nile."]

This also builds a sense of inquiry that makes students want to dig deeper into other sources to figure things out.

- Closely read The Geography of Ancient Mesopotamia (D1-2.b) with multiple purposes (i.e. asking and answering our own questions, tracking essential question #2), focusing on identifying corroborating details to support a claim about why people settled in ancient Mesopotamia (essential question #1). Discuss why it

is important to notice details that are corroborated by multiple sources.

[Teacher comment: At this point in the year, students have had a lot more experience corroborating details from texts; therefore, they can draw from that experience to explain examples of how corroboration is useful. More students at this point in the year should be able to say that corroboration helps them to get at trustworthiness and reliability of specific details because they have practical experience with that. For those who are not yet able to articulate this idea, hearing a classmate say it will hopefully move them toward this kind of thinking independently.]

- Construct a list of reasons why people settled in ancient Mesopotamia and why life flourished there. Write a claim about why people settled and why life flourished there, using evidence from the two sources.

Classroom Products: (See Appendix A, pg. 14)

- Our Questions about Mesopotamia Chart (D1-2.c)
- Mesopotamia Word Wall (D1-2.d)
- Sources Historians Use chart
- Group constructed notes on whiteboard during classroom discussion

Days 3-4

Focus: Gateway activity to generate criteria for making reasonable inferences/claims about people based on laws. Generating inferences/claims about life in ancient Mesopotamia based on their laws.

Texts:

- Student generated list of school rules
- Excerpts from Chicago Municipal Code (Chicago Laws) www.cityofchicago.org (D3-4.a)
- Hammurabi's Code (translated by L.W. King, eawc.evansville.edu) (D3-4.b)

Materials:

- SOAPStone poster (D3-4.c) (or similar resource that guides students in sourcing documents)

Activities:

- Brainstorm a list of school rules and discuss inquiry questions: What kinds of things can you infer about our school by reading our rules? What kinds of things would be unreasonable to infer about our school from reading our rules?

[Teacher comment: Students typically brainstorm rules like: No chewing gum. Wear your uniform everyday. I try to steer the conversation to really common rules and no more than ten. With my guidance, through discussion, students begin to understand that by looking at these rules we can make inferences about what life is like for students in today's age. For example, students can infer: There was gum. There were specific uniforms for schools. Students also begin to understand that they cannot overgeneralize their inferences. For example, based on our school rules, it is reasonable to infer that some students might have chewed gum sometimes, but it is not reasonable to infer that gum chewing was a huge problem and that all students chewed gum all the time. Through discussion, as students make inferences that are unreasonable, I challenge other students to respond, and guide them to sift through reasonable/less reasonable inferences.]

- Skim (read quickly just to get the gist) a selection of Chicago Laws (D3-4.a) and discuss inquiry questions: What kinds of things can you infer about Chicago by reading our laws? What kinds of things would be unreasonable to infer about Chicago from reading our laws?
- Construct a list of criteria for how to make reasonable inferences/claims about a group of people's rules/laws.

[Teacher comment: Reading and discussing school rules and Chicago laws helped students gain a sense of how to make

reasonable claims and the ability to recognize when a claim is not reasonable based on a group of people's laws. Criteria emerged informally through our discussions (i.e. using language like "some people might have" instead of "everyone always") and I wrote students' ideas down on the board. However, we did not construct a formal group chart that served as an anchor for the unit. In future lessons I would record ideas more formally as criteria so students could continually refer back to our list when making inferences about ancient Mesopotamia.]

- Source Hammurabi's Code (D3-4.b) using SOAPStone (D3-4.c) as a guide.

[Teacher comment: At this point of the year, we have moved beyond the three sourcing questions (Who wrote this? When was it written? What type of text is this?) and I have already introduced SOAPStone as a support (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Tone).

When I introduce SOAPStone to students, I show them that our three sourcing questions are still covered in the Speaker (Who wrote this?), Occasion (When was it written?), and Subject/Purpose (What type of text is this?), so we are not getting rid of those questions, but layering in additional thinking about the source (Audience, Tone) that will give us a deeper understanding as we read.

A SOAPStone poster is displayed in the room and students use it to guide their thinking while sourcing new documents and to continue sourcing as they read closely. Also, at this point in the year, my expectation is that I should be able to simply say, "Source the document," and students will automatically demonstrate this kind of thinking with no additional prompting from me.]

- Closely read a selection of Hammurabi's Code (D3-4.b) and discuss inquiry questions: What kinds of things can you infer about Ancient Mesopotamia by reading our rules? What kinds of things would be unreasonable to infer about Ancient Mesopotamia from reading our rules?

[Teacher comment: With the Chicago laws we skim and read for the gist because it is not important for students to get a deep understanding of the laws but rather a general notion of example laws with which we can practice making reasonable inferences. With Hammurabi's Code we do read the rules closely, but only with a selection of the rules. I give students more of the laws if they want to read more, but during class I just select certain numbered rules that I think most lend themselves to allowing students to grapple with what is a reasonable claim they can make about Ancient Mesopotamian life.]

- Exit Ticket (Appendix A, page 15): Make 5 reasonable claims about ordinary people in Ancient Mesopotamia based on evidence from the laws in Hammurabi's Code. Explain evidence that supports each claim.

Classroom Products: (Appendix A, pg. 14)

- Sources Historians Use chart
- Our Questions about Mesopotamia Chart
- Mesopotamia Word Wall
- Group constructed notes on whiteboard during classroom discussion (D3-4.d)

Days 5-9

Focus: Deepening the habit of corroborating and sourcing, and collecting evidence to support claims that address what life was like for ordinary people in ancient Mesopotamia (second essential question)

Texts:

- The Land Between the Rivers (Excerpt from The World: Volume I. Banks et al, 2009. MacMillan/McGraw-Hill.) (D5-9.a)
- All texts previously read in source file (See Appendix A, page 15)

- Excerpt from Epic of Gilgamesh (Excerpt from Worlds of History, A Comparative Reader, Vol. I. 2000. Kevin Reilly, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, pp. 58, 65-68) (D5-9.b)
- Mesopotamia and Egyptian Civilizations: A Tale of Two Rivers (Excerpt from Worlds of History, A Comparative Reader, Vol. I. 2000. Kevin Reilly, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, pp. 55-56) (D5-9.c)

Materials:

- Claims-Evidence-Source Chart (D5-9.d)
- SOAPStone poster (D3-4.c)

Activities:

- Closely read The Land Between the Rivers text (D5-9.a) with multiple purposes (i.e. asking and answering our own questions, continuing to track essential question #1), focusing on identifying corroborating details to support a claim about what life was like for ordinary people in Ancient Mesopotamia (essential question #2). Discuss why it is important to notice details that are corroborated by multiple sources.
- Closely read The Land Between the Rivers text to collect evidence using Claims-Evidence-Source chart (D5-9.d) to support claims about life in Ancient Mesopotamia. Review texts from previous lessons to add to Claim-Evidence-Source Chart.

[Teacher Comment: I only introduce Claims-Evidence-Source graphic organizers after already having closely read a document for multiple authentic purposes. I have found that students are better able to gather evidence for the graphic organizer after they have synthesized the content of the text, and if I ask students to gather evidence in a graphic organizer during their first reading of a text, they don't read as closely as they otherwise would. Also, once I have introduced a Claims-Evidence-Source chart, I always want to give students an opportunity to go back to other texts we have read to gather evidence from them, too.]

- Source Epic of Gilgamesh (D5-9.b) and discuss questions, insights, etc. about the source.
- Closely read Epic of Gilgamesh with multiple purposes, focusing on confirming/disconfirming students' assumptions about the source's origin as well as addressing the second essential question (what was life like for ordinary people?)
- Write one claim about life in ancient Mesopotamia based on evidence from this source. Explain how the evidence supports your claim.
- For the next text (Mesopotamian and Egyptian Civilizations: A Tale of Two Rivers, D5-9.c) follow the same process as above, pre-reading the document to determine the origin and then closely reading to confirm/disconfirm students' assumptions about the source's origins and to collect evidence to address the second essential question (what was life like for ordinary people?) Discuss the main claim of the author.

[Teacher comment: There are very few times in the year when I ask students explicitly to discuss the main claim of the author, because I know the author's claim is somewhat difficult to decipher (especially with tertiary/textbook sources). Usually, thinking about the author's claim is a part of sourcing and it comes up when students use SOAPStone as a guide. This particular text is written by one historian therefore reads a bit more like a "secondary" than a "tertiary" (textbook-like) source because the author's voice and perspective is a little more noticeable. He delivers his claim in a way that is less familiar to students (First describes Egypt, then Mesopotamia, and then only in the last few sentences does he makes a claim about their similarities and differences regarding their relationships to their water sources.) Students are used to reading textbooks which state claims very directly (like indisputable facts), so this warrants a closer discussion on what exactly this author is saying and how is he communicating his claim.]

- Exit Ticket: What is the main claim the author makes in this text? How can you tell? How did he support his claim?

Classroom Products: (Appendix A, pg. 14)

- Sources Historians Use chart
- Our Questions about Mesopotamia Chart
- Mesopotamia Word Wall

- Group constructed notes on whiteboard during classroom discussion

Day 10-12

Focus: Constructing a final argument comparing and contrasting life in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Mesopotamia

Texts:

- All texts read for this unit in Ss' source file (See Appendix A, pg. 15)

Materials:

- Claim-evidence-source charts (D5-9.d)

Activities:

- Revisit social and economic categories of life from the Ancient Egypt module and brainstorm a list of aspects of life for each category (social and economic) that we can compare/contrast between Ancient Egypt and Ancient Mesopotamia.
- As a pre-writing activity, collect evidence in several claim-evidence-source charts, one for social/Egypt, one for social/Mesopotamia, one for economic/Egypt, one for economic/Mesopotamia.
- Draft, peer-edit, and revise essays to construct an argument addressing the second essential question.

Classroom Products:

- Group constructed notes on whiteboard during classroom discussion

Fertile Crescent



[View full-size image](#)

Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

Related Articles:

[Fertile Crescent](#) (Children's Encyclopedia (Ages 8-11))

The Fertile Crescent is a part of the Middle East where some of the world's first civilizations began. In ancient times the land there was fertile, or good for growing crops. On a map, the land forms the shape of a crescent moon. The Fertile Crescent extends from the Persian Gulf to the Nile River ...

To cite this page:

MLA APA Harvard Chicago Manual of Style

Fertile Crescent. Map/Still. *Britannica Online for Kids*. Web. 19 Mar. 2014. <<http://kids.britannica.com/elementary/art-87351>>.

EXPORT CITATIONS

While every effort has been made to follow citation style rules, there may be some discrepancies. Please refer to the appropriate style manual or other sources if you have any questions.

Map of Fertile Crescent (excerpt from 2012 Britannica online for kids: <http://kids.britannica.com/elementary/art-87351>)

The Geography of Ancient Mesopotamia

Connect to What You Know Think of a time when you have seen pictures of a flood on television or in newspapers. Floods cause destruction by washing away objects in their path. Do you think a flood can also have good consequences?

The Land Between Two Rivers

KEY QUESTION How did the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers support farming?

The Tigris (TY•grihs) and Euphrates (yoo•FRAY•teez) rivers are in Southwest Asia. They start in the mountains of what are now Turkey and Kurdistan. From there they flow through what is now Iraq and head southeast to the Persian Gulf.

Mesopotamia The region where these two rivers flow is called **Mesopotamia** (MEHS•uh•puh•TAY•mee•uh). The name means "land between the rivers." This land is mostly flat with small, scrubby plants. The rivers provided water and means of travel. In ancient times, it was easier to travel by boat than over land. Boats can carry heavy loads, and river **currents** helped move boats that were traveling down river. Also, few roads existed.

Starting with a Story

Imagine you are a farmer living near a river in Southwest Asia. The yearly flood, which makes farming possible, has not come. Now the village is fighting for its life!

[Click here](#) to listen to the story @ClassZone.com



Euphrates River
Even today, people of Mesopotamia farm the land next to the Euphrates River. The flat land by a river is a floodplain. ▼

The Geography of Ancient Mesopotamia (excerpt from World History of Ancient Civilizations by Douglas Carnine, Carllose Cortes, Kenneth Curtis, and Anita Robinson. Published by McDougall Littell).

Fertile Soil Almost every year, rain and melting snow in the mountains caused the rivers to **swell**. As the water flowed down the mountains, it picked up soil. When the rivers reached the plains, water overflowed onto the **floodplain**, the flat land bordering the banks. As the water spread over the floodplain, the soil it carried settled on the land. The fine soil deposited by rivers is called **silt**. The silt was fertile, which means it was good for growing crops.

An Arid Climate Less than 10 inches of rain fell each year in southern Mesopotamia, and summers were hot. This type of climate is called **arid**. Although the region was dry, ancient people could still grow crops because of the rivers and the fertile soil. Farming villages were widespread across southern Mesopotamia by 3500 B.C.

