Lesson Plan: Ancient Middle East

Subject: World History

Grade: 6

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards:

SS.6.W.2.7 Summarize the important achievements of Mesopotamian civilization.

SS.6.W.2.8 Determine the impact of key figures from ancient Mesopotamian civilizations.

SS.6.W.2.9 Identify key figures and basic beliefs of the Israelites and determine how these beliefs compared with those of others in the geographic area.

SS.6.G.2.2 Differentiate between continents, regions, countries, and cities in order to understand the complexities of regions created by civilizations.

SS.6.G.2.4 Explain how the geographical location of ancient civilizations contributed to the culture and politics of those societies.

Overview:

Tough farmers in northern Mesopotamia provided the foot soldiers for the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which dominated western Asia from the late tenth to seventh centuries BCE. Ceaseless campaigns of conquest brought booty, tribute and taxes, and control of international commerce and valuable resources. The Assyrians employed Military might, propaganda, and state terrorism to intimidate their subjects. Moreover, due to the strategic location the small, resource-poor land of Israel has played an important role in World History, necessitating student understanding. The history of the ancient Israelites can be reconstructed by critically comparing information. Following conquests by the Assyrian empire Neo-Babylonian kingdoms, many Israelites were taken from their homeland. Diaspora communities created new institutions, a distinctive way of life and a strong Jewish identity. Additionally, in the tenth century BCE, Tyre, located on a practically offshore island and led by a king and merchant aristocracy, became the dominant Phoenician State.

Students should engage in studies regarding the Ancient Middle East because differences among cultures are important, as one reads about other cultures, they are reading about other people whose lives were surely different from their own. In the process students are able to acquire insight into the essence of culture; teaching
students not to measure others against their own cultural standard, which inherently form ones own view points, but rather look through a lens of openness, and examine culture for what is was at the time it existed.

**Essential Questions**

1. How did nomadic peoples affect the centers of civilization?
2. Why did the Phoenicians not develop into an agricultural society?
3. What caused the downfall of the Assyrian Empire?
4. Why did people of his time call Cyrus “the Great”?
5. What is the political evolution of the Ancient Near East?
6. What role did Judaism play in the Ancient Middle East? What impact did this have on other civilizations?
7. What were the duties of the Satraps in the Persian government?
8. How were the Assyrian and Persian systems of government different?
9. How did the geography of the Middle East play a role in its agricultural development?
10. Where were the ancient Middle Eastern empires located? What factors contributed to their development?

**Key Vocabulary**

Monotheistic, Indo-Europeans, Hittites, Phoenicians, Israelites, King Solomon, Isaiah, Palestine, Jerusalem, Satrapy, Satrap, monarchy, Cyrus, Persians, Darius, Zoroaster, Assyrians, Immortals, Zoroastrianism, Ten Commandments, Prophets

**Lesson Objectives:**

Students will:

- Identify contributions of the Phoenicians
- Summarize the extent and impact of ancient World Trade
- Explain the historical and cultural importance of the Exodus
- Summarize the history and beliefs of the ancient Hebrews
- Describe Israel’s destruction and the Hebrews’ exile in Babylon
• Analyze the sources of the Assyrian military strength
• Trace the Assyrian decline
• Evaluate Assyrian Achievements

**Evidence of Student Understanding (Assessment) in this Lesson:**

**Formative Assessments**
1. Chalk Talk Posters
2. Essay justifying city-state in which students would rather reside
3. Students will also be formally assessed based upon classroom discussions and activities. (See Activities Below)
4. Chart on Monotheism and Polytheism
5. Outline on Judaism

**Summative Assessments**

1. The primary summative assessment is the end of unit exam consisting of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

2. The project and essay can also serve as a secondary summative assessment.

**Materials Needed:**

• Internet Resources
• Books, Magazines and other resources made available by the school site
• Internet Access
• LCD Projector
• Overhead Projector
• Poster Paper
• Markers
Duration: 4 Class Periods or Two Blocks (210 minutes)

Steps to Deliver the Lesson and Activities

1. **20 minutes** Bell Ringer: Discuss with students the seminal cultural and technological innovations of the ancient Near East. Explore the role that each of these plays in our own society. How would it affect our lives should any be absent? For example, what if the Phoenicians never invented the Alphabet? What are the Pro’s and Con’s of recent innovations? Which ones will be short lived? Which ones will have lasting impacts? Once you have explored these questions with your students, widen the discussion to why do we study the ancient Near East in the first place. How does knowing the origin of something, help to understand its purpose, function and legacy?

