Great Rivers of Great Civilizations
Students write about four river systems and their great civilizations.

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Grade Level
6

Duration
2 class periods

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS
1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

Arizona Geography Strand

Concept 1 The World in Spatial Terms
PO 4 Locate physical and human features in the United States and in regions of the world on a map (e.g., continents, significant waterways, mountain ranges, cities, countries).

PO 5 Interpret thematic maps, graphs, charts, and databases depicting various aspects of world regions.

Concept 6 Geographic Applications
PO 1 Describe ways geographic features and conditions influenced settlement (e.g., near waterways, on high terrain, with adequate fresh water, on good land for farming, in temperate climates) in different periods of time, places, and regions.

Other Arizona Standards

Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
6-8.RH.10 By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
Text Types and Purposes
6-8.WHST.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.
a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.
f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
6-8.WHST.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
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Overview

River systems had a great impact on early civilizations. It was the river that gave humans the water for farming and sustainable growth of the population. The influence of these early cultures remains to this day. Students should realize how geographic location can foster human settlement.

Purpose

In this lesson, students complete a culminating, cross-curricular lesson on four ancient river systems: the Nile River, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the Indus River and the Huang He River.

Materials

- Cradle of Civilization Information Sheet
- Cradle of Civilization Map Key
- Cradle of Civilization Outline Map (for quizzing)
- Paper and pencil
- Simplified 6-Traits Rubric

Objectives

The student will be able to:
- locate the Nile River Valley, the Tigris and Euphrates river system, the Indus River Valley and the Huang He River on a map.
- write an expository essay comparing the similarities and differences of the river systems and analyzing their impact on ancient civilizations.

Strand 2 World History

Concept 1 Research Skills for History

PO 7. Analyze cause and effect relationships between and among individuals and/or historical events.

Concept 2 Early Civilizations

PO 2. Determine how the following factors influenced groups of people to develop into civilizations in Egypt, India, Mesopotamia, and China:
- a. farming methods
- b. domestication of animals
- c. division of labor
- d. geographic factors

PO 3. Describe the importance of the following river valleys in the development of ancient civilizations:
- a. Tigris and Euphrates - Mesopotamia
- b. Nile - Egypt
- c. Huang He - China
- d. Indus - India

Procedures

Prerequisite Knowledge: Students should have a background knowledge on the following four major river systems and the ancient civilizations that developed: Nile, Tigris and Euphrates, Indus and Huang He.

1. Distribute the Cradle of Civilization Information Sheet and the Cradle of Civilization Map Key.

2. Have students read the clues and locate the Nile River Valley, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the Indus River Valley, and the Huang He River.

3. Have students write an essay comparing the similarities and differences of the four river systems and conclude their essay with an analysis on which river they think suited early civilizations best and why. The essay should include facts about why the locations of the rivers were essential to settlement growth. Students should use the classroom text as well as the internet for sources of information.

Assessment

The Blank map can be used to quiz students on location of geographic features such as the mountain ranges, deserts, seas, and the four major river systems.
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Use the Simplified 6-traits rubric to assess essays for Ideas/Content with a 4 or higher being considered mastery.

**Extensions**

Develop a Cause and Effect Chain to demonstrate how the river systems impacted early civilizations’ economics and general development.

Use the map's coordinates to find the locations of the river systems and other map features.

**Sources**

- The World Past and Present East and West, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill