

## **1Chapter 10**

### **2Grade Six – World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations**

#### **3Global Overview: Early Beginnings to 300 CE**

- 4 • How did the environment influence human migration, ancient ways of life,  
5 and the development of societies?
- 6 • What were the early human ways of life and how did they change over  
7 time? (hunting and gathering, agriculture, civilizations, urban societies,  
8 states, and empires)
- 9 • How did the major religious and philosophical systems (Judaism, Greek  
10 thought, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism) support individuals, rulers,  
11 and societies?
- 12 • How did societies interact with each other? How did connections between  
13 societies increase over time?
- 14 Students in sixth-grade world history and geography classrooms learn about  
15the lives of the earliest humans, the development of tools, the foraging way of  
16life, agriculture, and the emergence of civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the  
17Indus River valley, China, Mesoamerica, and the Mediterranean basin. Although  
18teachers should keep the focus on ancient events and problems, this course  
19gives students the opportunity to grapple with geography, environmental issues,  
20political systems and power structures, and civic engagement with fundamental  
21ideas about citizenship, freedom, morality, and law, which also exist in the

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22modern world. Students practice history as an interpretative discipline. They read  
23written primary sources, investigate visual primary sources, and learn how to  
24analyze multiple points of view, cite evidence from sources, and make claims  
25based on that evidence in writing and speaking.

26 Although most of the sixth-grade standards are organized regionally, there  
27are patterns which the teacher uses to connect the regional studies into a world  
28history. These are:

- 29 • The movement of early humans across continents and their adaptations to  
30 the geography and climate of new regions.
- 31 • The rise of diverse civilizations, characterized by economies of surplus,  
32 centralized states, social hierarchies, cities, networks of trade, art and  
33 architecture, and systems of writing.
- 34 • The growth of urban societies and changes in societies (social class  
35 divisions, slavery, divisions of labor between men and women).
- 36 • The development of new political institutions (monarchy, empire,  
37 democracy) and new ideas (citizenship, freedom, morality, law).
- 38 • The birth and spread of religious and philosophical systems (Judaism,  
39 Greek thought, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism) which responded to  
40 human needs and supported social norms and power structures.
- 41 • The development and growth of links between societies through trade,  
42 diplomacy, migration, conquest, and the diffusion of goods and ideas.

43The first section below outlines the development of these themes throughout the  
44world over time. It is divided into three chronological periods: Beginnings to 4000

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45BCE; 4000-1000 BCE: Kingdoms and Innovations; and 1000 BCE-300 CE: An  
46Age of Empires and Interactions. The second section outlines the development  
47of these themes following the regional structure of the existing 6<sup>th</sup>-grade  
48standards.

#### 49*Beginnings to 4000 BCE*

50 Modern humans, *Homo Sapiens*, are members of the Great Ape family. About  
5125 million years ago a medium-sized primate group split into apes and monkeys;  
52both groups found an ecological niche in trees. Apes didn't have tails, relied  
53primarily on their arms for locomotion by swinging in trees (as opposed to  
54monkeys who primarily used four legs for travel). Apes developed a keener  
55sense of vision; monkeys developed a better sense of smell. Subsequently, the  
56ape family branched into two major lines—hominins and what we now usually  
57call apes. The ape strand led to the present day chimpanzees, bonobos, and  
58gorillas.

59 Our early ancestors, the hominins, and chimpanzees, our closest non-  
60hominin relative, appeared about 6 million years ago. Both were partially bi-  
61pedal. By 2.5 million years ago, these early hominins had evolved to walking up-  
62right. After passing through the austrapolihecine (southern ape) stage, the  
63hominins eventually gave rise to our genus *Homo* (our first human-like  
64ancestors), which initially appeared about 2.5 million years ago in Africa. The  
65brains of this new genus were about the same size as chimpanzees but grew  
66steadily through the next million years. There were several species of these early  
67homo lines whose population began to grow, though very gradually, after they

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68began to make use of tools more extensively. Our early human ancestors  
69evolved larger brains in response to the survival needs of hunting and gathering  
70in small bands, employed rudimentary stone tools for skinning animals and  
71weapons (such as spear heads and knives), developed simple clothing and  
72shelter, and used fire opportunistically. Pair-bonding, which allowed for more  
73extensive for child rearing, contributed to survival success.

74 There are various theories of how these hominins evolved. Most scholars  
75suggest that the continued growth of brain size necessitated larger food intake.  
76About 2 million years ago, a few of our early human ancestors migrated out of  
77their east African homeland to the rest of that continent and subsequently spread  
78throughout the world --to Europe, and as far east as Indonesia and China. The  
79various species of the homo line continued to evolve and eventually became the  
80more modern *Homo erectus*, *Neanderthals*, and *Denisovans*. Using archeological  
81evidence, such as the carbon dating of bones, stone tools and weapons, DNA  
82evidence of matrilineal and patrilineal descent, the examination of food remains  
83and campsites, students can consider, **How do we know about these early**  
84**proto-humans? Why did they succeed in replacing other Hominin lines?**

85 Around 200,000 years ago our direct human ancestors appeared, modern  
86*Homo sapiens* (the wise man), who were anatomically the same as modern  
87humans. At that time there was nothing particularly special about our species  
88compared to the other homo species. We co-existed with several other homo  
89lines who also possessed similar brain sizes, walked upright, used fire, ate a  
90variety of foods, were skilled gatherers, progressed from scavengers to hunters

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91of large animals, and used comparable tools. However, *Homo sapiens* were

92lighter, less muscled, more adaptable, and kept developing larger brains.

