

Grade 6

Ancient Civilizations

Coursebook



Oak Meadow

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Lesson

1

The Stone Age

Reading

Read “The Stone Age” (found in Reading Selections below).

Assignments

1. Draw a large map of the outline of the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe on a large piece of poster paper. Use a world map as a reference and try to draw continents accurately and to scale. Do not add any countries yet. You will be adding to this map all year, so you should use a very large piece of paper. Make your continents big enough that you have space to add in the countries later. You can put the North and South American continents on this map, or you can create a separate map for them (in lesson 30).

Include the following on your map (each should be labeled):

- A compass rose showing the four directions (north, south, east, west)
- Major bodies of water
- The equator

Keep this map. You will be adding to it throughout the year.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Read “The Stone Age.”
- ☐ Begin creating a world map.
- ☐ Write about a topic related to life in the Stone Age.
- ☐ Draw a representation of prehistoric art.
- ☐ Choose a project to complete.
- ☐ Activity: Stone Age Art and Tools

MATERIALS

- ☐ World Map
 - large paper or poster board
 - colored pencils
 - world map or atlas
- ☐ Activity: Stone Age Art and Tools
 - Option A: Cave Painting**
 - flat rock or plywood, glue, and sand
 - paints or natural materials to make paint
 - Option B: Stone Tools**
 - stone
 - stick or bone
 - leather
 - Option C: Clay Figurine**
 - clay

2. Choose one of the following topics and write one page:
 - a. In what ways do you think fire was important to the Stone Age people? What do you think they used it for? What kinds of changes in their lives might have occurred after they learned to use fire?
 - b. Find out three animals that were alive at the same time as the Stone Age people. Think about the ways in which people may have used the different parts of each animal. Give specific examples and add illustrations if you'd like to.
 - c. Explore your neighborhood and look for food that you think a Stone Age person might eat in your area today. (Remember, list only foods that would be naturally found in the environment.) Write a report describing the foods and why they might be edible or appealing to eat. If you like, make a colorful illustration of the nuts, berries, leaves, fruits, and roots you find.
3. Go to the library or search online to look at pictures of early cave paintings and carvings. Draw a picture showing an accurate representation of one or more. Label it with where the original was found and any other information known about it.
4. Do one of the following projects this week:
 - a. Write a diary about one week in the life of a cave man, woman, or child. Write it in the first person, with yourself as the central character.
 - b. Pretend you are going on an archaeological assignment. You are about to excavate one of the early caves used by primitive humans. Write a newspaper article describing your findings. Be sure to include information about the tools you find, the floor plan of the cave, paintings on the walls, and various other artifacts you might find. You will need to look in the encyclopedia or other resource book to find more information about caves and archaeological finds of early humans to help you write this article.
 - c. Pretend you are mysteriously transported back in time to the Stone Age, where you meet a cave man, woman, or child. List ten questions you would like to ask this person. What would you like to know about the world of the past? After listing your questions, write a dialogue between you and the Stone Age person in which they answer your questions and discuss what prehistoric life is like.

Activity

Stone Age Art and Tools

Choose **one** of the following activities to complete:

- a. Cave Painting. Do your own original cave painting. You can use either a large, flat piece of rock or a piece of plywood. To make a plywood "cave painting," paint a piece of plywood with glue and cover it with a layer of sand. Let it dry thoroughly, and paint your picture on the board. Another method is to mix sand directly into the paint. If you want, you can make your own

paints by boiling down walnuts, beets, onion skins, and other plants. You might want to make a paintbrush using dried grass, a stick, or other natural materials.

- b. **Stone Tools.** Make a stone tool or weapon. Use a thick heavy stick (or bone) and leather strings to make it functional. Make your tool using only materials that a prehistoric human would have had.
- c. **Clay Figurine.** Make a clay figure of an animal or person such as the people of the Stone Age might have made.

Further Study

In the appendix of this coursebook, you will find an extensive list of books related to your studies this year. (Students who are taking the Oak Meadow English course will find the books on this list included in each related lesson in the English coursebook.) If you find any topic especially interesting, you are encouraged to read one or more books on the subject, choosing from this list or browsing through selections in your local library or bookstore.

Here are some extra project choices if you are interested in learning more about the Stone Age:

- There are several kinds of early humanoids. See if you can find out about some of them. One such early human skeleton has been named “Lucy.” What new information has been gained from studying Lucy? Why was this skeleton a significant find?
- Learn about early farmers and grains that are now considered heirloom grains.
- A technique called carbon dating is often used to find out how old fossils and other artifacts are. Find out what this is and learn about other archaeological dating techniques as well.
- There are several methods that can be used to make fire using Stone Age materials. Find out about some of them. With adult supervision, try making fire on your own.
- Read books on wild food gathering, and prepare a meal from wild food.

Reading Selections

The Stone Age

Nobody knows for sure how long humans have walked upon Earth. There are many different beliefs and scientific theories about it. Creation stories and religions through the ages and around the world all have something to say about the beginning of Earth and the plants, animals, and people who live here. Some people believe that humans and other living creatures were created exactly as they are today, while others believe they have evolved and changed over millions of years.



Many scientists believe that humans and apes had a common ancestor far in the past, perhaps 15 to 20 million years ago. Fossils of skulls and bones have been discovered in East Africa, India, and Europe that are thought to be from humanlike creatures that lived 14 million years ago. Other fossils have been found from creatures who apparently lived anywhere from 1.3 million years to 5.5 million years in the past. The fossils of a humanlike creature that scientists call Neanderthal Man were found in Eurasia and Africa. These fossils are thought to be about 100,000 years old, and some scientists think Neanderthal Man is a direct ancestor of modern humans. Others believe that Neanderthal Man died out and that modern humans are descended from a smaller,

more upright creature who lived over a million years ago in Europe, Africa, and China. There are plenty of opinions, but we just don't know for sure one way or the other. One thing scientists and historians do know is that humans lived on Earth over 100,000 years ago in a time we now call the Stone Age.