 **ANALYZE EFFECTS** Explain how the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers supported farming.

Controlling Water by Irrigation

 **KEY QUESTION** Why was irrigation so important for farmers?

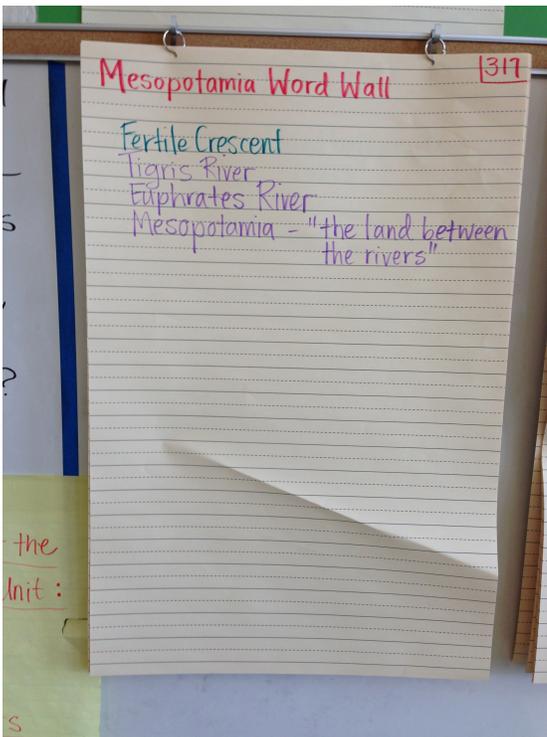
The work of a farmer is difficult. Crops need the right amount of water to thrive. The floods and the arid climate in Mesopotamia meant that farmers often had either too much water or too little.

Floods and Droughts The yearly floods of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were unpredictable. No one was sure when the floods would occur. They might come in April, or they might not happen until June, well after farmers had planted their crops. The extent of the floods depended on how much snow melted in the mountains in spring and how much rain fell. Heavy rains and snow melt brought violent floods that washed everything away. Too little rain and melting snow, however, meant that there would be no flood.

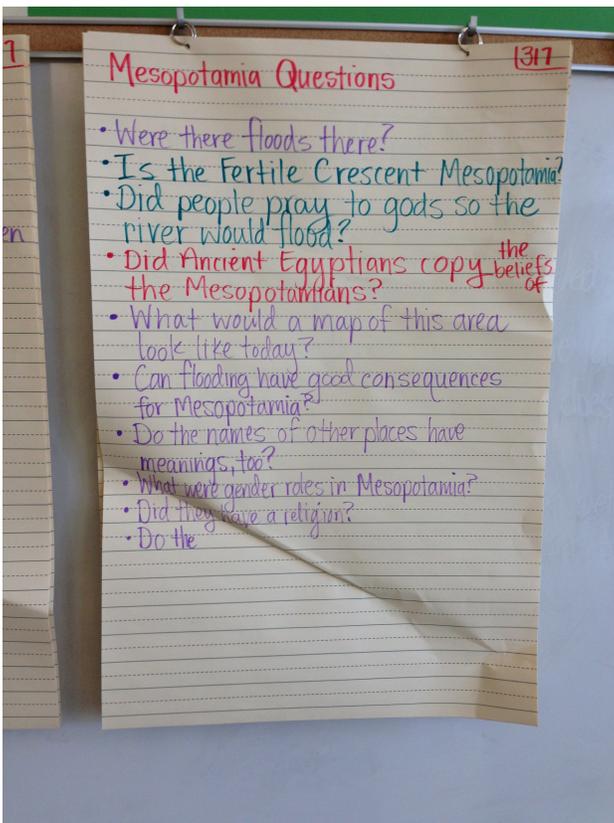
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A long period when too little rain falls is called a **drought** (drowt). In an arid region such as Mesopotamia, drought is a constant danger. During a drought, the level of the Tigris and Euphrates would drop, making it hard for farmers to water their crops. If crops failed, the people of Mesopotamia starved.

Mesopotamia Word Wall



Our Questions about Mesopotamia Chart



Excerpts from Chicago Municipal Code (Chicago Laws) (from www.cityofchicago.org)

Excerpts from the Municipal Code of Chicago, www.cityofchicago.org (American Legal Publishing Company, Chicago City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St. – Room 107, Chicago, IL 60602)

Municipal Code of Chicago

**CHAPTER 7-12
ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL**

7-12-030 Animals shall be restrained.

Each owner shall keep and maintain his animal under restraint; provided, however, that this section shall not apply to any dog being used for rescue or law enforcement work. It shall be unlawful for any owner to allow his or her animal to cross outside the property line of its owner to any extent, including reaching through, over or under a fence, or to keep or allow his or her animal to be outdoors on an unfenced portion of the owner's property, unless the animal is leashed and under the control of its owner or another responsible person; provided that any animal not secured by a leash or lead and that is outdoors on a fenced portion of the owner's property or outdoors on the premises of another person with consent of that person shall not be considered under restraint unless the fence is of sufficient height appropriate to the size of the animal to prevent the animal from jumping or reaching over the fence. In addition, it shall be an unlawful failure to restrain for an animal to attack, bite, threaten, or jump on any person without that person's consent, outside the property of the animal's owner. The provisions of this section shall be a positive duty of the owner and the offenses described herein shall be strict liability offenses.

Any owner who violates any provision of this section shall be subject to a fine of \$300.00, if the violation does not result in severe injury or death to any person or damage to another person's property. If the violation results in severe injury or death to any person, the owner shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$1,000.00 and not more than \$10,000.00. In addition to a fine, the owner may be required to submit full restitution to the victim or may be incarcerated for a period not to exceed six months, or may be required to perform up to 100 hours of community service, or any combination thereof. If the violation results in damage to another person's property, the owner shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$300.00 and not more than \$1,000.00. In addition to a fine, the owner may be required to submit full restitution to the victim.

(Prior code § 98-3; Amend Coun. J. 10-2-95, p. 8604; Amend Coun. J. 10-31-01, p. 71774, § 1; Amend Coun. J. 3-31-04, p. 20916, § 3.25; Amend Coun. J. 3-14-07, p. 99838, § 1)

7-12-080 Removal of neglected animal.

(a) Whenever the executive director shall determine: (1) that any animal is kept within a building or upon any premises without food, water, shelter, or proper care and attention for a period of time sufficient within his judgment to cause undue discomfort or suffering, and the owner cannot be located after reasonable search, or if the owner shall be known to be absent due to injury, illness, incarceration, eviction, or other involuntary circumstance; or (2) that any animal is kept at a residence under such conditions that endanger the public health, safety and welfare, or the safety and welfare of the animal, it shall be the duty of the executive director to obtain the necessary legal process to allow him or her to enter or to cause to have entered such building or premises to take possession and remove such animal to an animal control center or to a humane society or other appropriate agency equipped, able and willing to accept the animal.

(b) The animal control center, humane society or other authorized receiving agency shall exercise due caution for the welfare and temporary safekeeping of any animal so removed, in conformance with policies to be prescribed by the commission. After due notification to the owner, or, if the owner cannot be located or contacted after reasonable effort by the animal control center, humane society or other authorized receiving agency, any animal so removed and unredeemed shall become the property of the commission and disposed of under policies prescribed by the commission.

(Prior code § 98-4; Amend Coun. J. 3-14-07, p. 99838, § 1)

CHAPTER 7-20
CONTAGIOUS AND EPIDEMIC DISEASES

7-20-110 Towels in public lavatory.

No person owning, in charge of, or in control of, any public lavatory or washroom shall maintain in or about such lavatory or washroom any towel for common use. The term "common use" as used in this section shall be construed to mean for use by more than one person.

(Prior code § 94-11)

CHAPTER 7-24
DRUGS AND NARCOTICS

7-24-226 Driving while intoxicated – Impoundment.

(a) No person shall drive or be in actual physical control of any vehicle within the City of Chicago while under the influence of alcohol, other drug or drugs, intoxicating compound or compounds or any combination thereof, as defined and prohibited by 625 ILCS 5/11-501, as amended.

(b) Any vehicle used in a violation of subsection (a) of this section shall be subject to seizure and impoundment pursuant to this section. The owner of record of such vehicle shall be liable to the city for an administrative penalty of \$2,000 in addition to fees for the towing and storage of the vehicle. If the violation takes place within 500 feet of the boundary line of a public park or elementary or secondary school, the penalty shall be \$3,000 plus towing and storage fees.

CHAPTER 7-28
HEALTH NUISANCES

7-28-040 Abandonment of refrigerators.

Any person who abandons or discards in any place accessible to children any refrigerator, ice box or ice chest of a capacity of one and one-half cubic feet or more which has an attached lid or door which may be opened or fastened shut by means of an attached latch, or who being the owner, lessee, or manager of any place or premises knowingly permits such abandoned or discarded refrigerator, icebox or ice chest to remain there in such condition, shall be fined not less than \$50.00 nor more than \$200.00 or imprisoned for not more than 30 days, or both, for each offense. Every day that such violation continues shall be deemed a separate and distinct offense.

(Prior code § 99-3.1; Amend Coun. J. 12-4-02, p. 99931, § 4.1)

7-28-190 Throwing objects into roadways.

It shall be unlawful for any person:

- (1) To loiter on any public bridge, viaduct or overpass in such manner or for such purpose as might jeopardize the safety or well-being of any person upon or near the roadway below;
- (2) To stop any vehicle on any public bridge, viaduct or overpass except for necessary emergency purposes or upon the order of a police officer or other person authorized to direct such action;
- (3) To throw or drop or cause to be thrown or dropped from any public bridge, viaduct or overpass any article or thing which might jeopardize the safety or well-being of any person upon or near the roadway below.

Any violation of any of the provisions of this section shall constitute a nuisance and the offender shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$50.00 or more than \$200.00, or imprisonment not to exceed six months, or both, and every violation shall constitute a separate and distinct offense.

(Prior code § 99-13.2)

RESOURCE D: Excerpts from Hammurabi's Code (translated by L.W. King, eawc.evansville.edu)

Hammurabi's Code of Laws

Translated by L. W. King (eawc.evansville.edu)

Excerpts from The Code of Laws

2. If any one bring an accusation against a man, and the accused go to the river and leap into the river, if he sink in the river his accuser shall take possession of his house. But if the river prove that the accused is not guilty, and he escape unhurt, then he who had brought the accusation shall be put to death, while he who leaped into the river shall take possession of the house that had belonged to his accuser.
6. If any one steal the property of a temple or of the court, he shall be put to death, and also the one who receives the stolen thing from him shall be put to death.
9. If any one lose an article, and find it in the possession of another: if the person in whose possession the thing is found say "A merchant sold it to me, I paid for it before witnesses," and if the owner of the thing say, "I will bring witnesses who know my property," then shall the purchaser bring the merchant who sold it to him, and the witnesses before whom he bought it, and the owner shall bring witnesses who can identify his property. The judge shall examine their testimony -- both of the witnesses before whom the price was paid, and of the witnesses who identify the lost article on oath. The merchant is then proved to be a thief and shall be put to death. The owner of the lost article receives his property, and he who bought it receives the money he paid from the estate of the merchant.
14. If any one steal the minor son of another, he shall be put to death.
17. If any one find runaway male or female slaves in the open country and bring them to their masters, the master of the slaves shall pay him two shekels of silver.
21. If any one break a hole into a house (break in to steal), he shall be put to death before that hole and be buried.
25. If fire break out in a house, and some one who comes to put it out cast his eye upon the property of the owner of the house, and take the property of the master of the house, he shall be thrown into that self-same fire.
45. If a man rent his field for tillage for a fixed rental, and receive the rent of his field, but bad weather come and destroy the harvest, the injury falls upon the tiller of the soil.
53. If any one be too lazy to keep his dam in proper condition, and does not so keep it; if then the dam break and all the fields be flooded, then shall he in whose dam the break occurred be sold for money, and the money shall replace the corn which he has caused to be ruined.
108. If a tavern-keeper (feminine) does not accept corn according to gross weight in payment of drink, but takes money, and the price of the drink is less than that of the corn, she shall be convicted and thrown into the water.
116. If the prisoner die in prison from blows or maltreatment, the master of the prisoner shall convict the merchant before the judge. If he was a free-born man, the son of the merchant shall be put to death; if it was a slave, he shall pay one-third of a mina of gold, and all that the master of the prisoner gave he shall forfeit.
121. If any one store corn in another man's house he shall pay him storage at the rate of one gur for every five ka of corn per year.
129. If a man's wife be surprised (in flagrante delicto) with another man, both shall be tied and thrown into the water, but the husband may pardon his wife and the king his slaves.
131. If a man bring a charge against one's wife, but she is not surprised with another man, she must take an oath and then may return to her house.
132. If the "finger is pointed" at a man's wife about another man, but she is not caught sleeping with the other man, she shall jump into the river for her husband.
137. If a man wish to separate from a woman who has borne him children, or from his wife who has borne him children; then he shall give that wife her dowry, and a part of the usufruct of field, garden, and property, so that she can rear her children. When she has brought up her children, a portion of all that is given to the children, equal as that of one son, shall be given to her. She may then marry the man of her heart.
138. If a man wishes to separate from his wife who has borne him no children, he shall give her the amount of her purchase money and the dowry which she brought from her father's house, and let her go.