93 About 70,000 years ago *Homo sapiens* began a major transformation. The

94species underwent a cognitive revolution which allowed us to acquire

95sophisticated language, the ability to abstract, imagine, and plan, and to develop

96the social skills and myth-making capacity required for group cohesion. These

97talents permitted *homo sapiens* to develop more sophisticated tools and

98inventions, learn from one another and pass technical, cultural, and

99organizational knowledge from one generation to the next. *Homo sapiens* also

100began to act collectively in large groups for foraging, hunting, and defense.

101These talents allowed our species to learn from experience and adapt more

102easily to a changing conditions. Consequently, modern humans were able to

103survive the varied and extreme climates found on this planet.

104 Under one highly regarded explanation, the climate worsened around

105160,000 years ago, leaving much of African uninhabitable. The numbers of our

106immediate ancestors declined precipitously and some sought refuge on the

107southern coast where they learned to exploit the rich shell food beds for food.

108Unlike territory with scattered resources, territory that featured dense collections

109of resources required a stationary home base and defense against others. These

110ancestors evolved a genetically encoded prosocial proclivity, the ability to use

111sophisticated language and symbols, more advanced conceptual and cognitive

112capacities, and social lifestyle shifts to encourage sophisticated innovation and

113cooperation with unrelated individuals. These traits allowed them to better exploit

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114and defend their resource-rich territories against invaders. With their increased  
115brains and ability to cooperate they became even more inventive. Their  
116development of projectile weaponry, especially when coated with poison, was a  
117revolutionary innovation that allowed for safer hunting. (Neanderthals never  
118discovered bows and arrows and many were killed getting too close large  
119animals in the hunt).

120 The story of how our now fully human ancestors populated the earth starting  
121around 70,000 years ago is fascinating. Although the general narrative is  
122generally understood, some details are known, some controversial, and some yet  
123to be discovered. Students can consider the impact of population pressure, the  
124availability of untapped hunting grounds, warfare, or even a sense of adventure  
125as they consider the evidence for the migration and various routes taken. **Why**  
126**did modern humans leave Africa? What happened to all the other Hominids**  
127**in Africa, or the Neanderthals who had evolved from earlier humans in**  
128**Europe? How did modern humans travel across the hemispheres? How**  
129**violent or aggressive were these early humans?** In their investigations,  
130students can consider the fact that as the modern humans peopled the world, the  
131other lines became extinct. They can consider how modern humans from  
132Indonesia crossed land bridges and developed the sea-faring technology to settle  
133the continent of Australia more than 40,000 years ago. And students can develop  
134their own explanations for how 14,000 years our species had populated both  
135North and South America and had peopled every continent except Antarctica

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136(although some islands such as New Zealand and Hawaii were not inhabited until  
137much later).

138 In all these places people survived by foraging, hunting, and fishing, and they  
139lived in bands, that is, communities typically numbering no more than a few  
140dozen men, women, and children. World population of our species began to rise  
141but very gradually. Often, these bands were loosely associated with larger  
142groups, such as tribes who had a common language and belief systems. For  
143example, when the British conquered Australia in the eighteenth century, they  
144found 300,000 to 700,000 hunter-gatherers organized into between 200-600  
145tribes (further divided into multiple bands) each with its own language, customs,  
146norms, and belief systems.

147 Around 10,000 years ago, some humans began to domesticate plants and  
148animals and experiment with farming. Others learned to mine for desired metals  
149and precious stones after smelting was discovered. Their activities led to the  
150development of new ways of life: agriculture in settled villages, trade, and  
151pastoral nomadism. Students investigate why these radical changes began to  
152occur after humans had lived exclusively as gatherers and hunters and still  
153managed to adapt successfully to many climates and climatic changes over  
154hundreds of thousands of years. **Why did some humans start to plant and  
155harvest crops, live in crowded villages, and later build cities, accept the  
156rule of monarchs, and pay taxes? Why did the pace of historical change in  
157certain parts of the world begin to speed up?**

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158 During this period many technological and social discoveries or inventions  
159 occurred building on the previous breakthroughs, such as use of fire, cooking,  
160 boats, use of tools for hunting, defense, and daily life, and tools to make tools,  
161 language, expressions of emotions, the ability to understand what another  
162 person was thinking, planning, pair-bonding, cooperation, bands and tribes,  
163 clothing, sewing, containers, and art, including pigmentation, music and dance.  
164 The new innovations included domestication of animals and farming, smelting of  
165 copper, then bronze, then iron, the plough, twisted rope, musical instruments,  
166 beer and wine, religion and ancestor worship, more complex boats, and trade  
167 allowed for an increasing population and standard of living. Working in small  
168 groups, students can explore the impact of these discoveries and innovations by  
169 examining one discovery or invention in-depth to develop and present a short  
170 oral presentation that both explains the innovation and speculates as to its  
171 overall significance.