Tools for Survival

In the Stone Age, these long-ago men and women created and used tools made of stone. This was an important development for them because stone lasted much longer than either wood or bone, and their ability to use stone made their lives easier. Stone tools were used for many tasks, including digging for food, hunting and butchering animals, scraping and piercing animal skins for clothing, and chopping wood.

If you ever try to make a sharp-edged tool out of stone, using only another stone as your tool for making it, you will find that it is not an easy task. To do it well takes a lot of planning, thinking, experience, and skill. This is how we know that people, and not some other animal, made the ancient stone tools that archaeologists have found.

One kind of stone that was commonly used was flint. Flint is very useful for making sharp edges, as it has a way of chipping off in thin flakes when it is hit with another stone. In this way a sharp ax, knife, or spearhead can be fashioned.

Early Stone Age people had to keep their focus on survival, and so they spent much of their time hunting, gathering edible plants, and making tools. Because they depended on their immediate environment to provide food for them, they had to move frequently to follow animal herds and find new sources of nourishing plants. This meant they didn't build homes and settle down. They often lived in caves and wandered from one to another as necessary. Caves gave them a safe place to raise children, gave protection from weather and wild animals, and was a place to store food. Areas inside the cave were hollowed out to keep food safe from animals. At night or during storms, people rolled huge stones across the opening of the cave for even more protection. If, during their travels for food, they couldn't find shelter, they had to live outside in the elements.



Weapons the cave men had included stone axes, spears, bolas (stones bound on the end of a leather string and then bound together at the other end), and later bows and arrows. Such weapons were used for hunting. However, there is some evidence from fossils that Stone Age people may have killed each other on occasion, perhaps for hunting and other territorial reasons.



Stone Age people, or cavemen, as they're sometimes called, also depended on animals for clothing and other materials. Their clothes were made of animal skins, and even though many of their tools were made of stone, they used bone implements as well.

Another important development for the people living in the Stone Age was the discovery that they could make and use fire. Although we do not know exactly how they made it themselves, we know from studying other cultures around the world that fire can be made by rubbing two sticks together vigorously or striking certain rocks together.

Art in the Stone Age

Paintings have been found on cave walls dating back about 30,000 years. The first discovery was in Spain and showed bison, animals long extinct in Spain, in beautiful colors and expressive detail. More have been found in other parts of Europe, and there have been several exciting finds of cave paintings in recent years. Most paintings show animals. Paintings of a mammoth and a woolly rhinoceros have been found in France. These early painters used pigments they found in soil to make their colors. These pigments were probably then ground up, made to bind with raw egg or another substance, and then applied to the wall with fingers or animal-hair brushes. Sometimes the outline of the animal would be carved first into the wall.



Other common forms of art from the Stone Age were small sculptures made of bone and stone depicting animals and human figures. Sometimes carvings of figures were made directly onto a piece of stone or on a cave wall.

Some people believe that Stone Age art shows the beginnings of religious beliefs. Most paintings are of animals, which we know people were very dependent upon for survival. However, a few paintings have been discovered that indicate early humans had an idea of a world of spirits. One shows a man

dressed as a bison wearing hooves and a mask. Another painting in Lascaux, France, shows a hunting scene in which one of the hunters of a dying bison lies dead, wearing a bird mask. This suggests that there was a sense of reverence and respect for animals. Some scientists believe that Stone Age people dressed up in animal skins and masks and acted out or danced the stories of their hunting adventures. Furthermore, most of the carved figures of humans show women who are faceless and very round, as if pregnant. Life or nature may have been viewed as a mysterious and motherly figure.

After thousands of years, Stone Age people learned to grow their own food, and this was the start of what is called the Agricultural Revolution. It was a revolution because it was a completely new way of getting food, and it changed the way of life for early humans. Now they became farmers and tamed wild animals to help them with their work and to provide an easier way to get food. They didn't have to keep moving to find food, so they stayed in one place and began to build homes for themselves. They built their homes near rivers, so they could use the water for daily needs such as drinking, cooking, washing, and irrigating their crops when there wasn't enough rain.

It is believed that language was first developed during the Agricultural Revolution as well. In order for people to cooperate together and plan crops according to the seasons, a sense of time was necessary,



and this required finding words for concepts, rather than just for objects or immediate commands and warnings.

No one knows for sure when human “civilization” began. Usually we think of civilization as being any human activity that distinguishes us from animals. Creating art, an appreciation for nature, a concept of the spirit world, cultivating the earth, herding animals, and having a common language may be examples of human activity that are considered civilized. If so, then the Stone Age gave us the roots from which the rest of civilization sprang.

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

You will be sending a sample of work from this lesson to your Oak Meadow teacher at the end of lesson 2. In the meantime, feel free to contact your teacher if you have any questions about the assignments or the learning process. You can use your assignment summary checklist, weekly planner, and the learning assessment form to keep track of your student’s progress. You will be sending this documentation to your teacher every two weeks (with each submission of student work).

Learning Assessment

These assessment rubrics are intended to help track student progress throughout the year. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time. Parents and teachers can use this space to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or the skills that need work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of prehistoric human culture				
Demonstrates knowledge of Stone Age tools and art				
Draws a map to scale with detail, color, and labels				

Lesson

2

Ancient Mesopotamia

Reading

Read “Ancient Mesopotamia” (found in Reading Selections below).

Assignments

1. Add the Fertile Crescent to your map and name it. Make sure to include the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Use color to make your map more interesting. Make sure your labels are clear (both legible and clearly attached to a particular feature of your map).
2. Draw a picture or build a model of a ziggurat. Look at a variety of pictures first to get a good sense of how they were built.
3. How do you feel about Hammurabi’s code of laws? How do you think it would be received in your town today? Do you think you could live with it? Write at least one full paragraph. Follow the rules for paragraph writing (topic sentence, supporting details, concluding sentence, complete sentences, correct punctuation, etc.).

When you have completed your writing, choose one statement from Hammurabi’s Code and draw or paint it to accompany your paragraph. Make a border for it and illustrate it.