D3-4.b

145. If a man take a wife, and she bear him no children, and he intend to take another wife: if he take this second wife, and bring her into the house, this second wife shall not be allowed equality with his wife.
146. If a man take a wife and she give this man a maid-servant as wife and she bear him children, and then this maid assume equality with the wife: because she has borne him children her master shall not sell her for money, but he may keep her as a slave, reckoning her among the maid-servants.
175. If a State slave or the slave of a freed man marry the daughter of a free man, and children are born, the master of the slave shall have no right to enslave the children of the free.
185. If a man adopt a child and to his name as son, and rear him, this grown son can not be demanded back again.
186. If a man adopt a son, and if after he has taken him he injure his foster father and mother, then this adopted son shall return to his father's house.
195. If a son strike his father, his hands shall be hewn off.
196. If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.
197. If he break another man's bone, his bone shall be broken.
198. If he put out the eye of a freed man, or break the bone of a freed man, he shall pay one gold mina.
199. If he put out the eye of a man's slave, or break the bone of a man's slave, he shall pay one-half of its value.
200. If a man knock out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out.
215. If a physician make a large incision with an operating knife and cure it, or if he open a tumor (over the eye) with an operating knife, and saves the eye, he shall receive ten shekels in money.
218. If a physician make a large incision with the operating knife, and kill him, or open a tumor with the operating knife, and cut out the eye, his hands shall be cut off.
224. If a veterinary surgeon perform a serious operation on a donkey or an ox, and cure it, the owner shall pay the surgeon one-sixth of a shekel as a fee.
225. If he perform a serious operation on a donkey or an ox, and kill it, he shall pay the owner one-fourth of its value.
226. If a barber, without the knowledge of his master, cut the sign of a slave on a slave not to be sold, the hands of this barber shall be cut off.
257. If any one hire a field laborer, he shall pay him eight gur of corn per year.
258. If any one hire an ox-driver, he shall pay him six gur of corn per year.
259. If any one steal a water-wheel from the field, he shall pay five shekels in money to its owner.
260. If any one steal a shadduf (used to draw water from the river or canal) or a plow, he shall pay three shekels in money.
261. If any one hire a herdsman for cattle or sheep, he shall pay him eight gur of corn per annum.
274. If any one hire a skilled artizan, he shall pay as wages of the ... five gerahs, as wages of the potter five gerahs, of a tailor five gerahs, of ... gerahs, ... of a ropemaker four gerahs, of ... gerahs, of a mason ... gerahs per day.
275. If any one hire a ferryboat, he shall pay three gerahs in money per day.
276. If he hire a freight-boat, he shall pay two and one-half gerahs per day.
282. If a slave say to his master: "You are not my master," if they convict him his master shall cut off his ear.

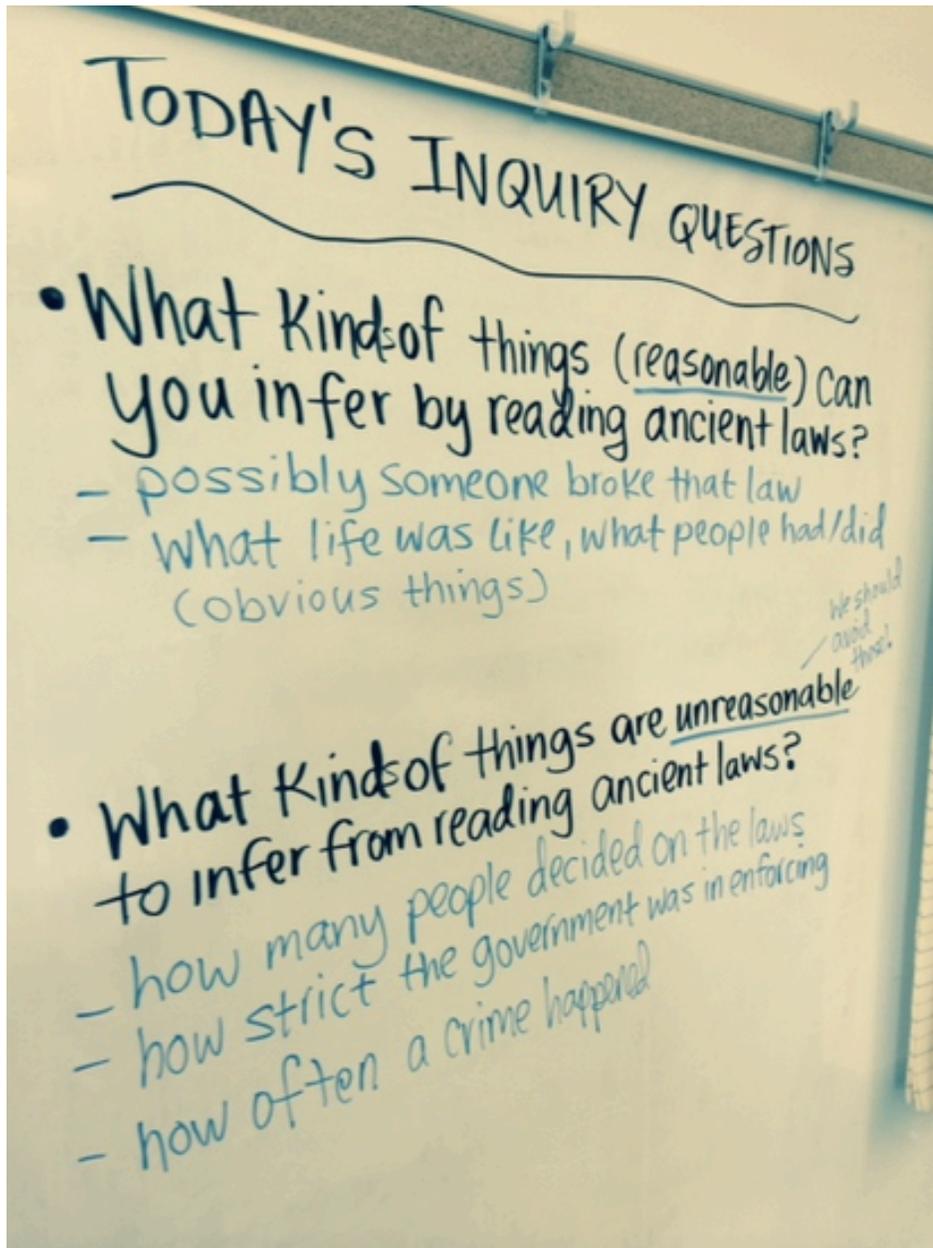
SOAPStone

Directions: Using the source provided, answer the following sourcing questions. Be sure to provide explicit evidence from the source to support your answers.

SOAP Stone	Sourcing Questions	Sourcing Answers	Evidence from source: What evidence from the source leads you to your answer?
Speaker	Who is the speaker? What do you know - important background information - about this person that may help you better understand his/her perspective?		
Occasion	What is the context in which the person is speaking? Identify the particular place and time to have a better understanding of context. What events might have influenced the speaker?		
Audience	Who is the intended audience? Who is the speaker directing their message to? How might the audience influence the way in which the speaker creates the message?		
Purpose	What is the main idea or message of the document?		
So What?	Why is this message significant, given the time in which it was written? Why should anyone care?		
Tone	What attitude is expressed by the author?		

Adapted from College Board.

Group constructed notes on whiteboard, inferences about Hammurabi's Laws



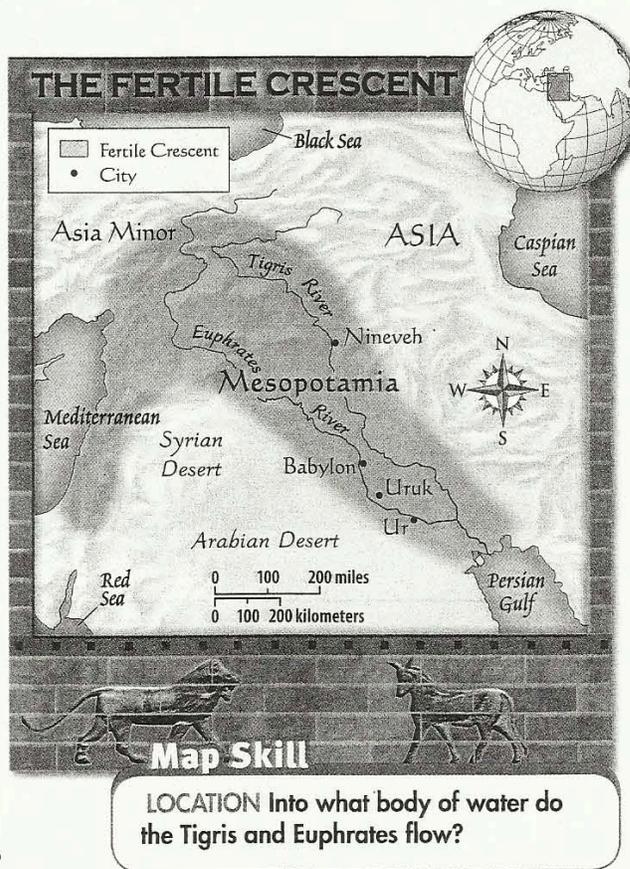
A THE LAND BETWEEN THE RIVERS

In a region full of harsh deserts, people discovered that they could farm in the fertile plain between two rivers. They had to live with the risk of floods, but here they could settle and build communities.

One of the world's first farming communities developed in the Fertile Crescent in Asia. This rainbow-shaped strip of land lies between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and along their banks. It curves northward from the Persian Gulf and then dips southwest along the Mediterranean Sea. The Greeks would later call this region Mesopotamia, or "the land between the rivers." Today we call this part of Southwest Asia the Middle East.

The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers each begin as melting snow high in Turkey's Taurus Mountains. Each flows southeast and then empties into the Persian Gulf. The area's climate is usually hot and dry, and the rains are unpredictable. When there is little rain, parts of the rivers dry up, and crops can die. If there is heavy rainfall, the rivers can overflow, drowning crops and destroying homes. But when the rivers have their regular spring floods, they leave behind rich, fertile soil called silt.

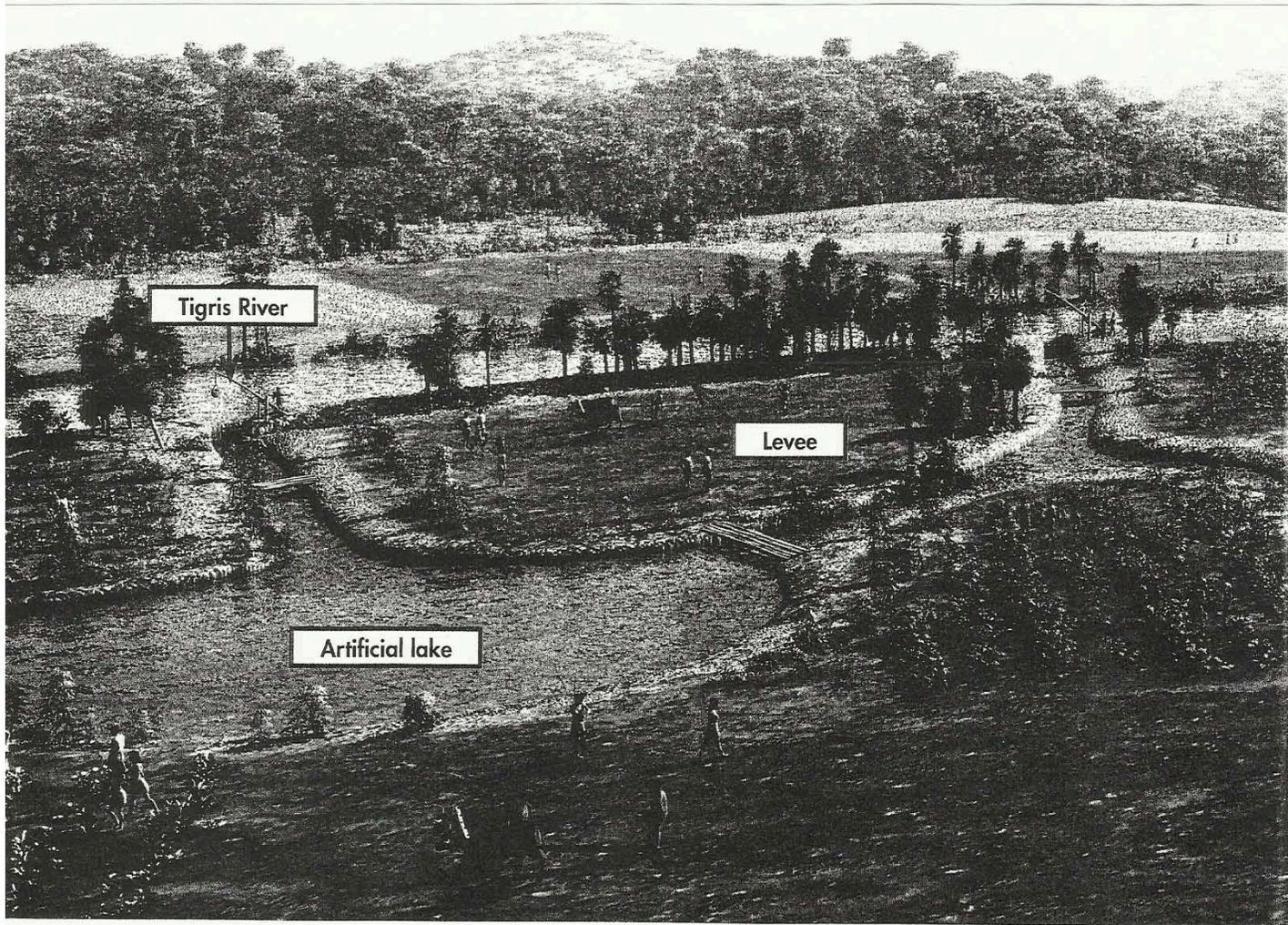
The two rivers were extremely important to the early people of Mesopotamia. The rivers were the only source of water for drinking, farming,



and washing. The Mesopotamians were one of the first groups of people to pray to gods for rain and good crops.

