Lesson 2: Early Mesopotamia

Getting Started

Archaeologists have learned that people first began farming about 12,000 years ago in a crescent-shaped area between the Mediterranean sea and the Persian Gulf — an area known as the Fertile Crescent. Two important rivers flow through that region — the Tigris and the Euphrates — and the land between those two rivers became home to some of the earliest civilizations. Historians call this region Mesopotamia, which comes from the Greek words for "middle" and "river." In this lesson, you'll be learning about the earliest ancient peoples of Mesopotamia.

Stuff You Need

- "The Geography of Mesopotamia (Page 1)"
- "The Geography of Mesopotamia (Page 2)"
- "Hammurabi’s Code (Page 1)"
- "Hammurabi’s Code (Page 2)"
- "Salt Dough Recipe"
- chopstick with a square end, available at many restaurants
- colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- scissors
- tape, glue stick, or glue
- timeline binder and timeline cards

Ideas to Think About

- How did the environment (landforms, locations, natural resources, and climate) influence the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia and Egypt?
- How were the cultures of the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia and Egypt similar to or different from one another?

Things to Know

- Scholars believe that farming developed in the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East about 12,000 years ago.
- Mesopotamia comes from the Greek words for "middle" and river" and is the name historians use to refer to the region between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The region was home to several early civilizations.
In addition to agriculture, ancient Mesopotamian people developed the potter's wheel and adapted the wheel for use in transportation. They also developed writing, first using pictographs and then cuneiform writing. Phoenicians eventually created a form of the alphabet to simplify writing.

Hammurabi's Code was a set of laws established by the Babylonian king Hammurabi during his reign, which began in 1792 BC.

Reading and Questions
Throughout this unit, you'll be learning more about effective reading and note-taking strategies for non-fiction sources. In some lessons, instead of completing questions about the readings, you will take notes using different kinds of organizers or complete other types of activity pages as you read. In other lessons, you will complete the readings and then answer questions about them, but feel free to also take notes on your reading for those lessons if you wish.

For this lesson, you'll focus on pre-reading a text. When you read a novel or a magazine for fun, you probably just dive right in on page 1 and read straight through to the end, and that can be a great way to read. But sometimes when you're reading to try to learn about something new, looking over what you plan to read before you actually read it can give you a preview of what's to come, help you think of questions you have about the reading, and give you some insights into what you're about to learn that will help you understand and enjoy the reading more deeply. **Before you start reading the text for today, follow the instructions in Questions 1-3 for an introduction to pre-reading.**

This reading will introduce you to the early civilizations of Mesopotamia, from the first farmers who settled along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to Sumerian city-states to the Akkadian Empire and the rise of Babylon.
1. For today's reading assignment, you'll be reading pages 10-31 in *The Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*. Look through those pages and notice how the book is organized. There is usually a section title in the top left-hand corner of the pages on the left side of the book. On each two-page spread, there is a large bold-faced heading in all capital letters indicating the main topic of those pages and then smaller underlined sub-headings on each page. Read each of these headings and sub-headings (without stopping to read the text underneath them) and write down your impressions of what these pages will be about.

2. Authors and editors choose the artwork that will accompany the text in a book carefully and, in most books, the images are not just there for decoration. The images convey important ideas that will enrich what you're reading in the text itself. Exploring the pictures before you read can help you get a sense of what will be covered in the reading. Look at the pictures on pages 10-31 and read the captions for each. Describe one picture that looks particularly interesting to you and write one question you have about what is shown in that picture. Be sure to mention the page number on which the picture appears.
3. Having reviewed the headings and images in this section of readings, take a few minutes to think about questions that you have or things that you are wondering about regarding what you will read and jot them down below. Circle or underline the one question that is most interesting to you. If you are responding to the questions online, use text editing tools to underline that question or change the text of that question to bold type. After you answer this question, complete the reading before going on to Question 4.