4. Choose **one** of the following projects.
 - a. The Babylonians wrote on clay tablets. Make a list of some of the ways in which we use paper today, and then describe how our culture would be different if we had to use clay tablets instead of paper. Think of as many examples as you can.
 - b. Research the Sumerians and find examples of their accomplishments. List and describe what you discover.
 - c. Find out more about the city of Ur and why it was an important discovery. Give specific examples in your discussion.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Read “Ancient Mesopotamia.”
- ☐ Add to your world map.
- ☐ Draw or build a model of a ziggurat.
- ☐ Write about Hammurabi’s code of laws.
- ☐ Choose a project about ancient Mesopotamia.
- ☐ Activity: Life in Ancient Babylon

MATERIALS

- ☐ Activity: Life in Ancient Babylon
- clay or paint (optional)

Activity

Life in Ancient Babylon

Choose **one** of the following projects.

- a. **Personal Trademark.** Design a trademark that has meaning to you. Carve this design into clay and let it dry to make a seal. Ink it and try printing with it. You can also try melting wax from a candle and pressing your seal into it.
- b. **Cuneiform Writing.** Make up a series of word pictures using wedge-shaped characters. Write a message (at least one paragraph long) describing some aspect of how people live today. Include a translation of your message. You might want to give your code key to someone and see if they can translate your message.
- c. **Measuring System.** Make up a system of weights and measures that might be used by Sumerians. List what each weight or measure equals within the system. Make up a picture character for each weight and measure and create several equations using them.
- d. **Moon Calendar.** Create a calendar showing the eight phases of the moon in a circle on a single sheet of paper. Beside the full moon image, write down the dates of the full moon for this year. (You may also want to record the dates for the new moon.) Illustrate the borders of the calendar beautifully.
- e. **Hanging Gardens.** Draw or paint a beautiful, colorful picture of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon as you imagine them.
- f. **Clay Writing.** Make a clay tablet and write a short letter of importance to someone on it. Let it dry and deliver it.

Further Study

Here are some extra projects you might like to do:

- Explore bas-relief art of Mesopotamia.
- Explore Babylonian astrology. Beautifully illustrate the entire zodiac and learn about some of the Babylonian myths behind the constellations.
- Find a children's version of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* in your local library or other resource. This is the most well-known ancient myth from Mesopotamia.
- Find out about some of the Babylonian gods, such as Ishtar, Marduk, and Adad, and the myths about them.
- Make a coil clay pot and/or weave a basket, using found materials, such as vines, reeds, or straw.
- Explore hammered art and Bronze Age jewelry. Get a flat piece of copper at an art store and create your own art piece or adornment.
- Do some cooking using barley, one of the first grains cultivated.

Reading Selections

Ancient Mesopotamia

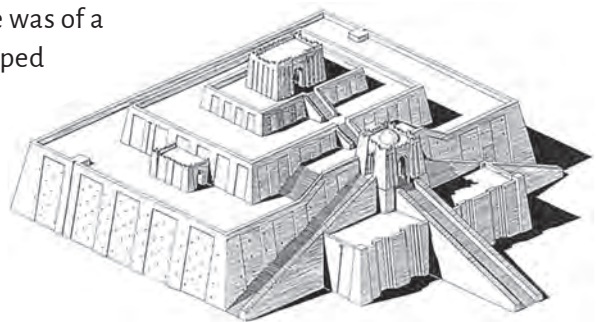
The world's first civilization began in an area called the Fertile Crescent. It's called this because the soil is very rich, and the land is shaped like a crescent moon. It stretches from the Persian Gulf to the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. The eastern part of the Fertile Crescent, which is between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, was called Mesopotamia (pronounced meh-so-po-TAY-me-uh), or "the land between the rivers." People known as the Sumerians lived there between 3500 and 2000 BCE. About 3500 BCE, they began to build the world's first cities and develop its first civilization. Later, another group of people known as the Babylonians lived along the Euphrates River. They conquered the Sumerian people and integrated into their own civilization many aspects of Sumerian art and culture.



On the arid Mesopotamian plains, the people became skillful at making use of the river waters. Working in teams, they dug canals and irrigation ditches to water their fields. They were farmers and raised cattle. Many were craftspeople. They lived and worked together as large families, tribes, or clans. Each clan had its own protecting god to whom the clansmen built a shrine. Eventually the shrine became a temple, and people built houses around the temple. Gradually what began as farming villages grew into towns and then into cities, each with its own ruler.

The temple was the center of all activity. The temple was of a peculiar design and was called a ziggurat. It was shaped like a pyramid and built up in a series of steps or terraces to a flat top.

There was a great city known as Ur. It was built by the Sumerians along the banks of the Euphrates River. The remains of the Sumerian city of Ur were found in 1927, buried in the sand. It is believed



that the reason the city stayed so well preserved for thousands of years was because the land was so arid. Many fascinating artifacts were discovered, as well as graves that were the tombs of kings. From these tombs and artifacts, we have learned that the Sumerians were skilled builders and artists.

We also learned that the Sumerians knew how to work copper, silver, and gold, and later made bronze by mixing together tin and copper. This was the beginning of what is called the Bronze Age of civilizations. Precious metals were



used to decorate and adorn everything, from clothing to buildings. Copper was also melted down and poured into a mold to make weapons, tools, and cooking utensils.

The Sumerians invented the wheel. At first it was invented to use as a pottery wheel, but then it was put to use for carts and wagons. Often people pulled the wheeled vehicles, but sometimes oxen were put to work. The plow, first pulled by humans and later by oxen, was also invented by the Sumerians.

Sumerian Culture

We have learned a lot about the lives of the Sumerians because they had an alphabet and knew how to write. They developed a system of writing that used word pictures, which evolved into a system of about 500 wedge-shaped characters called cuneiform. From deciphering and reading the cuneiform writing, archaeologists were able to find out about the lives of the Sumerians.

From cuneiform, we know that the Sumerians had three classes of people: the upper class, the middle class, and slaves. The upper class was made up of kings and nobles, priests, and people who owned a lot of land. The middle class included soldiers, farmers, and merchants. The slaves were the lowest of all.

Women were not regarded as equals in Mesopotamia. However, some women owned property and ran shops or inns. They were allowed to testify in court. Mesopotamian law protected wives from abuse and neglect and made sure they received some payment if they were divorced. On the other hand, a wife might be forced into slavery for a few years to pay back a debt her husband owed.

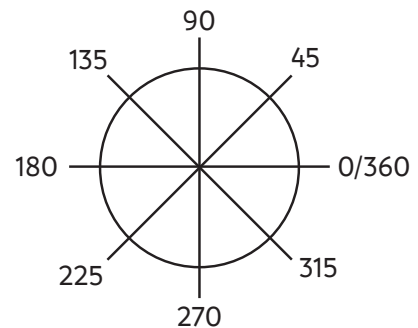
The Sumerians believed in many gods. Belief in many gods is called polytheism. Polytheism continued among the people living in Mesopotamia long after the Sumerians were conquered.



The people believed that the gods watched over them. They believed that the gods and demons caused natural disasters. People wore charms and did rituals to protect themselves from the wrath of the gods and demons. They also believed that the gods chose who was to be their king and handed down their decision through the temple.

The Sumerians studied mathematics and science. They invented the system of counting by tens and parts of ten, which we now call the decimal system. The Sumerians used fractions, too. They had a system of weights and measures: pounds, bushels, quarts, feet, and yards. They were able to measure large distances as well, such as the distance between villages.

The Sumerians and the other Mesopotamian peoples after them made important advances in astronomy. The Sumerians were the first to divide a circle into 360 parts, providing a system of measurement for angles. We still use this system today. The reason they invented these forms of measurement was so they could study the movements of the stars and planets. They observed the stars regularly and kept records of the changing positions of the planets. These are the first written records in astronomy.



Using their knowledge of astronomy, the Sumerians developed the 12-month calendar based upon the cycles of the moon. It was probably invented in order to keep track of religious festivals. They also kept track of days of labor in order to pay workmen.

The Sumerians often used a stamp or seal. A design was placed into soft clay and then dried, leaving a trademark, which could then be pressed or stamped into clay or wax to leave a unique mark. Every part of the design had a meaning.

Babylon's Great Kings

The Babylonians also lived along the Euphrates River. Their city of Babylon was settled about 2000 BCE, and is located in what is now Iraq. The Babylonians conquered the Sumerians and took over and continued much of their civilization.

One of the great kings of Babylon was Hammurabi (pronounced ham-ur-AH-bee). Hammurabi ruled for more than 40 years. He is the first known king to have a recorded code of laws, which are now known as "The Code of Hammurabi." There were nearly 300 laws, and they were based on the principle that the strong should not injure the weak. The laws were displayed in every town, so everyone would know about them.

Hammurabi's laws dealt with everything that affected the community, including religion, family relations, business, and crime. They included strong punishments for those found guilty of a crime. Sometimes a guilty person could pay a fine or become a slave, but sometimes he was put to death.

The following statements are adapted from Hammurabi's Code:

If a man stole an ox, a sheep, a pig, or a goat that belonged to the state, he shall repay 30 times its cost. If it belonged to a private citizen, he shall repay ten times its cost. If the thief does not have sufficient means to make repayment, he shall be put to death . . .

If a man was too lazy to make the dike of his field strong and a break has opened up in his dike and he has accordingly let the water ravage the farmland, the man in whose dike the break was opened shall make good the grain that he let get destroyed . . .

If a son has struck his father, they shall cut off his hand.

If a man has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye . . .

If a man has knocked out a tooth of a man of his own rank, they shall knock out his tooth.



Sometimes an argument between two people was so bitter and difficult that even a judge couldn't resolve it. In this case the accused person had to jump into the river to be judged by the river god. It was believed that if he was guilty, the river god would drown him. If the accused person survived the river, he was believed innocent, and the person who had accused him was the guilty one. The guilty accuser would then be put to death. If the one who was tested by the river god drowned, all his possessions were given to the person he had wronged.



Nebuchadnezzar was one of the great rulers of Babylon around 586 BCE. At that time, Babylon was a dazzling city. For example, Nebuchadnezzar had the Hanging Gardens of Babylon built to please his favorite wife in his harem, a Persian princess who was lonesome for the green hills of her native land. The Hanging Gardens could be seen far across the plains, rising like a green and flowery hillside in a part of the world where there were very few natural hills. The gardens were built up in terraces, stacked one on top of another, as high as 75 feet. The gardens did not actually hang, but were overhanging the terraces, like roof gardens we might see in a city today. Water from the Euphrates River was pumped to the top by shifts of slaves working around the clock. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon became known as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Nebuchadnezzar also had inscribed on most of the bricks of the city, "I am Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon." The bricks were glazed with blue, yellow, and white, and they were decorated with animals, birds, plants, and geometric designs. The center of the city of Babylon was the Processional Way, down which triumphant kings and armies would march to the roaring cheers of the crowds. The walls of the Processional Way were decorated with lions, a symbol for their most important goddess, Ishtar. The

main entrance to the city and the Processional Way was called the Ishtar Gate and was decorated in blue and yellow bricks with dragons and bulls to symbolize other gods.

Babylon lasted only a few decades after Nebuchadnezzar’s death, but that country left us a rich heri- tage. Babylonian mathematicians and astronomers named the constellations and the zodiac and made the first calculations of the motions of the stars and planets through the heavens. They also created a great literature of poetry, stories, laws, and philosophy.

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

At the end of this lesson, you will be sending the first batch of work to your Oak Meadow teacher along with your assignment summary checklist, the learning assessment forms, or any alternate form of doc- umentation. Include any additional notes about the lesson work or anything you’d like your teacher to know. Feel free to include questions with your documentation—your teacher is eager to help.

If you have any questions about what to send or how to send it, please refer to your parent handbook and your teacher’s welcome letter. Your teacher will respond to your submission of student work with detailed comments and individualized guidance. In the meantime, proceed to lesson 3 and continue your work.

Learning Assessment

These assessment rubrics are intended to help track student progress throughout the year. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time. Parents and teachers can use this space to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or skills that need work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of cuneiform and early systems of writing				
Compares historical culture to modern day				
Demonstrates knowledge of Sumerian and Babylonian cultures				
Identifies locations on a map				
Draws a map to scale with detail, color, and labels				



Hebrew History

Reading

Read “The Twelve Hebrew Tribes” (found in Reading Selections below).

Assignments

1. Choose two of the biblical proverbs below and think about what they mean. Write down your ideas. Have you seen these truths in your own life? Give specific examples.
 - a. “A wise man takes a command to heart; a foolish talker comes to grief.”
 - b. “A soft answer turns away anger, but a sharp word makes tempers hot.”
 - c. “Like a tooth decayed or a foot limping is a traitor relied on in the day of trouble.”
 - d. “A man who deceives another and then says, ‘It was only a joke,’ is like a madman shooting at random his deadly darts and arrows.”

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Read “The Twelve Hebrew Tribes.”
- ☐ Explain the meaning of two proverbs.
- ☐ Activity: Jewish Culture

Activity

Jewish Culture

Choose one of these projects to complete.

- a. Jewish Meal. Make a traditional Jewish meal. You may want to use traditional foods related to a specific holiday. Write a list of what you made.
- b. Symbols of Judaism. Learn about some of these symbols of Judaism: Star of David, the shofar, the kippah, the menorah, and the mezuzah. Draw pictures of each and explain their significance.
- c. Hebrew Alphabet. Look up the Hebrew alphabet at your library. Learn at least some of the characters and draw them beautifully. Learn to say some words in Hebrew and write them down. Hebrew is written from right to left.
- d. *The Ten Commandments* Movie. Watch the movie, *The Ten Commandments* (the 1956 version with Charlton Heston as Moses is excellent). Describe two of your favorite scenes and explain why you liked them.

Reading Selections

The Twelve Hebrew Tribes

The Hebrews wandered in the wilderness with Moses for 40 years. At last they came to the banks of the River Jordan in the southern area of Canaan. They lived there separately in 12 different tribes.

For quite some time, groups of people called the Sea Peoples had also been threatening and invading Canaan. One group of them migrated to the western region of Canaan. The Bible calls these people the Philistines. The Philistines struggled for 200 years to establish themselves there and named this land Palestine. During this time, the Hebrews and the Philistines lived side by side.

The 12 Hebrew tribes finally joined together with a man named Saul as their leader, and they successfully fought the Canaanites and the Philistines. From this war, they were able to establish the Kingdom of Israel in about 1020 BCE. Saul became the first king of Israel, and the Hebrews became known as the Israelites.



After Saul, King David ruled Israel from about 1000 to 972 BCE. The Old Testament tells us how David killed the Philistine giant, Goliath, with a single slingshot. He made Jerusalem the royal capital. Jerusalem became a powerful city, often called the City of David.

The new kingdom of Israel was often in danger of attack from those who wanted the land of Canaan for themselves, and the Israelites lived their lives accordingly. They lived in four-room houses built in rows next to each other to help form a barrier against attacks. Once settled, however, most Israelites became farmers, growing wheat, barley, fruits, and nuts.

King Solomon

When David died, his son Solomon ruled. The Hebrew kingdom reached its greatest height of power under King Solomon, who ruled from about 972 to 922 BCE. It was under Solomon that the Israelites began to grow rich. Solomon was good at keeping peace with other groups of people. He married an Egyptian princess, which may have furthered the good relations between the two groups.

Solomon brought many improvements to Jerusalem, but in order to do so, he had to demand taxes from the people. He kept an army for this purpose and also to keep control of the





trading routes through Israel. Through these taxes, Solomon was able to erect a great temple to God in Jerusalem. Inside the temple was the Ark of the Covenant, a box that contained the two tablets of stone showing the Ten Commandments believed to have been given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The Temple of Solomon became the center of religious life for the Hebrew people.

King Solomon wrote a collection of wise sayings that make up the Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament. Here are a few examples:

“A wise man takes a command to heart; a foolish talker comes to grief.” (Proverbs 10:8)

“A soft answer turns away anger, but a sharp word makes tempers hot.” (Proverbs 15:1)

“Like a tooth decayed or a foot limping is a traitor relied on in the day of trouble.” (Proverbs 25:19)

“A man who deceives another and then says, ‘It was only a joke,’ is like a madman shooting at random his deadly darts and arrows.” (Proverbs 26:18–19)

“If he digs a pit, he will fall into it, and if he rolls a stone, it will roll back upon him.” (Proverbs 26:27)



Israel was never a very wealthy nation, however, and the people began to resent paying taxes to Jerusalem. When Solomon died, the 12 Hebrew tribes divided the Hebrew kingdom. The northern Hebrews called their land Israel, and the southern Hebrews called their land, which included Jerusalem, Judah.

Israel was conquered in 722 BCE by the Assyrians (pronounced uh-SEER-ee-ans). The Assyrians were a warmongering people who came from the area of Mesopotamia in the upper Tigris River Valley. The Assyrians enslaved many of the Hebrews.

Judah was conquered in 586 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar (pronounced neh-boo-kad-NEZ-er), the ruler of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Solomon's Temple and captured several thousand Hebrews, who were sent to Babylon. When the Persians, an empire-building people originating in the area east of Mesopotamia, conquered Babylon in 538 BCE, they allowed the Hebrews to return home. The Hebrews now were called Jews, after the name of the southern kingdom of Judah, and their religion was now called Judaism. No matter where they live, all Jews now see themselves as one people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

One People, One God

The Hebrews greatly influenced world religions. You will remember that many civilizations believed in many gods, and the Hebrews were one of the first to believe in only one god. This belief in one god is called monotheism. Jews believe this God is all knowing and all powerful. They believe God has a high expectation for human ethics and behavior, but is also full of compassion and mercy.

Jews believe that the Hebrews are the "chosen people," with special duties and responsibilities. Their teachings say that God has assured them of love and protection. They feel that they are particularly accountable for their shortcomings because of this. Their beliefs are based upon the agreements described in the Old Testament between God and Abraham, and later with Moses, when the Ten Commandments were given.

Because Jews believe that people are made in the image of God, they feel that it is important to treat everyone well. Ethical and moral teachings are very important to them. Jews believe that they are to be a model for the rest of the world to follow and that their behavior will pave the way for a world savior to come. They believe that eventually this savior, or Messiah, will rule the entire world, and peace and justice will reign.

The Hebrew religion is recorded in the Torah. The Talmud is a collection of folklore and writings from Jewish history, combined with legal information. It is a guide for the laws of Judaism.

The story of the Exodus, when Israelites wanted to leave Egypt and the pharaoh's rule, tells of how ten plagues were visited upon the Egyptians when the pharaoh refused to let the Israelites free. These plagues were



terrible events that caused much suffering. The last of these was the death of all the first-born males in Egypt. This is the plague that finally convinced the pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. Following a message from God, the Israelites smeared the blood of a lamb on their doorposts to avoid the tenth plague that was sent to the pharaoh. Thus the Hebrews' houses were "passed over" and their first-born children were saved.

Jews still celebrate Passover today. This celebration takes the form of a special meal called a Seder. Particular foods are part of the meal because they symbolize both the difficulties and the miracles the Jews experienced during their 40 years of wandering on their way back to Canaan from Egypt. Prayer is also an important part of the Passover Seder.

Here are some of the symbols that are part of the Seder dinner:

- Candles (to commemorate the Holy Day)
- Betzah (roasted egg, a symbol of hope and new life)
- Z'roah (roasted lamb, to symbolize the Passover lamb)
- Three Matzos (flat, unleavened bread, symbolizing the bread the Israelites ate in the wilderness)
- Maror (horseradish or bitter herbs as a reminder of suffering)
- Salt water (another reminder of suffering)
- Haggadah (a Passover prayer book with prayers and songs)

There are two other important religious holidays that are associated with the Exodus from Egypt and the journey of the Israelites to the land of Canaan. One is Shabuot, which commemorates the giving of the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The other is Sukkot, a harvest festival when many Jews build small huts to remind themselves of the huts the Israelites lived in during their 40 years in the desert.

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

Please submit your student's work to your Oak Meadow teacher at the end of this lesson. Make sure all the assignments are completed (you can use the assignment checklist to help you organize your submission). Contact your teacher if you have any questions.

Learning Assessment

Use assessment rubrics to track student progress and to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or any skills that need work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of early Hebrew culture				
Demonstrates knowledge of early Hebrew history				
Shows empathetic awareness of challenges brought on by historical events				
Shows original thought in interpreting proverbs				
Accurately recounts historical events				
Draws a map to scale with detail, color, and labels				



Ancient Persia

Reading

Read "Ancient Persia" (found in Reading Selections below).

Assignments

1. On your world map, identify the location of ancient Persia before it became an empire. It lies east of the Fertile Crescent, on the plateau of Iran. Shade it in and label it.
2. Create a time line of the events you have learned about so far (listed below). Put pictures or symbols beside each historical time period to depict an important person, place, or thing of that time. Label the drawings as well as the time line. Use a large piece of paper so you have enough space to make this a work of art. Add color, and put an attractive border around the edge.
 - 3200 BCE: Sumerians settled in Mesopotamia
 - 2686–1090 BCE: Ancient Egyptian civilization
 - 1792 BCE: Hammurabi unites Mesopotamia
 - 1290 BCE: Hebrews' exodus from Egypt
 - 1200 BCE: Iron Age begins
 - 549 BCE: Persian Empire established
3. Think about King Darius's statement about truth and the ancient Persians' passion for truth. Do you feel that you live in a civilization that has a similar commitment to truth or not? Write one paragraph explaining your thoughts and providing specific examples to support your ideas.
4. Choose **one** of the following projects. You may need to take a trip to the library to gather information.
 - a. Draw a picture of the city of Persepolis, either as you see from pictures or as you imagine it.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Read "Ancient Persia."
- ☐ Add to your world map.
- ☐ Create a time line of historical events.
- ☐ Reflect on the role of truth in modern society.
- ☐ Choose a project about Ancient Persia.
- ☐ Activity: Paper Marbling

MATERIALS

- ☐ Activity: Paper Marbling
 - drawing paper
 - dishpan
 - oil-based paints
 - paint thinner
 - sticks
 - jars
 - newspapers

- b. Find a Persian or Iranian cookbook, and make a meal or dish for your family. Write down what you served and include a sentence or two about how you and others liked it.
- c. Look for pictures of ancient Persian rock reliefs and metal work. Notice the stylized appearance of the people. Draw a picture in this style of a person doing something.

Activity

Paper Marbling

Make marbled paper and use it to create a beautiful background or frame for a poem. You can use the poem you wrote for English, you can create a new poem, or you can copy a proverb or other saying that is meaningful to you.

Using your marbled paper (instructions below), cut a frame for your poem, or paste your poem onto the paper, leaving a wide border of marbled paper. You can then paste the whole thing onto a thin piece of cardboard to make it more sturdy. If you want to preserve it for a long time, put the poem, with its marbled frame, behind glass or into a picture frame to keep it safe.

You might want to make several pieces of marbled paper for other uses. They make lovely gifts, and you can marble envelopes along with sheets of writing paper to make sets of stationery.

Instructions for Marbling Paper

Marbling is a technique used for decorating paper. It is an old art that can be traced back to fifteenth-century Persia. The secret of “marbling” is that oil and water do not mix, so when you put oil-based paint in water, the paint floats on top, creating swirling patterns that then transfer onto anything that is dipped into the water.

