Early Civilizations

Lesson Essential Question: How do early civilizations demonstrate the characteristics of civilization?

The first civilizations developed along RIVERS.

Rivers offered the following advantages:

- WATER SOURCE
- TRADE
- ARABLE (FERTILE) FARMLAND
- PROTECTION

River Valley Civilizations included:

- MESOPOTAMIA
- EGYPT
- INDUS RIVER VALLEY
- CHINA

Mesopotamia: “The Fertile Crescent”

Mesopotamia, located in the MIDDLE EAST, is where the first civilizations were created.

It means the “land BETWEEN rivers.” These rivers are called the TIGRIS River and the EURPHRATES River.

Today, this area forms IRAQ.

Mesopotamians invented the WHEEL, the PLOW, and the first system of WRITING, called cuneiform, used in trade.

Mesopotamia featured advanced cities featuring TEMPLES called ziggurats.

Mesopotamian society was split into SOCIAL classes. The priest and kings ruled society, followed by skilled workers, and then farmers and slaves.

There were many civilizations that made up this region:

- THE SUMERIANS
- THE ASSYRIANS
- THE BABYLONIANS

Code of Law

The first great city of Mesopotamia was BABYLON.

The King of Babylon was HAMMURABI.
Hammurabi’s Code was the first time a set of ______ LAWS ______ were written (codified) for all to see. This made for a more stable society and a stronger civilization.

Hammurabi Code Example – An Eye for an Eye, a Tooth for a Tooth -- the punishments were very ______ HARSH ________________.

Phoenicians

They were expert _______ SAILORS __________ who traded and set up _______ COLONIES ___________ all around the Mediterranean Sea.

One major contribution of the Phoenicians was the _______ ALPHABET _________________. They are also known for their special _______ PURPLE ___________ dye that was made from tiny sea snails.

One of Phoenicia’s important colonies was _______ CARTHAGE _________________, located in the center of the Mediterranean Sea, on the coast of Africa (modern day Tunisia).

Egypt: The “Gift of the Nile”

Egypt is located in the northeast corner of _______ AFRICA ___________.

The _______ PHARAOH ___________ ruled over Egypt and was viewed and worshipped as a god (Menes was the 1st, but Ramses was the greatest).

Egypt relied on the annual flooding of the _______ NILE RIVER ___________ to provide arable farmland.

Egyptian women had a _______ HIGHER ___________ status than other women of their time.

Egypt today is remembered for its _______ MUMMIES _______, _______ HIEROGLYPHICS _______, _______ PYRAMIDS __________, and King Tut.

Egyptian Achievements

Egyptian trade routes extended all the way to _______ BABYLON ___________ in the east & Kush (gold) to the south.

Egyptians invented _______ INK ___________ and a paper called _______ PAPYRUS ______________.

Egyptian _______ DOCTORS ___________ were the first to use splints, bandages, and compresses. They sewed up cuts, set broken bones, performed complex surgery, and discovered _______ MEDICINE __________ still in use today (saffron, castor oil).

They used _______ GEOMETRY __________ to redraw land boundaries following the flooding of the Nile.

Egyptian _______ CALENDAR ______________, based on the annual Nile floods, becomes the basis for our modern calendar today.
Hebrews

They were the first ________MONOTHEISTIC_______ civilization.

Hebrews occupied the area we know as ________ISRAEL_________ today.

Their ________LAWS_________ were based off the 10 Commandments.

Their religion was called ________JUDIAISM_________. We get two other monotheistic religions from this: ________CHRISTIANITY_________ and ________ISLAM_________.

Indus River Valley

This river valley civilization is located along the ________INDUS_________ River and the ________GANGES_________ River of Asia.

The cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa were more recently discovered. They displayed advanced ________CITY_________ planning and ________SEWER_________ systems.

Indus people traded along the coast of the ________INDIAN_________ Ocean and with city-states in Mesopotamia. The Indus River Valley was a link on the ________________________________ Road.

In this region, two key religions were founded: ________HINDUISM_________ (polytheistic) and ________BUDDHISM_________ (monotheistic).

Social Structure: The Caste System - Social ________CLASSES_________ people are divided into that cannot be changed. This is still seen today in modern ________INDIA_________.

Ancient China

China’s early civilizations were centered around the ________CHANG_________ River and the ________HUANG-HE_________ (Yellow) River.

Ancient China was ruled by ________EMPERORS_________ selected through the Mandate of Heaven, similar to Egyptian view of a pharaoh. God chose when a families’ time to rule China began and ended.

Ancient China’s religious philosophies included ________CONFUCIANISM_________, ________DAOISM_________, and ________LEGALISM_________.

China’s contributions include: paper, a unified writing system, gunpowder, acupuncture, silk, advanced ships, and the Great Wall.

The ________SILK ROAD_________ was a very important trade route developed by the Chinese based on the export of silk. This not only led to exotic goods moving across ________ASIA_________, but the spread of cultural beliefs as well (cultural diffusion).
Persia

Persia’s territory stretched from the ________ NILE RIVER __________ to the ________ INDUS RIVER __________ Valley.

It is the country we call _______ IRAN _______ today.

Persians were tolerant of the religions, languages, and cultures of people they ______ CONQUERED _______

They were opposed to ______ TRADING ________ with other civilizations because they felt it would make them greedy and too reliable on others.

Persians practiced _______ POLYTHEISM ________, or the belief in many gods.

They had a large empire that was controlled by a _______ KING ________.

Which of these ancient civilizations would you like to learn more about? Why?