4. What was the answer to the question that you circled, underlined, or converted to bold type above?

Activities

☐ Activity 1: The Geography of Mesopotamia
The reading for this lesson introduced you to a number of different peoples who lived in Mesopotamia in ancient times. In this activity, you'll create a map of Mesopotamia that shows the locations where different people settled and built their civilizations. Use the maps on pages 12, 25-28, and 30 to help you. Use the "Geography of Mesopotamia" activity pages and do the following:

✓ Label the Tigris River.
✓ Label the Euphrates River.
✓ Lightly shade the area known as the Fertile Crescent green and label it.
Label the cities of Kish and Ur.

Use the map on page 25 as you trace in red the boundaries of the third dynasty of Ur — including its provinces and allied states — and label it.

Trace in blue the boundaries of the Babylonian empire during the reign of Hammurabi and label it.

Use the map on page 28 as you trace the boundaries of the Hittite empire (1350-1300 BC) in orange and label it.

Shade the area of the Mitanni empire (1480 BC) in purple and label it.

Trace the borders of the area where the Canaanites lived in yellow and label it.

When you have finished your map, answer the questions on the second page.

Optional Extension: Mesopotamia Today

If you have a copy of Geography of the World, used in the social studies units for Moving Beyond the Page in the 10-12 and 11-13 levels, use the maps of the Middle East on pages 147 and 153 to label the locations of the modern cities of Jerusalem, Beirut, Baghdad, and Kuwait on your map of Mesopotamia. Use a special symbol such as a square or a star to indicate that each city is a modern one.

Day 2

Activity 2: Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt Timeline

For this lesson, you will need to cut out the following green timeline cards and add them to your timeline binder:

- Agriculture (10,000 BC)
- Settlement of Jericho (8000 BC)
- Invention of the Potter's Wheel (3400 BC)
- Development of Writing (3300 BC)
- The Reign of Hammurabi (1792 - 1750 BC)
- The Alphabet (1100 BC)

For each card, note the date on the card, find the page that includes that date in your binder, and then use tape, glue stick, or glue to attach the card above or below the line in the appropriate place. Over time, you will be adding cards from
other ancient civilizations to this binder as well, so some pages may become crowded!

- **Activity 3: The Code of Hammurabi**

  Hammurabi became king of Babylon in 1792 BC and created a set of laws that all of the people in his vast empire would follow. These laws, known as **Hammurabi's Code**, were inscribed on a large stone slab and survive today. Modern scholars have been able to read and translate them to learn more about life in Babylon under Hammurabi's reign. In this activity, you'll have the chance to explore some of Hammurabi's laws and to think about what life would have been like in ancient Babylon.

  Use the "Hammurabi's Code" activity pages to compare how the Code of Hammurabi is similar to or different from modern laws. You do not need to know the exact state or federal law that applies to each situation — just have a general sense of how our own government addresses the same issues or problems. If you have any questions about modern laws as you work through this activity, ask a parent for help.

- **Activity 4: Cuneiform Writing**

  Some of the earliest evidence of writing comes to us from the Mesopotamian region. In this activity, you'll have the opportunity to try your hand at **cuneiform** writing like the ancient Sumerians used.

  First prepare your writing surface. Ancient Sumerians didn't have paper — they wrote on clay tablets. You can use many different kinds of clay or dough for this activity. (Refer to the "Salt Dough Recipe" page if you'd like to make your own salt dough.) If you do not plan to keep your finished writing for long, you can use purchased or homemade play dough or non-drying modeling clay. If you prefer to keep your finished work, you can use non-toxic air dry clay or homemade salt dough. (If you use salt dough, you can let your finished project dry at room temperature or ask for a parent’s help to bake your finished work at a low temperature until thoroughly dry.)

  Form a piece of clay about the size of a coaster and about an inch thick. Use a chopstick with a square end to make marks in the clay. (If you do not have a chopstick, you can try other kinds of materials such as a stick or pencil to make marks, but the edges of a chopstick's square end will create marks more like the wedge-like impressions that cuneiform writing is known for.) Holding the chopstick
at a shallow angle, practice pressing one corner of the square end of the chopstick (not the end you would use to pick up food) into the clay or dough to make an impression. Try pressing the edge of the tool down onto the clay at slightly different angles and depths until you find a method that seems comfortable and that creates marks as similar as possible to what you see on pages 18-19 of *The Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*.

