

Early Civilization Activities

Teacher Notes

Introduction

Aims

These simple activities are designed to reinforce students' knowledge of early civilizations. In particular, they are aimed at aiding students' understanding of where and when in history the earliest civilizations arose, and their relationship to one another in time and space.

The idea of these activities is not to make students feel anxious about knowing exactly when all early civilizations existed. Rather, it is aimed at giving them a geographical and historical overview of this part of Ancient History, a framework on which they can build their understanding of it.

Having studied the civilizations of, say, Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt and the Indus Valley separately, they may not be aware that they co-existed with each other. These activities aim to address this issue, and to help their understanding of the rise and fall of the earliest civilizations.

Coverage

This unit covers Ancient History from 3500 BCE through 500 BCE. It therefore does not cover the Classical world (c. 500 BCE to 500 CE) when the Ancient World reached its peak.

Also, it covers Eurasia only. American civilizations have a completely different chronology, which will be explored in another activity.

How to use these activities

Are they stand-alone?

These activities link to the Premium Resource, *Early Civilizations*. This gives an overview of this period of history.

It is not necessary to use all the activities, You may wish to use only Activity 2, or 2 and 3 and not 1, or 1 and 2 and not 3 - they will work just fine singly or in any combination. It all depends of your students' level of ability, and of course the time you have for this.

On the other hand, they can certainly work together, if that is what's wanted.

When should they be used?

As just notes, these activities link to the Premium Resource, *Early Civilizations*. But they could easily be used independently.

If using with *Early Civilizations*, you can either

- 1) show this presentation to the class, or give students access to this, before using the activities;
or
- 2) get the class first to work their way through one or more of the activities and then show the presentation as a reinforcement. To do this, students will first have to research when and where these early civilizations started and ended. A good place to do this would be the free maps within the Timemaps website - starting at www.timemaps.com/history/world-3500bc and following the links from there.

Before using the activities

In order to work with these, students of course need to be able to access them, so you may need to download the PowerPoints into student work areas.

The slide shows need to be in Edit mode.

Activities

Activity 1. Physical Geography

This is a short activity to reinforce students' understanding of some of the key physical geography associated with Early Civilizations.

The file *Early Civilizations - Eurasian Geography* consists of just one slide. Below a blank map of much of Eurasia are some labels, in three categories: Rivers, Landscapes and Seas/Oceans.

Students drag these labels (NOT the ones in **bold**) to the correct locations on the map.

For more accuracy, they can use the **rotate** function to angle the labels appropriately.

The map should end up looking like the one in the file *Eurasian Geography - Example*.

Activity 2. Early Civilizations: Chronology

This longer activity is designed to give students an overall geographical/chronological framework for where and when the major civilizations in early world history occurred.

The file *Early Civilizations Activity 2* is a selection of maps, set at the following dates: 3500 BCE, 2500 BCE, 1500 BCE, 1000 BCE, 700 BCE, 600 BCE, 500 BCE.

How it works

Each map has coloured areas where the civilizations which are flourishing at that date are located. Not all colors have labels, but those showing the locations of the main civilizations and empires do.

To the right of the maps are labels of the main civilizations which flourished between 3500 BCE and 500 BCE.

To begin with, the maps are **NOT in date order**. It is the students' task to put them in order and label the civilizations on each map.

The map should end up looking like the one in the file *Early Civilization Activity 2 - Example*

Suggested *modus operandi*:

1. Go through the maps one by one, and assign labels to the colored areas by dragging them onto the maps (most but not all colors have a label, so don't worry if you can't find an appropriate one). At the end, check that you have used all the labels.
2. Go through the maps again and give them a date, dragging the appropriate date into the box at the top. Put the maps in date order, and place the orange circle at the appropriate point on timeline below the screen.
3. If you want, tidy the maps up by deleting all labels which you haven't used.
4. You now have a slide show of maps showing when and where the early civilizations of world history existed.

It should look something like the slide show in the file *Early Civilization Activity 2 - Example*

Activity 3. Early Civilizations: Characteristics

This activity is to reinforce students' knowledge of some of the chief characteristics of the early civilizations.

In the file *Early Civilizations Activity 3*, a selection of brief phrases referring to particular civilizations at a particular time in their history are placed below and to the right of the maps.

The students' task is to place these phrases with the appropriate civilization or empire, on the map with the most appropriate date.

Not all civilizations or empires on the maps will have such phrases linked to them - on a couple of the maps only one does.

Suggested *modus operandi*:

1. Place in small texts at relevant points on the maps. They can be placed above, below or near the appropriate civilization labels.
2. Feel free to edit the boxes so that they don't overlap other texts or labels; or perhaps use lines to connect a phrase to a civilization's label or location.
3. If you want, tidy up by deleting unused phrases in each slide. If you have the time you might like to put a colored border round each text box and give the box a background, so that they stand out clearly.

The map should end up looking like the one in the file *Early Civilizations Activity 3 - Example*.