To marble paper, you will need the following supplies:

- Drawing paper
- Dishpan (that you don't need for dishes again)
- Oil-based paints (the tubes of oil paint in art stores work well)
- Paint thinner
- Sticks for stirring
- Jars in which to mix colors
- Newspapers on which to let the marbled paper dry

Alternately, you can purchase a paper marbling kit through Oak Meadow or an art supply store.

1. To begin, half fill the dishpan with cold water.
2. Next, squeeze one of the oil-based paints into a jar. Add a small amount of paint thinner, and stir until the mixture is like cream.

3. Pour a few drops of this mixture into the water. It should float to the top and spread out. If it doesn't do this, you should add more paint thinner to the mixture.
4. Swirl the paint around with a stick. Then, gently lay a sheet of paper onto the surface of the water. Try to avoid letting any air bubbles form underneath the paper. Lift the paper up by the corners, and lay it face up on the newspaper to dry.
5. Once you have experimented with the process, vary the amount of thinner and try different combinations of colors. You can create many different kinds of colors and swirling patterns with just a few basic colors.

Further Study

Here are more ways to explore ancient Persian culture:

- Explore mosaic. What kinds of patterns and images did the ancient Persians make with mosaic? Draw a design onto a vase, coaster, piece of wood, tin can, etc. You could also buy a large plain-colored tile at a building supply store, and do your work on that. Glue tiny stones, beads, tiles, shells, glass, or other materials onto your design to make a beautiful mosaic. You can also embed your mosaic pieces in plaster for a more authentic look.
- Make a desert diorama, and do a report on nomads.
- Do a simple weaving project. Try making your own loom!
- On a large, flat slab of clay, carve a relief picture in the style seen in ancient Persian rock reliefs.
- Learn more about Zoroastrianism. The teachings are still followed today. Can you find at least one similarity between Zoroaster's teachings and the beliefs of the ancient Israelites?
- Learn about Persian New Year (called Nowruz), and find out what year it is according to their calendar.
- Do you believe in an afterlife? Explain why or why not, and if you do, are there things you do in this life to prepare you for it?

Reading Selections

Ancient Persia

About 2000 BCE, a group of people began to migrate from their homeland northeast of the Black Sea. They moved in many directions and took their language with them. This language became the ancestor of just about all the languages spoken in Europe and India today. One group of these people were the Hittites. They invaded northern Mesopotamia, Babylon, Syria, and Palestine. The Hittites were some of the first people to discover how to make iron. While other people were still using bronze, the Hittites began making iron weapons and tools. Although they were able to keep their discovery secret for hundreds of years, knowledge of iron working finally spread throughout the ancient Middle East, and the Bronze Age eventually gave way to the Iron Age.

Southeast of Asia Minor, where Lebanon is today, was the land of Phoenicia. Because Phoenicians lived along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and had very little land they could farm, many turned to the sea to make a living. They became sailors, fishermen, builders, and merchants. By learning to read the stars, they became skilled at sailing at night, which allowed them to travel long distances more easily. As they traveled from place to place, the Phoenicians spread the ideas, language, and culture of the ancient Middle East and the Mediterranean. They also carried many different material goods far and wide. Phoenicians became known as “carriers of civilization.”

Trade flourished in Phoenicia, and many people became wealthy. One of the products they were known for was a beautiful purple dye that came only from a particular shellfish. Because the shellfish were so tiny and the dye so hard to extract, it was very expensive, and only very rich people could buy the purple cloth made from the beautiful dye. This is why purple came to be known as the color of royalty.

The Phoenicians developed a system of writing in which each letter symbol stood for a sound. This alphabet had no vowels, but it was certainly easier to learn than hieroglyphics. The Phoenician traders carried the alphabet with them, in addition to their items for trade. About 800 BCE, the Greeks adopted this alphabet and added vowels, thus creating the basis for the alphabet we have today.

Cyrus the Great

Another group of people, the ancient Persians, moved onto the Iranian plateau, a harsh area of desert surrounded by rugged mountains. They called the area “land of the Aryans,” which has since become the name “Iran.” They continued along the mountains, taking over various tribes of people who lived there, including the kingdom of Media. Gradually, by about 547 BCE, led by Cyrus the Great, whose grandfather had ruled Media, the Persians began to build the largest Middle Eastern empire that had existed up to that time.

Cyrus conquered many of his neighbors, sometimes using camels because he knew that horses are afraid of them. He would keep the camels in hiding until the last moment, and then have them appear and charge toward his opponents, frightening their horses and scattering the soldiers. The Persians were usually generous to the people they conquered, rather than being cruel, as were some other

conquerors. Cyrus conquered Babylonia in 539 BCE, freeing the captive Jews, who then went back to Palestine. The Persians, led by Cyrus, also took over the rest of the Fertile Crescent, Phoenicia, and Asia Minor. Cyrus's son, who followed him as ruler, took over Egypt and it too became part of the Persian Empire. The Persians ruled the Middle East and Asia Minor for over 200 years, until the area was conquered by Alexander the Great in 330 BCE during his great sweep across the ancient world.

So far the civilizations you have been studying are called "Sumerian." This is because they all grew out of, or were greatly influenced by, the early Sumerians. The following is a time line of the Sumerian civilization through the time of the Persian Empire:

3200 BCE: Sumerians settled in Mesopotamia

2686–1090 BCE: Ancient Egyptian civilization

1792 BCE: Hammurabi unites Mesopotamia

1290 BCE: Hebrews' exodus from Egypt occurs

1200 BCE: Iron Age begins

549 BCE: Persian Empire established



King Darius I

The next ruler of the Persian Empire was King Darius I, or Darius the Great. He took advantage of the Persian conquests to create the Persian Empire. He began the building of the great ceremonial city of Parsa, or Persepolis. The city of Persepolis was a citadel, built on a natural rock platform rising up 40 to 50 feet. It rose right up from the rocky plains on three sides and on the other side backed into a low mountain.