When you feel comfortable with your writing method, try to copy the Sumerian words for "bird," "wheat," and "ox" from 2400 BC as shown on page 19. If you like, try to copy other examples from the book that show pictograph or cuneiform writing onto your clay or dough tablets, or create your own pictograph symbols for things that you might want to write about today. Save your finished work to share with a parent later today.

**Optional Extension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The World of a Scribe</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/441">www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/441</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>If you wish, explore the Internet links provided in the readings for this lesson. You may enjoy exploring the world of a scribe from this website from the British Museum.</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/writing/explore/exp_set.html">http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/writing/explore/exp_set.html</a></td>
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<th><strong>Clay Tablets</strong></th>
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<td><a href="http://www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/442">www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/442</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>You might also be interested in examining artifacts like the early clay tablet that is discussed on the website of the Oriental Institute at the University Chicago. This and the link above are just two of the interesting websites that you may find by using the Internet links provided throughout the book you're using for this unit.</td>
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**Wrapping Up**

The earliest civilizations of **Mesopotamia** flourished in the **Fertile Crescent**. In the next lesson, you'll learn about more Mesopotamian peoples, including the Assyrians, Neo-Babylonians, and Persians.
Map of Ancient Mesopotamia
**Geography of Mesopotamia Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which areas of your map are included inside the borders of multiple Mesopotamian peoples?</td>
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<td>What natural resources do you think might be available in those areas?</td>
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<td>Why do you think that many different groups of people decided to make their homes and build their empires in those specific areas?</td>
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<td>How would those natural resources be useful?</td>
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<td>Law from the Code of Hammurabi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hammurabi</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. If any one bring an accusation against a man, and the accused go to the river and drink into the river, if he sink in the river, his accuser shall take possession of his house, and the accuser shall go to the river and drink.</td>
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<td>Fair and why?</td>
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<td>Which law seems preferable or more addressed in your modern community?</td>
<td>How is this same issue addressed by the Babylonian law?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law from the Code of Hammurabi</td>
<td>How is this same issue addressed in your modern community?</td>
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<tr>
<td>229. If a builder build a house for someone, and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built fall in and kill its owner, then that builder shall be put to death.</td>
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<td>197. If he break another man's bone, his bone shall be broken.</td>
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<td>200. If a man knock out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out.</td>
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<td>117. If anyone fail to meet a claim for debt and sell himself, his wife, his son, and daughter for money or give them away to forced labor, they shall work for three years or the proprietor and in the fourth year they shall be set free.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. If anyone is committing a robbery and is caught, then he shall be put to death.</td>
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Salt Dough Recipe

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup salt
3/4 to 1 cup water

Mix flour and salt together in a large bowl. Add most of the water, mixing well until you have a dough. Depending on the humidity where you live, you may only need 3/4 cup of water or may need a full cup. When the dough comes together and you no longer see any loose flour and salt in the bowl, turn the dough out onto a floured countertop and knead for 7-8 minutes until you have a smooth dough. Salt dough is for modeling only. Do not eat this dough.

Use salt dough to create 3-D sculptures, or roll it out thinly and cut out shapes for ornaments and decorations. You can use a straw to create a hole in a flat piece for later hanging! Salt dough creations can be allowed to air dry if you turn them several times a day. They can also be baked in a low oven (200 degrees F) until they are thoroughly dry. Finished, dried, cooled projects can be painted with poster paints and decorated with glue and beads, sequins, or glitter.
Parent Overview
Lesson 2: Early Mesopotamia

Getting Started

Big Ideas

✓ How did the environment (landforms, locations, natural resources, and climate) influence the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia and Egypt?

✓ How were the cultures of the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia and Egypt similar to or different from one another?

Facts and Definitions

✓ Scholars believe that farming developed in the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East about 12,000 years ago.

✓ Mesopotamia comes from the Greek words for "middle" and river" and is the name historians use to refer to the region between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The region was home to several early civilizations.

✓ In addition to agriculture, ancient Mesopotamian people developed the potter's wheel and adapted the wheel for use in transportation. They also developed writing, first using pictographs and then cuneiform writing. Phoenicians eventually created a form of the alphabet to simplify writing.