2. **60 minutes** - Understanding Ancient Middle Eastern Cultures. **Chalk Talk.** Place 4 posters around your classroom. On the 1st poster write Phoenicians. One the 2nd poster, write Israelites. On the 3rd poster write Assyrians. On the 4th poster write Persian Empire. Divide the class up into 4 groups. Have each group start at a different poster. Provide students with background information for each of the aforementioned civilizations. Give the students 5 minutes to come up with as many words as possible that are related to their assigned empire. After 5 minutes have students move to the next civilization and provide them 10 minutes to identify the words left by the previous group. Have students move once again to the next civilization and provide them 5 minutes to identify major achievements of the assigned civilization. Once again switch and allow students to write down religious beliefs of the civilization. Switch one final time, and provide students with 10 minutes to finish anything other groups left off, and identify at least 3 reasons why the civilization fell. At this juncture students should be at their original civilization. Have each group present their poster or posters to the rest of the class.

3. **30 minutes** In the aftermath of the group presentations, have students write a brief essay in which they must justify what civilization they would have like to be a part of and why?
4. **20 minutes** Have students create a chart identifying the differences between a religious system based on monotheism and one based on polytheism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monotheism</th>
<th>Polytheism</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
5. **45 minutes** Understanding Judaism and the Role of Israel in Ancient Middle East History. Have students complete the following organizational chart on the history of Judaism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judaism</th>
<th>Religious Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is followed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Worship</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important teachings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Celebrations/ traditions</td>
<td>Countries where the religion is practiced</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In the aftermath of students completing the chart have a brief discussion on the evolution of Judaism and its lasting legacy.

6. **35 minutes**-Summarizing Activity: Either in groups or as individuals have students imagine that they are the king’s adviser in a newly created empire without a reliable communication system. Explain what potential problems this poses and suggest a solution using one of the civilizations studied communication networks as models. Include the costs and benefits of your system. This will also serve as a great segue into the civilizations of Greece and Rome, as they had numerous contributions to many societies and ideologies.

**Differentiated Instruction Strategies:**

Students who are identified with learning disabilities can be provided with information before the implementation of the lesson. If ESOL students are present in your classroom, provide students with annotated copies of the material. For those students who are more advanced allot them opportunities to assist with other students. Furthermore, activities outlined in this lesson plan, serve multiple learning styles and thus various student interests, ranging from linguistic, visual/spatial to logical

**Technology Integration:**

Collection of primary sources about the ancient Middle East

[http://www.semiticmuseum.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do](http://www.semiticmuseum.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do)

Collection of sources and information on the ancient Hebrews

[http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/ancient_hebrews/](http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/ancient_hebrews/)

Lesson plans on the ancient Middle East

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/heritage/pdfs/episode1.pdf](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/heritage/pdfs/episode1.pdf)

Information resource on the Assyrian Empire

[http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/history/assyrians.htm](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/westasia/history/assyrians.htm)

Power points on the Persian Empire


A brief overview on the history of Judaism


Lesson plans on the Phoenician Alphabet
Lesson Closure:

In order to engage students in summarizing their learning, students will synthesize learned information, skills and processes by writing an exit slip. An exit slip can be a one sentence summary of what students learned. Other uses may include but are not limited to answering a review question, pose a question related to topic studied, make a short list of facts learned, set a goal for the next day of class, etc. Prior to providing students with exit sip be sure to decide what its purpose will be (and whether or not this will be a type of formative assessment). During the last 5 minutes of class inform students about the purpose of the task associated with the exit slip. As students exit your classroom, collect their exit slips. This will serve a dual purpose, as they will assess your own teaching and will often indicate whether or not students understood the material presented.