Giant columns up to 65 feet tall and walls made of mud-brick supported the buildings, and huge limestone bulls, 18 feet tall, stood guard at the main gate. There were sculptures throughout, a common theme being a lion and a bull in combat. The dining hall was 50 feet on each side with carvings of fighting animals on the walls around it. Persepolis was used only for certain periods of the year. Its specific purpose was apparently for sacred ceremonies when representatives from every part of the Persian Empire came to pay tribute to King Darius.

Ancient Persians had great pride in their king and country and prayed only for those things, never for themselves. They lived a fairly simple life, and their general goals were "to ride a horse, to draw a bow, and to speak the truth."



Darius the Great made many improvements in Persia. He had such a huge empire that he divided it into smaller provinces, so it could be ruled efficiently by local officials. He had the government build good roads to tie the empire together. This made it possible for the armies to move around more easily and for trade to be improved. Darius also built a canal connecting the Red Sea to the Nile River. A common coin was adopted for the whole empire, and the same system of weights and measures was used by everyone, so people from one area could trade more easily with people

from another area. Aramaic was the language spoken. Even with such a vast empire, people from one area could connect with people from far away corners of Persia because of good roads and the similarity of language, money, and weights and measures.

The Persians sent letters by people on horseback to all parts of the empire. This was one of the most organized early postal systems. In fact it was so well managed, that Herodotus, a Greek historian who lived around 450 BCE, said of it, “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.” This has become a famous statement, and it can be found in the main post office of the United States in New York City.

King Darius I was known for his belief in the importance of good laws, and he borrowed heavily from the laws of Hammurabi. He left many written messages on the walls of Persepolis, and the following statement, which accurately sums up the Persians’ passion for truth, was among them:

I am of such a character: what is right I love and what is not right I hate. . . . The man who decides for the Lie I hate . . . And whoever injures, according to what he has injured I punish . . . Of the man who speaks against the Truth, never do I trust a word.

Most ancient Middle Easterners believed in many gods. There were two groups of gods, called ahuras and daevas. The ahuras were higher gods, and the most important of them were called Ahura and Mithra. They set the courses of the sun, moon, and stars. Mithra also stood for loyalty and Ahura for true speech. The lower gods, daevas, represented more earthly concerns, personifying the elements of earth, fire, water, and wind. Generally, people felt they were at the whim of the gods without any real plan or understanding of what the rules were.



Zoroaster

In about 600 BCE, a Persian teacher called Zarathustra (also known as Zoroaster), gave a new teaching to the people. He taught that life was a struggle between Good and Evil, with good being embodied by a single supreme being called Ahuramazda. This being had many helpers, but these helpers weren't actually gods themselves. Ahuramazda, "Lord of Wisdom," created man, light, and darkness, and everything else. According to Zoroaster, he also created two opposing forces that represented the Truth (Spenta Mainyu, the Holy Spirit), and the Lie (Angra Mainyu, the Destructive Spirit). These two powers were apparently always working on people. Zoroaster taught that life was a sort of battleground where every man must choose between Good and Evil and that he would be judged in the afterlife. Evil people would be tormented forever, while the righteous would live forever in bliss.

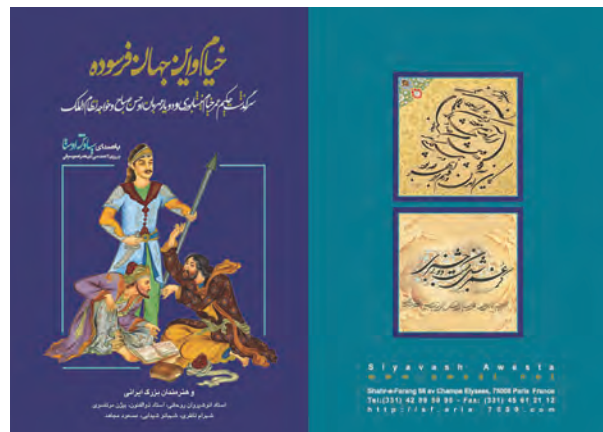


Now people began to have a sense of order about their behavior and a belief that the way they lived on Earth would make a difference for eternity. This belief in judgment and afterlife raised the standard of men's lives in ancient Egypt and in Persia. The Persians' holy book, based on the teachings of Zoroaster, is called the Avesta.

Over many years, Zoroaster's teachings were changed somewhat, and by 441 BCE, Zoroastrianism was jumbled up again with some of the ancient Iranian gods. Mithra became very important as the god of the light that comes before dawn and protector of all Iranians. Mithra also became the god of combat. Fire was a very important element in Zoroastrian worship. It was said to be a special gift from Ahuramazda to mankind, a symbol of truth because it takes away darkness. Fire was used in Zoroastrian ceremonies, which also involved the sacrifice of a bull and the drinking of the juice from a special plant.

Persian Artwork and Verse

Persians have traditionally expressed their history and philosophy through verse. The best known poem is the twelfth-century *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, which came much later in history than the early Persian culture being discussed here, but nonetheless is a fine example of Persian verse. (*Rubaiyat* means a collection of four-line stanzas.) The best loved themes are friendship, beauty, great deeds of heroes, and courage.





The primary art of ancient Persia included stonework, rock wall carvings called reliefs, and objects made of bronze, silver, and gold. Thousands of bronze daggers have been found from this time, obviously made by very skilled craftsmen. The sculptures and stonework show the Persians with long, straight noses, and very stylized, tightly curled hair at the nape of the neck. The men also had full, stiff beards composed of very tightly curled hair compressed together. They probably wore wigs. Some groups also wore a long lock of hair that dangled just behind the ear.

Later, the walls and domes of many of the beautiful palaces were paved with mosaics made of small glass stones and tiles. Many of these mosaics still exist today.

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

Continue to document your student's progress using the weekly planner, assignment checklist, and learning assessment form in each lesson. Feel free to contact your teacher if you have any questions about the assignments or the learning process.

Learning Assessment

Use assessment rubrics to track student progress and to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or the skills that need work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of early Persian culture				
Demonstrates knowledge of early Persian history				
Reflects on traditional and modern values and beliefs				
Shows original thought in essay responses				
Accurately recounts historical events				
Draws a map to scale with detail, color, and labels				