✓ Hammurabi's Code was a set of laws established by the Babylonian king Hammurabi during his reign, which began in 1792 BC.

Skills

✓ Trace the development and assess the achievements in the arts, sciences, and technology of early river civilizations. (SS)

✓ Analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilization of Mesopotamia. (SS)

✓ Locate and describe the major river systems and discuss the physical settings that supported permanent settlement and early civilizations. (SS)

✓ Trace the development of agricultural techniques that permitted the production of economic surplus and the emergence of cities as centers of culture and power. (SS)

✓ Know the significance of Hammurabi's Code. (SS)

✓ Trace the evolution of language in its written forms. (SS)

Introducing the Lesson

In this lesson, your child will begin learning about the ancient people of Mesopotamia. She will map the geography of Mesopotamia, begin work on a timeline of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, explore Hammurabi's code of laws, and practice cuneiform writing. As your child works through the readings and activities in this two-day lesson, encourage her to think about how archaeologists may have learned about the people of Mesopotamia.

In this lesson, your child will also begin learning note-taking skills during the readings portion of the lesson. Throughout this unit, some readings will be accompanied by questions to answer, while in other lessons your child will be instructed to use graphic organizers, charts, and other tools to take notes on specific topics related to later activities in the unit. Note-taking is an important skill — taking notes can be a valuable tool for recording important details and also for allowing the reader to remain active and engaged while reading. Instead of passively looking over the words on the page, the active reader is engaged with the text, thinking about questions, jotting down ideas, and noting important concepts. That kind of reading can lead to deeper understanding, and notes that are thoughtfully taken can serve as useful resources for later study or research purposes. Students who are new to note taking often aren't sure what they should write down or how much they should write, and they either don't write down anything at all or they write down so much that it feels like they...
are simply copying the book (a tedious process to be sure!). The activities in this unit will help your child think critically about what she has been asked to read before she reads it, remain an active thinker as she reads, and record information that will help her synthesize what she has read in meaningful ways.

**Reading and Questions (Answers)**

1. For today’s reading assignment, you’ll be reading pages 10-31 in *The Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*. Look through those pages and notice how the book is organized. There is usually a section title in the top left-hand corner of the pages on the left side of the book. On each two-page spread, there is a large bold-faced heading in all capital letters indicating the main topic of those pages and then smaller underlined sub-headings on each page. Read each of these headings and sub-headings (without stopping to read the text underneath them) and write down your impressions of what these pages will be about.

   - Answers will vary, but your child may mention early farmers and civilizations and the importance of water, inventions, trade, and writing. She may also mention city-states, the royal tombs of Ur, early empires (Akkad, Ur, Sumer, Elam), the rise of Babylon, trade, and warfare.

2. Authors and editors choose the artwork that will accompany the text in a book carefully and, in most books, the images are not just there for decoration. The images convey important ideas that will enrich what you’re reading in the text itself. Exploring the pictures before you read can help you get a sense of what will be covered in the reading. Look at the pictures on pages 10-31 and read the captions for each. Describe one picture that looks particularly interesting to you and write one question you have about what is shown in that picture. Be sure to mention the page number on which the picture appears.

   - Answers will vary. Your child should have provided the page number of the image so that you can review the image and her description of it.

3. Having reviewed the headings and images in this section of readings, take a few minutes to think about questions that you have or things that you are wondering about regarding what you will read and jot them down below. Circle or underline the one question that is most interesting to you. If you are responding to the questions online, use text editing tools to underline that question or change the text of that question to **bold type**. After you answer this question, complete the reading before going on to Question 4.

   - Answers will vary.

4. What was the answer to the question that you circled, underlined, or converted to bold type above?

   - Answers will vary.

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**Outline of Activities and Answer Keys**

**Activity 1: The Geography of Mesopotamia**

In this activity, your child will label the locations of several key geographic features, cities, and civilizations on a map of ancient Mesopotamia. She will then answer questions about the map after it is complete. Your child’s map should look like the one below:
**Page 2 Answers:**

Are there particular places on your map where many different Mesopotamian peoples settled? What kinds of geographical features seemed likely to attract settlers?