QUICK CHECK

Cause and Effect How did the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers affect the people of Mesopotamia?

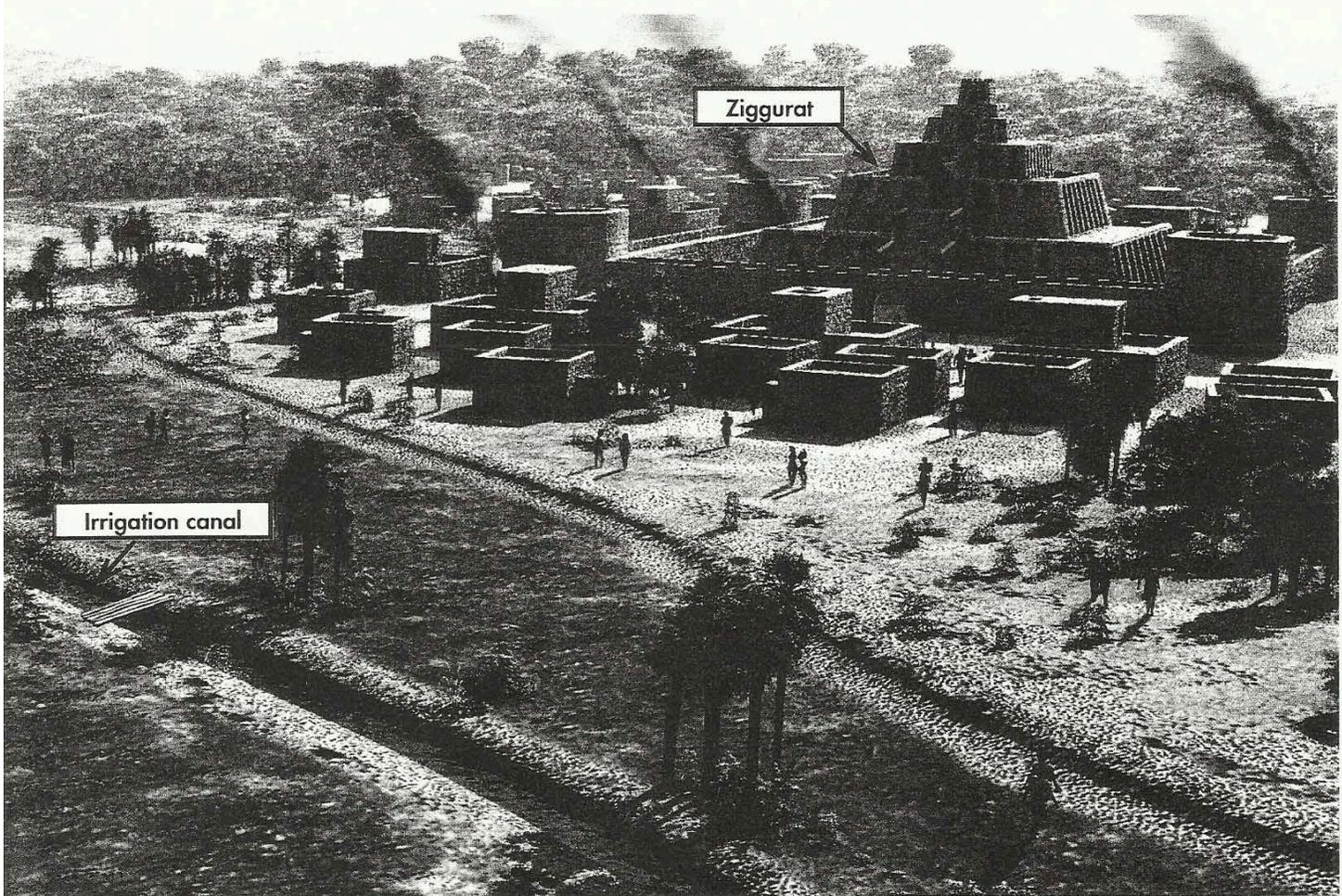


B LIFE IN MESOPOTAMIA

It took centuries, but Mesopotamian farmers eventually learned how to direct the water of the Tigris and Euphrates where they needed it. They used **irrigation**, or the bringing of water to dry fields by using canals or pipes. Farmers worked together to build canals. They also constructed dams to collect water in ponds for storage. To prevent flooding, they built high walls of dirt called levees along riverbanks. Managing the water supply was so important to early farmers that some of Mesopotamia's first laws dealt with sharing water fairly.

Their growing skill at controlling the Tigris and Euphrates made Mesopotamia's farmers some of the best farmers in the ancient world. Working their fields with simple tools such as wooden plows and hoes with stone edges, they grew wheat, barley, dates, onions, and other crops.

Mesopotamians used their geography and resources to their advantage. In addition to using the rivers for farming, they caught fish in the rivers. The rivers also provided mud and reeds for building houses. Mesopotamia had few trees, so wood was a valuable resource.



▲ Irrigation helped Mesopotamians grow crops and avoid floods. Cities rose near major farmlands.

People used wood to make plows and furniture, as well as a new invention—the potter’s wheel. As the wheel spun, a potter could mold lumps of clay into bowls and pots. Pottery soon became one of Mesopotamia’s many art forms.

Animals Go to Work

Mesopotamian farmers also discovered how to raise animals for food and other goods. Sheep were among the first domesticated animals. They supplied meat as well as wool for clothing. Cattle were raised for their meat and their skins, which were made into leather. Farmers also trained them to carry goods and to pull plows. Mesopotamians tamed dogs, pigs, goats, and donkeys as well.

Trade and Crafts

The combination of rich soil, hard work, and new irrigation techniques helped Mesopotamians produce a surplus of crops. This surplus led to the growth of trade. Farmers would travel to nearby villages to exchange surplus grain and meat for things they needed. Surplus food also allowed people to specialize in crafts, like making baskets, cloth, and pottery. Villages became centers of trading and crafting.

QUICK CHECK

Cause and Effect How did geography affect the way people lived in Mesopotamia?



CIVILIZATION IN SUMER

By 3000 B.C., Mesopotamia's villages had grown into larger cities, some with as many as 10,000 people. Many of these cities developed in southern Mesopotamia, near the Persian Gulf. This region became known as Sumer.

Sumer had dozens of large **city-states**—cities that had their own governments. The city-states developed strict social class systems, in which certain groups of people always held the same positions in society. At the top were kings, priests, and government officials. Below them were farmers, traders, and craftspeople. Enslaved people were the lowest class.

PEOPLE

Enheduanna, the daughter of Sargon, was a high priestess and the region's first known poet. In one poem she promised a goddess that, "I, Enheduanna, will offer prayers to her / My tears like sweet drinks, / Will I present to the holy Inanna. . . ."



Enheduanna

Religion in Sumer

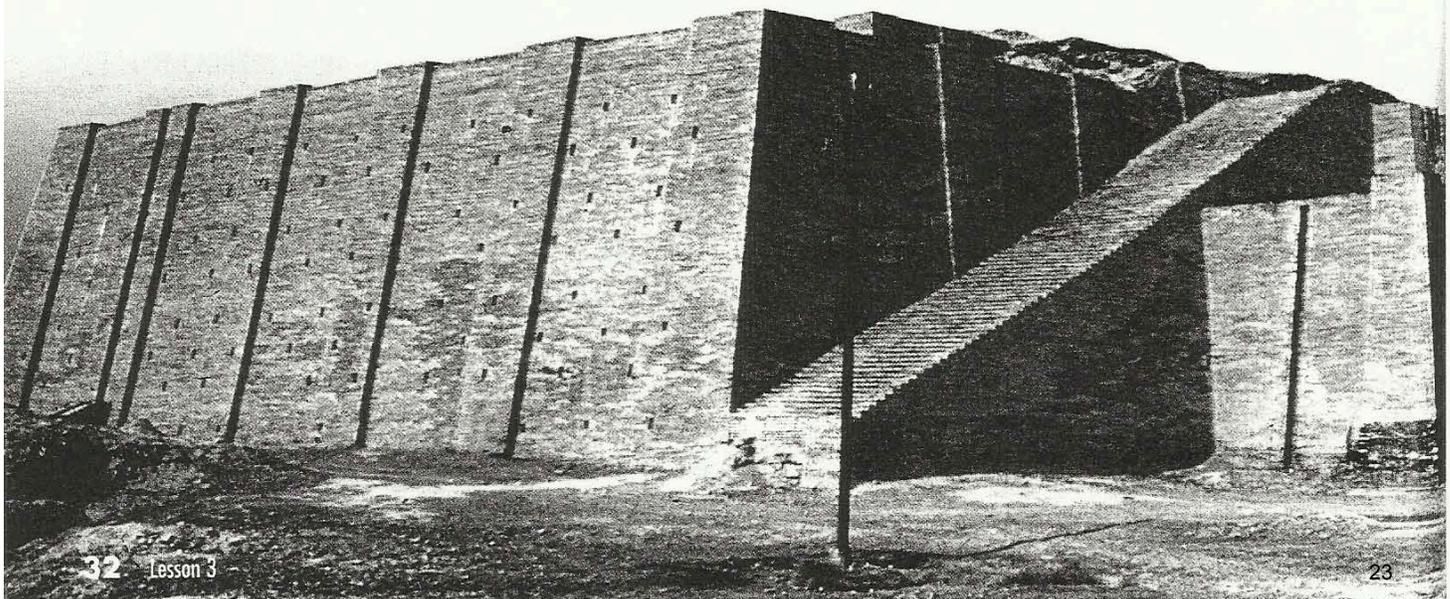
Sumerians also practiced **polytheism**, or the belief in many gods and goddesses. Their gods included An, the father of the gods, and Inanna, the goddess of love and war. Another important god was Enki, the god of water.

The main building in each Sumerian city was a ziggurat, or "mountain of god." A temple honoring one of Sumer's gods stood at the top of each ziggurat. Sumerians believed their priests and priestesses could communicate with the gods and goddesses from the ziggurats.

The Sumerian Empire

For many years, Sumer's most powerful city-states tried to conquer each other and create an **empire**, a group of different lands under one ruler. Around 2300 B.C., Sargon, king of the city-state of Akkad, succeeded. He united Sumer under his rule, creating the first empire in world history.

Sargon ruled for about 56 years. After his death, his empire fell apart, as states from northern Mesopotamia attacked Sumer.



Sumerian Inventions

The Sumerians made discoveries that would influence other civilizations for centuries. Most important was the development of a writing system. Sumerians used cuneiform, or wedge-shaped marks, to record laws and important events. These marks were pressed into wet clay tablets with sharpened reeds. The tablets were then baked in the sun until dry. Some Sumerian tablets have survived until today.

Sumerians opened schools called edubbas, or “tablet houses.” There, wealthy boys studied math and music and spent long days learning how to read and write cuneiform. Some would

▼ This cuneiform tablet is a record of fields and crops from 2800 B.C.



◀ The partially restored Third Sumerian Dynasty ziggurat in Ur, originally built around 2100 B.C.

become official record-keepers, or **scribes**, who were highly respected.

Along with irrigation systems and pottery, the Sumerians invented or improved the wagon wheel and the sailboat. They also developed new systems of measurements. They were the first people to come up with a 12-month calendar. They used it to predict floods and decide the best times to plant crops. They also created the 60-second minute and the 60-minute hour—methods we still use to tell time today, more than 4,500 years later.

QUICK CHECK

Cause and Effect How did Sumerian inventions affect life in Mesopotamia?

Check Understanding

1. VOCABULARY Use these vocabulary words to write a travel guide about ancient Sumer.

city-state

empire

polytheism

scribe

2. READING SKILL Cause and Effect Use your chart from page 28 to explain how advances in farming affected life in Mesopotamia.

Cause	→	Effect
	→	
	→	
	→	



3. Write About It Write about how the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers affected life in the Fertile Crescent.

