

Ancient Civilizations and the Modern World

Summary

Students will understand how ancient civilizations developed based on the local physical features and how the boundaries of early civilizations compare to their modern counterparts.

Essential Question: What importance do physical features in a region have to sustain the development of a civilization?

Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 6th Grade

[Standard 1 Objective 1](#)

Time Frame

4 class periods of 60 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning

Materials

- Physical & political maps of ancient civilizations
- [Five column graphic organizer](#)
- Colored pencils
- Poster paper for group project - 1 per group
- Suggested research sources - internet, social studies texts, history atlases (for example, Nystrom)

Background for Teachers

Humans migrated across the earth which led to hunter gatherer clan groups finding places that supported abundant life. This stationary, non-migrational life depended upon the physical features of the environment that would lend itself to year-round hunting, animal domestication, and seasonal farming. Modern civilizations trace their foundations to the development of these early settlements and civilizations.

Student Prior Knowledge

- Map reading
- Note-taking and summarizing
- Making connections

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will make connections between the physical geography of ancient civilizations and how these features influenced the development of these civilizations.

Instructional Procedures

Question #1:

What do you absolutely need to live/survive? (Brainstorm as a class)

Question #2:

What importance do physical features in a region have to sustain the development of a civilization?

Identify the major ancient civilizations on each continent as a class (Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Mesopotamian, China, India, and Aztecs are examples of study).

Divide class into seven small groups and assign each group one of seven the major ancient civilization to research. Hand out a five column graphic organizer to each group.

Discuss with the class, "What resources do we need to find this information about the ancient civilizations? What resources do we have in our room and school that would provide the needed information?"

Direct students to take notes under the appropriate columns on physical features, trade routes, agriculture, manufacturing, and natural resources. Depending on prior instructional activities, the teacher may or may not need to model note-taking or summarizing techniques.

Student groups fill out graphic organizers (each group focuses on the assigned ancient civilization). Once groups finish taking notes, they are to write a brief summary highlighting the main points of their notes.

Using the Jigsaw strategy, each group is given 2 minutes to share their summary with other groups so that all groups have the same information.

Discuss similarities and differences between each of the civilizations (what was required for the civilization's sustainability and growth, etc.). A Venn diagram on the board is a useful tool for this discussion.

Inform the class that each group will next create a poster that maps their research. The teacher then guides then class in creating a rubric for a civilization poster which should include modern political boundaries, an outline of the ancient political boundary, and information from their notes.

Students create map posters following guidelines of their rubrics. Once published, posters are displayed around room.

Direct students to do a poster walk around room and attach a "sticky" note to each poster, giving a point value to each poster based on the map rubric. Students must write a 1 - 2 sentence justification of their score. Teacher reminds students that in the event s/he disagrees on the points assigned, the teacher will be the final say.

Question #3:

What were the major physical features that determined whether a civilization flourished and why?

Students list each feature followed by a concise 1 sentence explanation.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Kinesthetic - draw and illustrate maps

Aural/Oral - presentation of findings

Visual - posters displayed around room as reminders of information

Extensions

Locate significant physical features of a civilization based on class presentations on Google Earth and write a description, draw a replica, or create a model.

Build a model of a trading vessel used by one of the ancient civilizations. Student determines what materials to use.

Research the constellations ancient traders used to navigate trade routes.

Assessment Plan

Assessment includes:

Note-taking on and summary of physical features, etc. of an ancient civilization.

The creation of a poster which demonstrates analytical thinking: cause and effect and compare and contrast.

Bibliography

- <http://www.mrdonn.org/>
- <http://www.worldbookonline.com/wb/Home>
- <http://online.culturegrams.com/index.php>

Authors

[Jill Gammon](#)

[Richard Kirschner](#)