Your child will notice that the areas along the banks of the two main rivers were settled by many different people, and also that coastal areas along the Mediterranean Sea were settled by many different people as well.

What natural resources do you think might be available in those areas?

Your child may mention many different resources — fertile and hospitable land, rivers, access to the sea, stone, clay, metal, or plant and animal resources.

How would those natural resources be useful?

Answers will vary, but your child may mention the need for fertile land for growing crops; land that would allow for easy travel; rivers for drinking water, irrigation, and transportation; local food sources such as wild plants and animals; access to the sea for trade; clay for making pottery or bricks; stone for construction; metals for making tools, weapons, and other objects.

Why do you think that many different groups of people decided to make their homes and build their empires in those specific areas?

Your child should understand that the areas that were rich in natural resources were attractive for settlement. She may also recognize that once one group of people had settled in and improved a location, building a prosperous community, that location may have drawn other people to it, either as merchants and settlers or as potential conquerors.
Optional Extension: Mesopotamia Today

In this optional extension activity, your child will add the location of modern cities to the map of Mesopotamia. This may be a useful activity to help your child connect the ancient world to the present day. As your family comes across news stories related to this part of the world today, knowing the relationship between the locations of modern cities and ancient civilizations will enrich your child's understanding of both ancient history and current events. If your child completes this activity, her map should look like the one below.

Answer Key: The Geography of Mesopotamia (with Extension Cities)

Map of Ancient Mesopotamia Key

This answer key includes the modern-day cities if your child has done the optional extension to this unit.

Day 2

Activity 2: Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt Timeline

When prompted in the lessons throughout this unit, your child will add timeline cards about significant events to her timeline. Your child can use glue, glue stick, or tape to add the cards to the timeline, placing them either above or below the line. You'll notice that extra space has been included to allow your child to add timeline cards from other civilizations in future units of Moving Beyond the Page.

For this lesson, your child will cut out six green timeline cards and add them to her binder. The dates on the cards should correspond to the dates on the timeline pages where your child has affixed each card.

Activity 3: The Code of Hammurabi

In this activity, your child will explore some of the laws of Hammurabi's Code. Your child will be given several examples of
laws from ancient Babylon and will compare them to the laws of her own community in modern times. Remind your child that she does not need to be overly specific in filling out this chart. Your child does not need to read the actual legal code for your community for this particular activity — a general working knowledge of typical punishments for common crimes and the workings of the judicial system should be sufficient. Depending on your child's background in civics and understanding of the judicial system, you may want to be available to answer any questions your child may have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Laws</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/state_statutes">link</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are curious about statutes in various U.S. states, this website from the Cornell University Law School provides additional information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible answers that your child might provide are listed in the answer key below — for the third column on your child's activity page ("Which law seems preferable or more fair, and why?") answers will vary, but your child should provide an explanation of her reasoning about why one law seems preferable to the other.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law from the Code of Hammurabi</th>
<th>How is this same issue addressed in your modern community?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Accusations are tried in a court of law instead of having the accused person leap into the river.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When a judge trying a case, reaches a decision, and presents his judgment in writing, if later error shall appear in his decision, and it be through his own fault, then he shall pay twelve times the fine set by him in the case, and he shall be publicly removed from the judge's bench, and never again shall he sit there to render judgment.</td>
<td>Judges are not required to pay fines or to be removed from their positions if they make an error. Serious judicial misconduct can have consequences, but simple mistakes are usually handled in the appeals process without a penalty to the judge who made the original ruling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. If any one is committing a robbery and is caught, then he shall be put to death.</td>
<td>Modern laws prohibit robbery, but the penalty for robbery is not as severe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117. If any one fail to meet a claim for debt, and sell himself, his wife, his son, and daughter for money or give them away to forced labor: they shall work for three years in the house of the man who bought them, or the proprietor, and in the fourth year they shall be set free.</td>
<td>Modern laws do hold people responsible for their debts but do not allow the sale of one's self or one's family to pay off debts. Your child may also mention bankruptcy laws as another way that our society handles the inability to pay debt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>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. 200. If a man knock out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out.</td>
<td>While modern laws address the issue of assault, they do not impose a physical punishment that is equivalent to the injury inflicted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229. If a builder build a house for some one, and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built fall in and kill its owner, then that builder shall be put to death.</td>
<td>While modern laws do hold builders and other contractors responsible for the quality of their work and require that they follow housing codes to ensure safety, they do not impose a death penalty for poor construction.</td>
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The Avalon Project