A THE BABYLONIANS

They came to Mesopotamia as wandering herders and decided to settle in the city-state of Babylon, just north of the old Sumerian Empire. These former herders began to follow the customs of the local people, and their city grew strong. Eventually, they were ready to conquer.

Almost 500 years after the fall of Sumer, King Hammurabi of Babylon conquered Mesopotamian city-states north and south of his home. By 1792 B.C., he controlled the entire region—an empire several times larger than Sumer.

Hammurabi established a system of laws in his empire. There was no excuse for breaking Hammurabi's laws—for perhaps the first time in history, this king had them written down for everyone to read.

Hammurabi's Code

The Code of Hammurabi was written down by scribes in about 1780 B.C. A **code** is a written collection of laws. The Code of Hammurabi is the oldest set of laws archaeologists have ever found. It listed 282 laws everyone in the empire had to follow—including the king. The code dealt with all parts of life, including crimes, farming and business activities, marriage, and the family. Several laws protected weaker people from the more powerful. Other laws set punishments that would probably seem cruel today. The laws were, however, typical of societies at that time. For example:



▲ This carving shows Hammurabi before the sun god.

“If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out. . . . If a son has struck his father, they shall cut off his hand.”

As with Sumer, Hammurabi's empire came to an end. After Hammurabi's death, neighboring states conquered different pieces of his empire until it vanished. It would be 1,000 years before a new empire arose in Mesopotamia.

QUICK CHECK

Cause and Effect How did Hammurabi's code affect Mesopotamian civilization?

Excerpt from Epic of Gilgamesh (Excerpt from Worlds of History, A Comparative Reader, Vol I. 2000. Kevin Reilly, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, pp. 58, 65-68)

From *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

This selection is a primary source for the study of ancient Mesopotamia — the land between the two great rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. It is also the earliest written story in any language.

Gilgamesh was an ancient king of Sumer, who lived about 2700 B.C.E. Since *The Epic* comes from a thousand years later, we can assume Sumerians told this story about King Gilgamesh for some time before it was written down. In Sumer, writing was initially used by temple priests to keep track of property and taxes. Soon, however, writing was used to preserve stories and to celebrate kings. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is one of the earliest examples of such literature.

Kevin Reilly. Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Volume 1. Published by: Bedford/St. Martin
(page 58) (2000)

excerpt from The Epic of Gilgamesh

(1)

The Story of the Flood

"You know the city Shurruapak, it stands on the banks of Euphrates? That city grew old and the gods that were in it were old. There was Anu, lord of the firmament, their father, and warrior Enlil their counsellor, Ninurta the helper, and Ennugi watcher over canals; and with them also was Ea. In those days the world teemed, the people multiplied, the world bellowed like a wild bull, and the great god was aroused by the clamour. Enlil heard the clamour and he said to the gods in council, 'The uproar of mankind is intolerable and sleep is no longer possible by reason of the babel.' So the gods agreed to exterminate mankind. Enlil did this, but Ea because of his oath warned me in a dream. He whispered their words to my house of reeds, 'Reed-house, reed-house! Wall, O wall, hearken reed-house, wall reflect; O man of Shurruapak, son of Ubara-Tutu; tear down your house and build a boat, abandon possessions and look for life, despise worldly goods and save your soul alive. Tear down your house, I say, and build a boat. These are the measurements of the barque as you shall build her: let her beam equal her length, let her deck be roofed like the vault that covers the abyss; then take up into the boat the seed of all living creatures.'

"When I had understood I said to my lord, 'Behold, what you have commanded I will honour and perform, but how shall I answer the people, the city, the elders?' The Ea opened his mouth and said to me, his servant, 'Tell them this: I have learnt that Enlil is wrathful against me, I dare no longer walk in his land nor live in his city; I will go down to the Gulf to dwell with Ea my lord. But on you he will rain down abundance, rare fish and shy wild-fowl, a rich harvest-tide. In the evening the rider of the storm will bring you wheat in torrents.'

"In the first light of dawn all my household gathered round me, the children brought pitch and the men whatever was necessary. On the fifth day I laid the keel and the ribs, then I made fast the planking. The ground-space was one acre, each side of the deck measured one hundred and twenty cubits, making a square. I built six decks below, seven in all, I divided them into nine sections with bulkheads between. I drove in wedges where needed, I saw to the punt-poles, and laid in supplies. The carriers brought oil in baskets, I poured pitch into the furnace and asphalt and oil; more oil was consumed in caulking, and more again the master of the boat took into his stores. I slaughtered bullocks for the people and every day I killed sheep. I gave the shipwrights wine to drink as though it were river water, raw wine and red wine and oil and white wine. There was feasting then as there is at the time of the New Year's festival; I myself anointed my head. On the seventh day the boat was complete.

"Then was the launching full of difficulty; there was shifting of ballast above and below till two thirds was submerged. I loaded into her all that I had of gold and of living things, my family, my kin, the beast of the field both wild and tame, and all the craftsmen. I sent them on board, for the time that Shamash had ordained was already fulfilled when he said 'In the evening, when the rider of the storm sends down the destroying rain, enter the boat and batten her down.' The time was fulfilled, the evening came, the rider of the storm sent down the rain. I looked out at the weather and it was terrible, so I too boarded the boat and battened her down. All was now complete, the battening and the

Kevin Reilly. *Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Volume 1*. Published by: Bedford/St. Martin's. (pages 65-68) (2000)

excerpt from the epic of Gilgamesh

(2)

caulking; so I handed the tiller to Puzur-Amurri the steersman, with the navigation and the care of the whole boat.

"With the first light of dawn a black cloud came from the horizon; it thundered within where Adad, lord of the storm was riding. In front over hill and plain Shullat and Hanish, heralds of the storm, led on. Then the gods of the abyss rose up; Nergal pulled out the dams of the nether waters, Ninurta the war-lord threw down the dykes, and the seven judges of hell, the Annunaki, raised their torches, lighting the land with their livid flame. A stupor of despair went up to heaven when the god of the storm turned daylight to darkness, when he smashed the land like a cup. One whole day the tempest raged, gathering fury as it went, it poured over the people like the tides of battle; a man could not see his brother nor the people be seen from heaven. Even the gods were terrified at the flood, they fled to the highest heaven, the firmament of Anu; they crouched against the walls, cowering like curs. Then Ishtar the sweet-voiced Queen of Heaven cried out like a woman in travail: 'Alas the days of old are turned to dust because I commanded evil; why did I command this evil in the council of all the gods? I commanded wars to destroy the people, but are they not my people, for I brought them forth? Now like the spawn of fish they float in the ocean.' The great gods of heaven and of hell wept, they covered their mouths.

"For six days and six nights the winds blew, torrent and tempest and flood overwhelmed the world, tempest and flood raged together like warring hosts. When the seventh day dawned the storm from the south subsided, the sea grew calm, the flood was stilled; I looked at the face of the world and there was silence, all mankind was turned to clay. The surface of the sea stretched as flat as a roof-top; I opened a hatch and the light fell on my face. Then I bowed low, I sat down and I wept, the tears streamed down my face, for on every side was the waste of water. I looked for land in vain, but fourteen leagues distant there appeared a mountain, and there the boat grounded; on the mountain of Nisir the boat held fast, she held fast and did not budge. One day she held, and a second day on the mountain of Nisir she held fast and did not budge. A third day, and a fourth day she held fast on the mountain and did not budge; a fifth day and a sixth day she held fast on the mountain. When the seventh day dawned I loosed a dove and let her go. She flew away, but finding no resting-place she returned. Then I loosed a swallow, and she flew away but finding no resting-place she returned. I loosed a raven, she saw that the waters had retreated, she ate, she flew around, she cawed, and she did not come back. Then I threw everything open to the four winds, I made a sacrifice and poured out a libation on the mountain top. Seven and again seven cauldrons I set up on their stands, I heaped up wood and cane and cedar and myrtle. When the gods smelled the sweet savour, they gathered like flies over the sacrifice. Then, at last, Ishtar also came, she lifted her necklace

Kevin Reilly. *Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Volume 1*. Published by: Bedford/St. Martin's
(pages 65-68) (2000)

excerpt from The Epic of Gilgamesh

③

with the jewels of heaven that once Anu had made to please her. 'O you gods here present, by the lapis lazuli round my neck I shall remember these days as I remember the jewels of my throat; these last days I shall not forget. Let all the gods gather round the sacrifice, except Enlil. He shall not approach this offering, for without reflection he brought the flood; he consigned my people to destruction.'

"When Enlil had come, when he saw the boat, he was wrath and swelled with anger at the gods, the host of heaven, 'Has any of these mortals escaped? Not one was to have survived the destruction.' Then the god of the wells and canals Ninurta opened his mouth and said to the warrior Enlil, 'Who is there of the gods that devise without Ea? It is Ea alone who knows all things.' Then Ea opened his mouth and spoke to warrior Enlil, 'Wisest of gods, hero Enlil, how could you so senselessly bring down the flood?'

Lay upon the sinner his sin,
Lay upon the transgressor his transgression,
Punish him a little when he breaks loose,
Do not drive him too hard or he perishes;
Would that a lion had ravaged mankind
Rather than the flood,
Would that a wolf had ravaged mankind
Rather than the flood,
Would that famine had wasted the world
Rather than the flood,
Would that pestilence had wasted mankind
Rather than the flood.

It was not I that revealed the secret of the gods; the wise man learned it in a dream. Now take your counsel what shall be done with him.'

"Then Enlil went up into the boat, he took me by the hand and my wife and made us enter the boat and kneel down on either side, he standing between us. He touched our foreheads to bless us saying, 'In time past Utnapishtim was a mortal man; henceforth he and his wife shall live in the distance at the mouth of the rivers.' Thus it was that the gods took me and placed me here to live in the distance, at the mouth of the rivers."

Kevin Reilly. *Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Volume 1*. Published by: Bedford/St. Martin's
(pages 65-68) (2006)

Mesopotamian and Egyptian Civilizations: A Tale of Two Rivers

Kevin Reilly, *Worlds of History, A Comparative Reader, Vol. I*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2000. (pages 55-56)

Experts disagree as to whether Mesopotamian or Egyptian civilization is older. Mesopotamian influence in Egypt was considerable enough to suggest slightly earlier origins, but both had evolved distinct civilizations by 3000 B.C. Indeed, the difference between the two civilizations attests to the existence of multiple routes to civilized life. In both cases, river valleys provided the necessary water and silt for an agricultural surplus large enough to support classes of specialists who did not have to farm. But the differing nature of the rivers had much to do with the different types of civilizations that evolved.

The Egyptians were blessed with the easier and more reliable of the two rivers. The Nile overflowed its banks predictably every year on the parched ground in the summer after August 15, well after the harvest had been gathered, depositing its rich sediment, and withdrawing by early October, leaving little salt or marsh, in time for the sowing of winter crops. Later sowings for summer crops required only simple canals that tapped the river upstream and the natural drainage of the Nile River. Further, transportation on the Nile was simplified by the fact that the prevailing winds blew from the north, while the river flowed from the south, making navigation a matter of using sails upstream and dispensing with them coming downstream.

The Euphrates offered none of these advantages as it cut its way through Mesopotamia. The Euphrates flowed high above the flood plain (unlike the neighboring Tigris) so that its waters could be used, but it

flooded suddenly and without warning in the late spring, after the summer crops had been sown and before the winter crops could be harvested. Thus, the flooding of the Euphrates offered no natural irrigation. Its waters were needed at other times, and its flooding was destructive. Canals were necessary to drain off water for irrigation when the river was low, and these canals had to be adequately blocked, and the banks reinforced, when the river flooded. Further, since the Euphrates was not as easily navigable as the Nile, the main canals had to serve as major transportation arteries as well.

In Mesopotamia, the flood was the enemy. The Mesopotamian deities who ruled the waters, Nin-Girsu and Tiamat, were feared. The forces of nature were often evil. Life was a struggle. In Egypt, on the other hand, life was viewed as a cooperation with nature. Even the Egyptian god of the flood, Hapi, was a helpful deity, who provided the people's daily bread. Egyptian priests and philosophers were much more at ease with their world than their Mesopotamian counterparts.

Claims-Evidence-Source Chart

Ask questions when you don't understand.

Source	Evidence	Claim

SCAFFOLDS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL HISTORICAL INQUIRY MODULES

Historical inquiry means close reading of multiple sources, both primary and secondary, to construct evidence-based interpretations about the past. Close reading in history involves detailed, careful analysis of sources to make sense of the past through practices such as sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization. It involves comparing and contrasting key historical details within and across sources while considering how the context and the source information (i.e. author, date, audience) play a role in shaping the narrative. To support students in constructing their own evidence-based interpretations of the past, I design units that center on an addressing an overarching essential question through close reading and discussion of a carefully constructed text set. I work to establish routines of making our thinking visible through close reading and annotation routines. I build in supports to move students to independently draw conclusions about the topic of inquiry by to habitually interrogate sources and making claims based on reasoning through what textual evidence best supports their argument.

This document breaks down some of the steps of this process. The sections of this document are not necessarily meant to be read in order or to imply a sequential process of designing and implementing these units. Rather, it is meant to complement the module materials by providing a more thorough explanation of how I establish routines, how I incrementally support middle schoolers' historical thinking, what guides some of my decisions, etc.

Designing modules

While planning throughout the year, I center units around essential questions that give students something thought-provoking/challenging that supports their historical thinking. I carefully choose a text set for each unit that provides students with much evidence related to the essential questions, so students will be able to have text-based discussions. Determining the essential question(s) is an iterative process of considering the interrelation between the historical content, available sources, and learning objectives. It is a constant back and forth process of “testing” out various versions of questions with multiple combinations of sources and determining the affordances of each source for addressing the question. I revise the question depending on the historical information available in the sources and the specific historical inquiry practices to which the sources lend themselves in relation to what the students know and are able to do at that time of year. I also play around with adding or removing sources to construct a text set in consideration of the following criteria:

- The text set as a whole should offer answers to the essential question. Whenever possible, there should be more than one answer to the essential question that could be given based on evidence from the text set, so students will have to grapple with which is best.
- Texts in the set should “talk to each other.” In other words, the texts, when read together, should provide opportunities for discussions. There should be places where the various sources agree, disagree, provide diverse opinions and perspectives, show evidence of various biases, etc.

- The text set should include various types of texts (primary, secondary, visual, print, multimedia, etc.)
- Texts should afford opportunities to move students toward deeper historical thinking.

When I'm thinking about how to sequence texts within a module, I like to sequence them in such a way that I can create a sense of inquiry that isn't teacher-directed, but is derived from students' experiences while reading the texts. For example, I may choose a text to be the first one that students read knowing that, with the right prompting from me, I can almost certainly get them to ask a specific question. When they do, I will record this question on our question chart, and instead of answering it, I will invite students to look for an answer to that question throughout the module as we keep looking at new sources. Then I'll sequence the reading experience so that students will later read a source that answers that exact question, so they can "find" the answer. I do this in the Egypt unit when I begin with a map that shows that all of the biggest cities in Ancient Egypt were within the annual flood plains. Without fail, students always ask, "Why would anyone build a city in a place where it floods every year?" Soon after, I have students read a text which explains the benefits of the annual flooding, and students easily recognize when they have found the answer to their own question.

When I'm planning a module, I plan a culminating task that will allow students to address the essential question. Knowing from the beginning that they will be required to produce some kind of evidence for their answer to the question gives students an incentive to track the question closely throughout the module. Often the culminating task is an essay, and I emphasize to students that this is usually how historians present their arguments about history, in writing. Sometimes I like to give students alternative ways to show their thinking, like creating causal maps that answer the essential question in graphic form.

Unpacking (READI) Learning Goals

At the beginning of the year, I post the 6 READI History Learning goals prominently on the wall in student-friendly language. In the first few weeks of school, I ask students to read one at a time and unpack what meaning they can find in the goal statement. For some of the goals, students don't understand much at first because they don't yet know the specialized vocabulary (i.e. contextualization, corroboration, sourcing, frameworks, etc.) but they at least are aware of what parts they understand and what parts they don't. Gradually, as I introduce, teach, and model components of the learning goals, I point students back to the learning goal statements and they begin to internalize them. During the first few weeks, each time I give the objective for the lesson, I show students which learning goals align with the objective. Then I start showing students the objective, and ask them to talk to a partner and share out about which learning goals relate.

Unpacking Essential Questions

At the beginning of a new unit, I introduce students to the essential questions for that unit and, instead of explaining it to them, I ask students to unpack the questions. What I mean by "unpack" is to thoroughly break down the meaning of each component of the question. I ask students to first think and annotate, then share with their partner and whole group, and I prompt them with questions like: What is the question asking? Can you say it in your own words? Are there any words I don't understand in the question? What kinds of evidence would I need to find

to support an answer to this question? The point of this activity is to help students internalize the questions so they will attend to them while they are reading.

Close Reading Annotation Cycle

For each unit I regularly engage students in cycles of close reading and annotating of primary and secondary sources from the unit's text set to support their historical inquiry. This involves a succession of reading and annotating portions of a text individually, sharing thinking with partners about the text, discussing as a whole group, and then repeating the cycle. I set a variety of purposes for reading each text depending on the intended learning goal and what students need at the time (see "Reading for Multiple Purposes" section).

At the very beginning of the year, I usually encourage students to share all types of sense making during the close reading cycle - from identifying words they don't understand in the text and making personal connections to asking questions about the historical context - to get students comfortable sharing and to build a culture of collaborative inquiry. Over time I build in supports to move students to delving into texts from a historical inquiry stance through modeling and establishing routines of sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization. Throughout the year, as students learn to habitually engage in historical inquiry practices, I also continue to support general/literal sense-making through the close reading cycle. I purposefully interleave historical practices and general literacy skills to support students of varying reading levels and to promote the close reading of texts that are increasingly complex as the year progresses. Texts can increase in complexity in multiple ways, from containing more difficult language and syntax as well as representing more complex historical concepts.

The close reading cycle begins with individual, silent close reading of a short section of the text (a designated chunk of the text) with annotations, such as previewing the source information before reading a poem/hymn from ancient Egypt or reading the first paragraph of a textbook excerpt about the Egyptian social pyramid. I usually set multiple purposes for each section of reading, from addressing the essential question to asking our own questions about the historical context (see "Reading for Multiple Purposes" section). I try to limit the time for this individual reading to no more than two minutes, because reading independently for long periods of time can be frustrating and overwhelming for students who are not confident in their reading abilities or students who find it difficult to sustain mental focus. Also, it is useful to stop periodically and make collective sense of what we are reading before moving on. After silent independent close reading, I invite students to move into partner conversations. I encourage students to share with their partner their experience with the text, whether it be things they understood, things they found confusing, words they didn't know, connections they made to other texts or historical constructs, insights about the overarching essential question, questions they had, etc. Finally, I invite students to share-out with the whole group some of their experiences with the reading or some of the ideas that stood out as significant in their partner conversations. After this discussion, we choose another short section of the text and repeat the cycle.

Each part of the close reading cycle requires a lot of explicit teaching, modeling, and encouragement from me, especially early in the year. For the silent, independent reading phase, I watch for students who are getting frustrated and try to intervene early to keep them from forming negative associations with this step. If a student is doodling, or staring at the ceiling, or

seems to be getting agitated, I lean close and, in a whisper, remind the student that for this part of the cycle, it's okay if you don't understand every word, and it's alright if you just work on figuring out a word or two or even just studying the pictures to make meaning from them. I remind the student that he will be sharing with a partner soon, and all he has to do is tell "his experience with the text," whatever that may be. I also say to the student, "I wouldn't ever ask you to sit and read a really hard text all by yourself for an hour. I'm just asking you to do what you can on your own for one minute. After that, you know that you'll start to gain even more understanding by talking with your partner and even more understanding by talking with the whole group, so you are just getting started on your own." Once I've delivered this speech, I watch for even the tiniest bit of evidence that this student is trying to make sense of the text independently, and I reinforce this positively. I might point to a student's annotations and whisper, "This is really interesting thinking, and I hope you'll raise your hand and share it with the class." Or I may ask the student if I can put his annotations on the document camera as an example for the other students.

For the partner conversations, I spend time at the beginning of the year teaching, modeling, and reteaching/remodeling the behaviors and attitudes for successful partner conversations. This includes things like making sure both partners have a turn to speak, looking at your partner when he/she speaks, sharing your thinking naturally like a conversation instead of just reading annotations from your page. I observe students during partner conversations and notice behaviors that I want to highlight as exemplary (i.e. repeating back what a classmate said to make sure you understand him correctly) or behaviors I want students to avoid (i.e. dominating conversations, interrupting, belittling others' ideas). For the positive behaviors, I praise students publicly, but for the negative behaviors, I address them anonymously by saying something like, "I'm noticing that some of you are occasionally forgetting to look at your partner while he/she is speaking. How does it feel when you are sharing your thinking and your partner is looking away? Why do you think it's important that we look at the speaker while we are talking with a partner?" Sometimes I model what to do/what not to do so students learn a principle of respectful partner conversation from the example and the non-example. For example, I may act out active listening body language (slight lean toward speaker, sustained eye contact, slight nodding of the head at key points, etc.) and then act out the opposite (slouching or leaning away from speaker, gaze not focused on speaker, etc.) and ask students, "Which partner would you rather share your ideas with? Why? What is this partner communicating non-verbally?"

Regarding partner groupings, I try to change up my methods of grouping students throughout the year. Sometimes I strategically partner students heterogeneously (a more proficient reader with a less proficient reader), knowing that both students will benefit from the conversation (one will gain deeper insights from explaining, the other will gain knowledge from hearing explanations). Sometimes I pair students so that they can use their native language as well as English to explain their thinking if that is more comfortable for them. Sometimes I allow students to choose their own partners. I try to sometimes have students stand up and walk around the room to find a new person to speak to during the partner talk phase of the close reading cycle.

For the third phase of the close reading cycle, whole group discussion, I facilitate to help students surface key parts of their reading experience with this section of the text. I maintain focus by introducing specific purposes for reading, but also allow flexibility for the

conversations to reflect students' unique experiences. (See other sections of this document, such as "Facilitating Inquiry Discussions" and "Reading for Multiple Purposes" sections for more details.

Annotations

Early in the year, I find it is important to invest students in the value of using annotations while closely reading historical texts. I use annotations as a way to make our historical thinking visible. I model historical thinking through my annotations on the document camera throughout the year, progressing the focus and complexity of my thinking over time (i.e. xx). I use students' annotations as formative assessment of their historical thinking and as a way to support collaborative inquiry (i.e. encouraging students to use their annotations to guide their partner and whole group conversations).

Often students come to my class with preconceived ideas about annotations. I usually ask in the first few days of school if students like annotations or find them helpful, and most of my students say they do not like them or don't find them helpful. When I ask them why, they often say that it feels tedious or it slows down the reading process. They don't like having to worry about what the teacher is looking for, or wonder how many annotations they need to prove that they have read and get 100% on the assignment.

I try to affirm students' feelings about annotations-as-a-teacher-task, and I tell them, "If I'm lying on the couch on a Saturday afternoon, lost in the pages of a Harry Potter novel, I don't get out my post-its and write down my personal connections, and I would hate it if someone forced me to do that." I then try to make a case for when annotations can be valuable. I say something like, "There are times, though, when I use annotations, not because someone tells me to, but because they support me as a reader. (And I'm a pretty good reader; I've made it through college and graduate school, which required a lot of reading.) I find it helpful to use annotations when I'm reading something that is really, really challenging for me. When I'm reading something very technical from a field that I'm not very familiar with, such as physics, or philosophy, I read the same paragraph over and over again, and I'm still not sure what it means. In those times, annotations help me to keep track of the sense I am making of the text, and also help me to keep notes in the places where I don't understand. Sometimes I go back and read my annotations later to remind myself what things in the text mean or how I was interpreting information in the text at that time. Another time when I use annotations is when I know that I'm going to have to talk about what I'm reading with other people. Like I've been in Book Clubs before, where I read a chapter and then meet with other people to talk about it. I use more annotations then, because I know that the notes I write down will help me to remember the things I want to bring up in the conversations with other people. In that case, my annotations are really not primarily about making sense of the text, but more about helping me to share my thoughts with the community." By sharing those real-life examples, I try to encourage students to disconnect from their previous experiences with annotations and use the strategy when they find it helpful to either unpack a challenging section of a text, or to prepare thoughts to share in class discussions.

Another way I work to invest students in the value of annotations is to highlight examples of interesting annotations early in the year. For example, I look for students who are showing their

sense making in their annotations, or demonstrating the use of strategies that I hope other students will use, or showing evidence of sourcing, corroboration, contextualization or other historical practices, and I ask them if I can put their paper on the document camera to show everyone how their annotations support them in the inquiry. Basically, I highlight any kind of thinking that I hope students will imitate. Sometimes I do this specifically just to boost the confidence of a struggling reader to send a message that I value the work they are doing to make sense of difficult text and that it is worth sharing with others. Other times I do this when I want to reinforce specific historical practices such as attending to the source information of a text. When I'm doing think-alouds, I am always strategic in planning to model annotations on the document camera, hoping that students will imitate what they see me do there. I have noticed changes in students' annotations based on what I have modeled. At the very beginning of the year I may intentionally focus my annotations more on making sense of the text, such as defining words or summarizing a difficult part. As the year progresses, I strategically model annotations that represent important historical ways of thinking, such as circling the date of the document and writing my thoughts about how the date might impact the author's interpretation of the event, or highlighting information in one text and noting how it corroborates with information in another text we read.

Later in the year, I may occasionally give students tasks in which the annotations are graded using an annotations rubric that emphasizes showing meaning making and historical thinking. For example, after teaching students about sourcing, I may give a kind of assessment in which I tell students that I will be giving them a grade for showing the thinking they are doing about sourcing the document through their annotations. I encourage students to show as much thinking as possible to demonstrate how they source a text. When I do this, I encourage students to use their own style, and never try to standardize the process (i.e. "Write a question mark next to words you don't understand.") because I want them to think of their own annotation style as very personal.