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/434

If you would like to explore the Code of Hammurabi further, the Avalon Project at the Law School of Yale University includes a full translation of Hammurabi's Code of Laws. Parents should note that the Code addresses issues such as prostitution, incest, and sexual misconduct of other kinds, so you may wish to read it for your own information or to select specific laws to explore further together instead of simply sending your child to the website.

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/ancient/hamframe.asp

Assyriologist — Part 1

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/435

You may wish to listen to this audio file from an Assyriologist on the website of the University of Chicago and decide if you would like to share it with your child — it provides a short but interesting scholarly discussion of the laws.

http://mesopotamia.lib.uchicago.edu/interactives/martha-laws.html

Assyriologist — Part 2

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/436

This is a second audio file from an Assyriologist at the University of Chicago. You may wish to review this resource and decide if you would like to share it with your child.

http://mesopotamia.lib.uchicago.edu/interactives/martha-today.html

Activity 4: Cuneiform Writing

In this activity, your child will use a chopstick and clay or dough to experience cuneiform writing. If your child chooses to use salt dough clay for this activity and wants to bake her finished work to keep it for a longer term, you will need to assist her with baking the finished project.

Knowledge and Power

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/2390

If your child is especially interested in cuneiform writing, you may wish to explore this website: "Knowledge and Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire" from the University of Pennsylvania.

http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/knpp/
**Tips for Learning Cuneiform**

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/2394

This page provides detailed information about learning to write cuneiform symbols. The "Tips for Learning Cuneiform Signs" section includes a video about writing cuneiform symbols with a chopstick in clay and also instructions for creating a more flexible reed stylus.

http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/knpp/cuneiformrevealed/learningsigns/

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**Cuneify**

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/2392

Elsewhere on the website, you can find cuneiform fonts for your computer and a Cuneify program that will allow you to create cuneiform transliterations to copy onto clay or dough tablets.

http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/knpp/cuneiformrevealed/cuneify/

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**Advanced Teaching Resources**

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/2391

Parents may also be interested in this page of teaching resources. While it is aimed at university faculty, parents of advanced middle school students may find some of the information and teaching ideas useful for extension activities.

http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/knpp/teachingresources/

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**Wrapping Up**

**Questions to Discuss**

✓ Did you find that pre-reading the text by exploring the headings and images and thinking about questions before you read the book was helpful to you? (Answers will vary. Not every strategy will be helpful to every child, but exploring many different strategies and trying them out while reading can help a reader determine which ones are the best fit for her learning style and preferences. If your child found this pre-reading strategy to be helpful, encourage her to take a few moments to think about what made it so helpful.)

✓ Why did people settle in Mesopotamia? (Your child should understand that the natural resources of the Fertile Crescent made it an attractive place for settlement.)

✓ What were some of the significant achievements of the early Mesopotamian civilizations? (Answers will vary, but your child may mention agriculture; the wheel — first for pottery and later for transportation; writing; trade, including specialized goods like jewelry, pottery, glass, and dyes; and laws like the Code of Hammurabi.)

**Things to Review**

✓ Review your child's map of Mesopotamia for accuracy.

✓ Review your child's timeline binder and confirm that the cards are placed correctly.
Review your child's "Hammurabi's Code" activity page and discuss her ideas about which set of laws seems preferable or more fair.

Ask your child to share her cuneiform writing with you and ask her about the experience. Would she want to have to write that way all the time?

**Special Notes**

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/443

Parents may be interested in exploring some of the activity ideas in the lesson plans on Mesopotamia from the Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago. While these resources are aimed at K-12 teachers in schools, many of the ideas can be adapted for homeschool use with one child or for use with a homeschool group or co-op.

http://mesopotamia.lib.uchicago.edu/teacherresources/article.php?m=Lesson%20Plans