In general, though, I avoid mandating annotations or making it punitive if students don't annotate. Instead, I encourage the use of the strategy by praising and highlighting students' attempts to use it.

Reading for multiple purposes

I like to give students lots of different "entry points" into the daily close reading sessions, so I offer various purposes for reading. This is a kind of built-in differentiation for everyone, because students who struggle with the reading may find it only possible to attend to one purpose (which may just be decoding words or phrases) while more proficient readers may find that they can simultaneously read for a variety of purposes. When I introduce students to a new text, I then share some possible purposes for which students may read. For example, on a given day I may say, "Today, as you are reading, be prepared to share with your partner or with our group anything at all about your experience with this text. You might notice something that helps you answer one of our essential questions, or you might find an answer to one of the questions on our questions chart. You might find yourself asking a new question, which would be great to share with the class, too, so we can add it to our list of questions." As I'm listing these purposes, I move around the room and point to the various charts and spaces on the board for notetaking for each of these purposes, so that students have a visual reminder of the purposes as they read. (I

try to keep these locations in the room as consistent as possible, so students connect that space with that purpose.) When I first started engaging students in close reading for multiple purposes, I was skeptical, thinking that they would be overwhelmed. But in fact, I've been astounded at how many purposes students can track simultaneously.

When we read for multiple purposes, I try to maintain a balance between allowing students to guide the discussion with their own authentic reading experiences, and also making sure that the discussion continues moving in a direction that achieves the day's objective. If discussions start focusing on tangents, I need to be prepared to gently redirect students by reminding them of our primary purposes for the day's lesson. For instance, if students ask a question that isn't necessarily "answerable" from information in the text we are reading (i.e. xx), I guide students in determining whether there is evidence in this text or other texts we've read so far to answer the question. If there isn't, I usually write the question on the History Questions Chart and advise students to look out for information to answer it in the texts we encounter moving forward. I have found this approach serves to honor students' questions and motivate them to read further, while at the same time it reinforces the historical practice of relying on textual evidence to construct claims rather than making conjectures based on lack of information).

Although I try to be flexible enough to let the reading experience feel "owned" by students. I am very intentional about the purposes I introduce for each lesson. I think long-term about the kind of thinking I want to see students doing while reading, and I plan to move them toward that. For example, at the beginning of the year I might focus more on reading strategies to get students comfortable with making their thinking visible, but at the end of the year we rarely mention general reading strategies and focus more on historical thinking. Also, the purposes for reading might be dictated by the affordances of a text. When I closely read the text in preparation for instruction, I think about what students might struggle with in a text or what opportunities for historical thinking it presents, and I design the purposes to elicit that thinking. For instance, when we read Mrs. O'Leary's testimony in the Chicago Fire unit, the text affords consideration of how the source information shapes our interpretation of the document. The text is a testimony from the primary suspect under oath who was an Irish woman during a time period of anti-Irish immigrant sentiment in the U.S. Thus, I make sure to focus on sourcing and contextualizing as primary purposes for closely reading that particular source (in addition to other relevant purposes, such as answering the essential question).

Whole Group Inquiry Discussions

I try to make discussion a regular part of every day instead of a special event that happens infrequently. Discussions usually occur within the close reading annotation cycle, where students have regular opportunities to first read silently and independently for a short time and then discuss their historical sense-making process with a partner and then whole group (see "Close Reading Cycle" section).

Before instruction and throughout the year, I look for opportunities to celebrate and highlight student contributions to discussions that are exemplars of respectful behavior, risk-taking, initiative, out-of-the-box thinking, etc. (Any attitude or behavior that I want to see, I look for students to do this and make a big deal out of it when it happens!) Conversely, I stay on the

lookout for students who seem hesitant or anxious about participating in discussions to provide extra support and encouragement, and praise them liberally and publicly when they take risks!

While planning beginning of year lessons (introducing routines, procedures, etc.) I am mindful and intentional about also planning community building/bonding experiences that will give students opportunities to take small risks and develop a beginning level of trust in the learning community. I lead students in conversation about what builds trust and what breaks down trust in groups, and the ideas generated in that conversation become the key components of co-constructed classroom norms that we post in the classroom for the rest of the year to establish norms and expectations for speaking and listening in class. Just because we establish these norms early on, doesn't mean that students grasp them or consistently follow them. They need lots of opportunities to practice and evaluate their own progress toward maintaining these norms and expectations. In these discussions of norms, I look for opportunities to normalize struggle and make it okay to not know something or to share an idea in discussion that later turns out to be unfounded. I have to explicitly communicate to students that we are striving to have conversations that center on grappling, rather than clear-cut correct answers, and then model in my facilitation of discussion that I value that kind of communication.

To reinforce the historical practice of basing interpretations on evidence within and across sources, I use prompts in discussions that probe for evidence and reasoning (i.e. "what in the text makes you say that?"), but I also talk explicitly with students about the goal that they will eventually prompt each other for evidence and reasoning. I teach and model ways that students can probe for evidence and reasoning, and allow opportunities for them to do this. For example, if a student makes a statement without providing evidence, instead of saying, "How did you know that?" I would say, "Would anyone like to respond to Javier's statement?" to allow students to notice that he hasn't provided evidence and challenge him to do so.

I introduce routine sentence stems for how to respond to classmate (i.e. "I would like to respond to what ___ said about ___."). I teach and model each. I give students opportunities to practice and engage in conversation about the utility (and limits) of each. I also introduce students to supportive structures and routines in the classroom that will be consistent daily. For example, I let students know that whenever they discuss, I will keep a visual record of the points raised in discussion on a certain spot on the board. During whole group discussions, I find that keeping a visual record of discussion on the white board as students talk supports students in following the key points of the discussion. When I'm introducing the purposes for reading, I create designated spaces on the whiteboard for each purpose, and when students share-out in whole group, I try to capture the key ideas in phrases on the whiteboard. This supports students who may not hear their classmates, or it may help students gain deeper understanding by reading the words while also hearing them spoken aloud. It helps us all to track what has been said and what has not yet been said in a discussion. We often review what has been recorded to make collective conclusions about what ideas are more likely, what ideas have the most evidential support, etc. We may look over the arguments listed on the board and cross out claims that are not supported by evidence and reasoning and circle the claims that are still in the running to discuss further. For example, in the WWI unit, for each text we read, we determined what claim that text was making about why the U.S. entered WWI. I recorded students' ideas on the board as they emerged during discussion. We continually referred to the list, crossing off ideas that did not make sense or did

not come from the specific text we were examining at the time. We used the list to draw a collective conclusion about each text's causal claim and then to compare the claims across texts, discussing why the claims differed. Having a visual representation of students' ideas served multiple purposes, such as allowing students to scrutinize each other's ideas and to compare claims across sources.

Throughout unit and lesson planning, I plan explicitly not only for the content, but also for the student talk that will take place in that lesson/unit (What supports will be needed? What should be taught/modeled? Etc.). When planning specific lessons, I read the text carefully with the same purposes for which students will read it, and I think about what the text affords in terms of discussion. Based on this analysis, I post questions and sentence stems specific to that day's lesson to support students in more productive discussions. For example, in a lesson in which students are reading a primary source from the Lakota-U.S. Government conflict over the Black Hills, I remind students to read with the purpose of answering the essential question: What were the causes of the conflict? To support students in looking for and using textual evidence relevant to the overarching inquiry while they are reading and during small and whole group discussion, I post the following question on the board: According to this source, the cause of the conflict between the U.S. Government and the Lakota was _____. I continually remind students to use this sentence stem to keep students focused on the main purpose, to encourage them to use text evidence, to prompt students to draw conclusions if there are several ideas out on the table, etc. I also often use a simple claim/evidence t-chart under the question to encourage students to cite and keep track of evidence for their claim. I find that if I provide a space for the evidence that supports the claim, students are more likely to share their supporting evidence when they share a claim in discussion. Regarding questions and sentence stem supports during close reading, I have found that it is helpful whenever possible to keep these supports in a specific spot in the classroom where students know they can always look for support as needed. I teach/model these stems when I'm introducing the purposes for reading, and give students opportunities to practice using them.

I welcome opportunities to have discussions based on student inquiries so that it moves beyond the teacher asking questions. When new questions come up, I try to allow space and time for students to pursue their own interests in discussions. (i.e. see "Student Generated Questions Chart" section that explains how students track their progress toward answering student-generated questions in addition to the essential questions.)

I provide a set of group goals that the class will work on together. I teach and model each goal, giving students opportunities to practice and talk about what we are doing well, what we still need to work on. I ask students to interpret the goals at the beginning of the year and keep returning to their understanding of the goals throughout the year (and how they are relevant to the tasks you are doing). Later on, I make opportunities to build in self-assessment in addition to teacher formative assessment (i.e. through rubrics). I periodically audio record students in whole group discussion and track their progress toward the discussion goals using a discourse tracker. I report results to students in percentages (i.e. 42% of the time when students spoke in this discussion, they provided evidence without prompting from the teacher). From these results, I ask students to choose one of the goals as a group goal. For this, we choose one component of discussion that we think that we need to focus on because improving it would improve the

overall quality of our discussions. This component of our discussions then becomes the content of upcoming mini-lessons. In addition to a group goal, I also ask each student to choose an individual personal goal for how they will support the group toward meeting all goals. This is important because sometimes individual students need to change their individual discussion habits to improve the overall discussion (i.e. not interrupting, speaking more often, speaking less often). Students need to think both about how we work together as a group and how each individual impacts the outcomes of discussions. When we audio record discussions, I always encourage students to celebrate successes and to continue to talk about how we can improve. We revisit group and individual goals and revise as needed. These audio check-ins are not punitive or intimidating (not treated as a “gotcha”) and they are not entered in the gradebook in any way. The purpose is to give informal feedback on progress. I prefer to think about and talk about discussion as a means to the end (which is the exit ticket) and not the end in itself. As I observe student discussions, I keep watching for problems or concerning trends. As needed, I design mini-lessons to teach/model and practice attitudes and behaviors that I want to see in discussions. Sometimes I share my own thinking process as a teacher with students, especially related to my role as facilitator of discussions. I sometimes set my own personal goal as facilitator and share it with students. For example, last year I made a goal that I would rephrase students’ comments less often to encourage students to listen to one another more carefully and ask each other to repeat their statements or ask for clarification when necessary.

Rolling out sourcing

One of the first things that I do, before I even start mentioning sourcing, is to make a habit of briefly sourcing documents when I do think-aloud models in class. Students start to notice that I have a practice of routinely noticing the author, date, and other important source information for a document before I launch into a close reading of the content. Often, students will start to imitate this practice before I even explicitly teach it, just because I am modeling it. Once I begin to teach sourcing explicitly, I can build on the many times students have seen me do this without realizing that it was sourcing. Usually, by the time I formally introduce sourcing to students, I tell them it is something they are already doing.

In one of the first lessons in which I have students engage in a sourcing task, I ask students to preview a source and to determine: Who wrote this? When was it written? What type of source is this? I’ll say “look over each page, look at the pictures and captions, notice things that jump out at you, and notice things you think might be important.” I’ll also say “we’re going to read this more closely later, so this is a first pass like skimming the source.” I try to make sure discussion is focused on the three questions, but I also accept other things students notice. We address these questions by going through the close reading cycle (individual, pair share, whole group discussion), focusing on textual evidence and reasoning. We then closely read the text keeping these questions in mind to see if our answers need to be revised based on new evidence and reasoning. I introduce my 6th graders to this activity with a text in the Egypt unit called Hymn to the Nile. This text is a rich and engaging source to use because the source information is not very straightforward for 6th grade students to determine. Rather than that being frustrating, it actually gives students an opportunity to grapple with sourcing, making them more interested in figuring it out on their own (through my support). For example, the original author of the hymn is unknown, but there are names on the text to indicate the authors of the edited volume in which it is published. This confuses young students and they engage in debates about who the author is.

Also, there are two dates printed on the text, the date the book was published (1907) and one in the title of the Hymn that states “c 2100 BCE.” Students also recognize that the language of the text sounds “ancient” and reason it must have been written thousands of years before the book was published. Students challenge each other about which date makes more sense and eventually conclude that it is a primary source from BCE. Students even struggle to identify what type of source it is. Every year, for example, someone says, “It is a letter written by a person named ‘Hymn’ to a person named ‘Nile.’”

I guide students through discussion and close reading to eventually come to reasonable conclusions about this source. When we have determined our collective reasoning about the source, I ask, “How does knowing the author, the date, and the type of text help you to understand what you a reading?” I want students to internalize the idea that sourcing is not just a teacher-task that they do because they are told to do it, but that it helps them to gain a deeper understanding of what they are reading. I also want to reinforce that sourcing is not something we just do “before” reading a text but throughout the process of close reading a source.

As a routine part of previewing and closely reading each text after this introductory activity, I continue to have students answer the questions: Who wrote this? When was it written? What type of text is this? After engaging in this process a few times, I usually explicitly introduce the term “sourcing” and tell students they’ve already been doing it. I then model sourcing with a think aloud, reinforcing much of the same things we’ve been practicing, but really emphasizing that I’m not just identifying source information but how it will help me make sense of the source in relation to the historical context (such as noticing if the date important in relation to the event, noticing who the author is and why that’s important, etc.).

Later, I introduce the acronym SOAPSTone (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Tone) as a support while sourcing to introduce students to some specific types of details they should notice to gain a deeper sense of the source. I try to not use SOAPSTone as a rigid protocol that students must follow step-by-step, because then I find it actually deters close reading and students get too focused on finding each component. I make it a point not to spell out each letter of SOAPSTone so that students don’t think it is necessary to identify every component for each source. When I teach and model this support, I always try to show in my annotations and my thoughts that I notice these things when I encounter them in my reading, and emphasize how they help me make sense of the text.

After students have had some experience with sourcing, I like to have them generate a definition of the term – first individually, then as a table group, and then we share out to compile a group definition that is posted in the room. I think this is much more powerful and meaningful than if I give them a teacher-written definition or ask them to memorize a definition from the dictionary.

Over time, I move students to a point where I can say, “source the document,” and they know what to look for. One way I measure this is by giving an assessment in which I tell students that they will be graded on their annotations only (something I normally don’t do!) and then I tell them to show me all of their thinking related to sourcing the document in their annotations. I use an annotations rubric to grade this, but I also analyze their annotations closely to see what kinds of things they are noticing and how they are using those elements to make sense of the text. This

works best if the text is one that can easily be misunderstood if the reader doesn't closely attend to the sourcing information.

The ultimate end goal, of course, would be that students automatically source a new document without any instruction from me because they know that this will inform their historical sense-making as they continue in close reading.

Rolling out corroboration

Similar to sourcing, I do not immediately teach the term “corroboration” at the beginning of the year. Instead, I try to design text sets that include similar and different details between sources, and then look for moments early in the year when students naturally notice similarities and differences between texts. When students notice similar or different details in two texts, I try to probe reasoning with questions like, “When you notice that, what do you think?” or “How does it help you to notice when two texts tell similar or different details?”

One thing that I've found to be helpful in pushing students to naturally corroborate is to post dates on our class timeline. Especially when we are studying very ancient history, various sources will often cite different dates for events. For example, one source may say c. 3000 B.C. and another source may say 2800 B.C. By teaching students to notice dates and compare the dates in one source to dates they noticed in other sources, they will naturally notice and question when sources give discrepant information. Then I will probe reasoning by asking, “Why might it be that these two sources are telling us different dates? What does this help us to understand by noticing these different details?” It's not uncommon for students to say things like, “One of them must be lying,” so it is necessary to push them through discussion over time to arrive at the understanding that these differences occur because the sources are arriving at different conclusions based on what evidence they analyze and how they interpret it.

Later, after students have experienced corroboration naturally as it comes up in close reading experiences, I'll gauge when it is a good time to teach the term and make this the explicit focus of a few lessons. Usually I do this when the texts in the text set afford this because of the similarities and differences in accounts. Like I explained above about assessing sourcing, I sometimes ask students to independently read a new source and show in their annotations their thinking related to corroboration to see if students are noticing similar and different details while they are reading and what kind of thinking they do when they notice them.

After students have had some experience with corroboration, I have them generate a definition of the term – first individually, then as a table group, and then we share out to compile a group definition that is posted in the room. Similar to doing this with the term sourcing, I think this is much more powerful and meaningful than if I were to give them a teacher-written definition or ask them to memorize a definition from the dictionary.

Rolling out claims, evidence, reasoning

At the beginning of the year, I introduce students to the six history learning goals that are posted in the classroom. When they unpack learning goal #3, I tie this to the Big Goal I have set for them for the end of the year, which is to prepare, present, and defend an original historical argument. I show them that the components of learning goal #3 are all things that they will need

to be able to do independently in order to meet the Big Goal at the end of the school year. After that, whenever I teach or model a component of learning goal #3, I connect to the learning goal poster and the Big Goal poster.

I have found it helpful to roll out argumentation little by little, one component at a time. First, we start by making claims. When students make claims in class discussions, I invite the group to distinguish between claims that are based on evidence and claims that are not. I also encourage them to distinguish between claims that are more or less reasonable given the evidence available. We generate a list of criteria for a strong claim by reading several student claims and evaluating them. The list often includes things like: somebody could argue against it, it is stated clearly, it is concisely worded, it is based on evidence. We refer to this list throughout the year whenever students are constructing written arguments. At the end of the first unit (the Artifacts unit), I give a culminating assessment that requires students to make a claim that meets our established criteria for a strong claim based on two pieces of evidence. At this point, I expect every student to be able to do this, and if they cannot, I work with them one-on-one to make sure they can before moving on.

Next, I begin to focus more explicitly on evidence. In discussions I start pushing more for students to state the evidence to support the claims they make. I push for students to state their evidence base without prompting from the teacher and for classmates to notice and prompt for evidence when it is missing from discussions. I introduce a claim-evidence t-chart for students to use in their writing when organizing ideas to answer the essential question. I model my thinking when using this chart and encourage students to share their thinking.

As students become comfortable with the routine of making claims based on evidence and identifying/stating the evidence that supports their claims, I begin to explicitly focus more and more on reasoning. I can do this by asking, “How does this evidence support your claim?” I also look for opportunities to focus on reasoning when students make claims that are unreasonable. I can invite the group to discuss, “Is that a reasonable claim?” and guide them to distinguish more reasonable claims from less reasonable claims. I look for opportunities that present themselves in the text set to have a more explicit focus on reasoning.

Process for selecting and analyzing Ss writing samples as a group

One way I work to improve students’ historical writing is by choosing a few student writing samples to type and present to the group for evaluation using whatever rubric I use to grade it. When I choose these samples, I look for one that is an almost-perfect model of what I want to see (sometimes I write it myself if I can’t find a student example), and then I look for a few samples that exemplify problems that I notice in most or all of students’ writing. (When students read the problem samples, I want them to think, “That doesn’t sound right? What could I do instead?”) For example, if I want students to develop more authentic, natural language for writing arguments, I may choose a very well written argument and pair it with one that uses, “My claim is . . . My evidence is . . .” When students compare the two, they will most likely notice that they prefer the first and talk about why they prefer it. This can be used to generate criteria or even sometimes to create a template from the well written argument. We go through this process several times, focusing on different components/problems of their writing as they develop throughout the year.

Sources Historians Use chart

At the beginning of the year, one of the anchor charts I post in the room is labeled, “Sources Historians Use.” Each time we use a different type of source (i.e. artifacts, newspapers, letters, maps, etc.) we add it to the list. This list is important in helping students to construct a sense of how we know what happened in the past by analyzing different types of sources. I keep this posted throughout the year and it is helpful to refer to during discussions. For example, if we are reading a textbook excerpt about the Great Chicago Fire, I might say, “This textbook was written in 2006. None of the people who wrote this were alive when the fire happened. How do they know what happened, and how did they come up with the claims they present in this text?” If students are struggling to answer a question like this, sometimes all I have to do is point to the “Sources Historians Use” poster, and they arrive at the idea that historians (or textbook authors) analyzed sources and made interpretations based on evidence from those sources to construct an account of what happened.

History Word Wall

During each unit, I post a word wall for that unit. (i.e. “Egypt Word Wall”). When we encounter words in our reading that are significant for our inquiry, we add them to the word wall. I try to limit the words to the most significant, and the ones that students will most likely be presented with in other texts, so it doesn’t become a dumping ground for any word that someone doesn’t understand. For example, while we are reading about the environmental factors that influenced early settlers to live near the Nile River, students will encounter the words “fertilization” and “irrigation.” Some will struggle with the words, but others will be able to work them out and share their understanding through discussion. We add those words to the word wall because students will be encountering them again in later texts. But later, when reading another text, if a student struggles with a word like “mingles,” we’ll go through a similar process of figuring out the meaning, but I won’t add it to the word wall, because it isn’t essential to our inquiry, and we won’t likely see it again in a text.

In general, I like students to learn vocabulary by encountering new words in authentic texts and figuring them out through group discussion. I tend to not assign isolated word lists or have students copy definitions from dictionaries, and trust that they will not only learn important words, but appropriate them into their own vocabularies (which I see more and more as the unit progresses), when they learn them in the context of an authentic inquiry with a rich text.

Student Generated History Questions Chart

At the beginning of each new module, I introduce a blank poster labeled, “Our Questions about _____” (i.e. “Our Questions about Ancient Egypt”). When we are closely reading sources in class, I encourage students to share any part of their reading experience, including questions that come to their minds as they read about the historical context. When students share questions, we add them to the chart, and I encourage the class to notice if we ever find answers to any of these questions. In addition to the overarching essential questions I introduce for each module, these questions often become an important part of our inquiry. For example, xx. Students become very invested in finding answers, not only to our essential questions, but also to the questions that they and their classmates generated while reading.

Mini-discussion/inquiry based on Student Questions

Sometimes a student will ask an important question during during small or whole group discussion from closely reading a source. At times I will make room on the spot for jointly addressing that question during whole group discussion. I usually make a mini-activity out of a student's question by writing the question on the board and asking students to keep it in mind as they continue their reading and discussions. I like to do this because it places a high value on students' questions, and my students tend to be more invested in finding answers to questions that are developed from their own inquiries. I lean toward focusing on a student-generated question during discussion if I know that the text affords opportunities for students to answer that question in various ways through closer reading and interpreting, or if the question elicits some kind of historical thinking and I want to capitalize on the opportunity for students to engage in that thinking authentically. I might also choose to do this if I am getting a sense that the question represents a mental stumbling block for a lot of students. This is why it is important for me to have thoroughly read the text myself with the lesson's purpose in mind before teaching the lesson so that I can make decisions about how productive it would be to spend time on questions and ideas that spontaneously emerge during our talk. If I am unsure in the moment, I sometimes table the question and resurface it in a subsequent lesson after I've had time to determine the utility of spending an ample amount of class time addressing it.

I will share an example of this type of scaffold from a lesson on the primary source "Hymn to the Nile" from the Ancient Egypt module. When students were reading this text, one student struggled with the line, "When he arises earth rejoices and all men are glad," and wondered to whom the pronoun "he" referred. I asked students to respond to his question, and students raised several responses that were all based on evidence from the text, but some were more reasonable than others. I made a decision, in the moment, to add the question, "Who is "he"?" to the board and to list the various student responses. I then invited students, as they continued reading, to continue thinking about which answer made the most sense in the context of "Hymn to the Nile."

Source files

I encourage students to keep all of their texts/sources with their original annotations in a source file that we keep in the classroom. When students are reading new sources, they have their source file nearby on their desks. This is strategic because it encourages students to corroborate details they see in sources. When a student reads something and thinks, "I remember reading something similar to this in another source," I want to encourage him/her to check the other source and corroborate details. When I notice students doing this, I praise them for good thinking to encourage others to imitate it. The source files are useful at the end of the unit when we are completing a culminating task, because I want students to base their final essays on all of the sources.

Exit tickets

I regularly use exit tickets to measure student mastery of the daily objective. In my planning, I think, "What skill/strategy/content do I want students to learn in this lesson?" Then I design a question or task that will measure whether or not students have learned what I want them to learn. This will be the exit ticket for the lesson. After I design the exit ticket, I move on to think, "What do I need to teach/model in order for students to answer this question or complete this

task? What kind of learning experience will students need to be able to do this?" Answering this question informs my planning for the mini-lesson, think-aloud, and activities in the lesson.

I find it helpful to preview the exit ticket at the beginning of the lesson so students know exactly how their learning will be measured. At the beginning of the lesson, when I'm introducing the objective and sharing the purposes for reading, I post the exit ticket question/prompt, and say, "While we are reading and discussing today, keep in the back of your mind that this is what you need to do at the end of class to show what you've learned." During discussions, if students address the exit ticket question, we make notes on the board. (I usually make a point of erasing those notes related to the exit ticket right before students write, but sometimes I leave it, if I think they will need the support.)

Sometimes I like to ask the same question at the beginning and end of a lesson to see how student thinking changes as a result of the learning experience. For example, in the first lesson in the artifact unit, I ask students to do a quick write at the beginning of class to answer the question, "What is an artifact?" At the end of the lesson, I ask them to write again about the same question, and add the prompt, "Reread what you wrote at the beginning of class. Has your thinking changed at all? If so, explain how your thinking has changed."

Sometimes I use group discussion as an exit ticket assessment in place of an individual written exit ticket. When I do this, I emphasize that students must work together to generate answers to the question through discussion. I give students a group grade based on the audio recording of the discussion (percentage of the time they are meeting goals) as well as the record of the points made in discussion on board. The grade is partly determined by their participation in discussion but also partly the content of their collaborative answers to the question.