#### 172 *4000-1000 BCE: Kingdoms and Innovations*

173 At the beginning of the period between 4000 and 1000 BCE, the earliest  
174 complex urban societies, or civilizations, rose. By the end of this period, there  
175 were many urban societies, and their interaction had accelerated. During those  
176 three millennia, numerous technical and intellectual innovations appeared,  
177 especially in the dense agricultural societies that arose in the Middle East  
178 (notably Mesopotamia, Syria, Anatolia, and Persia), the Nile Valley of Africa,  
179 northern India, China, and the lands around the Aegean Sea. By about 2000  
180 BCE, urban societies also began to emerge in the Americas, starting with the



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181 Olmec civilization in Mesoamerica and Chavín in South America. Many

182 inventions and ideas fundamental to modern life appeared, including the wheel,

183 writing, more complex metallurgy, codes of law, mathematics, and astronomy.

184 While cities grew in some areas, hunter-gatherers and village farmers remained

185 in other areas. Increased trade occurred. Global population rose at a faster rate

186 than it had before 4000 BCE.

187 Powerful people (warlords) took control of the tribes in larger areas and

188 eventually the strongest warlords formed states or city-states with governments

189 headed by kings or, very occasionally, queens, often claiming authority from gods

190 and passing on power to their own descendants. Supported by political elites

191 (nobles, officials, warriors) and priests, these monarchs imposed taxes on

192 ordinary city dwellers and rural people to pay for bureaucracies, armies, irrigation

193 works, and monumental architecture. Writing systems were first invented to serve

194 governments, religions, and merchants, and later became means of transmitting

195 religious, scientific, and literary ideas. Some of the religions of this era, such as

196 early Hinduism and Judaism, set the stage for later world belief systems.

197 Migrations continued as farming peoples slowly expanded into tropical Africa

198 and Southeast Asia, North and South America, and the temperate woodlands of

199 Europe. In the steppes of Central Asia, a new way of life and type of society

200 emerged after 4000 BCE. There, communities lived by herding domesticated

201 animals, such as sheep, cattle, or horses. Their economy, called pastoral

202 nomadism, permitted humans to adapt in larger numbers to climates which were

203 too dry for farming. Pastoral nomads lived mainly on the products of their

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204livestock. They grazed herds over vast areas and came regularly in contact with  
205urban societies, often to trade, sometimes to make war. By the end of this period,  
206urban societies ruled by monarchies had greatly expanded their control over  
207agricultural regions, but many people still lived in small village, pastoral nomad,  
208and hunter-gatherer societies.

209*1000 BCE-300 CE: An Age of Empires and Interchange*

210 During these 1,300 years, many patterns of change established in the  
211previous era continued, but at a faster pace. The number of cities multiplied, and  
212states appeared in new forms that were bigger, more complex, and more efficient  
213at coercing people and extracting taxes from them. A new form of state  
214developed – the empire. Among the largest states of that era were the Assyrian  
215and Babylonian Empires centered in Mesopotamia, the Achaemenid, Parthian,  
216and Sasanian Empires in Persia, the Kushan Empire in Central Asia, the Maurya  
217Empire in India, and the kingdom of Kush in the upper Nile River valley. The  
218largest of all were the Roman Empire, which came to embrace the entire  
219Mediterranean Sea region and much of Europe, and the Han Empire in China. At  
220the dawn of the first millennium CE, these two states together ruled a small part  
221of the earth’s land area, but roughly one-half of the world’s population.

222 A second key development of that era was the establishment of a thicker web  
223of interregional communication and transport, which allowed goods,  
224technologies, and ideas to move long distances. Interlocking networks of roads,  
225such as the Silk Road, and sea lanes in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean  
226Sea, connected empires, kingdoms, and regions of the Eastern Hemisphere with

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227one another. Merchants and other travelers created similar interconnections in  
228Mesoamerica and along South America’s Andean mountain spine. Merchants  
229traveled long distances in caravans and ships to connect farming and urban  
230societies that lay along the rims of seas, deserts, and steppes. In this period, the  
231religions of Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Christianity and the philosophies  
232of Confucianism and Greek thought emerged and spread within empires and  
233along trade routes. These religious and philosophical systems changed as they  
234developed, in order to address human needs, support social order, and adapt to  
235different societies.

236 The following section discusses the development of the above themes  
237following the existing sixth-grade standards. Teachers use the guiding questions  
238to focus on course themes and draw comparisons with other regional units.

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#### 240**Early Humankind and the Development of Human Societies**

- 241 • How did the environment influence the migrations of early humans? How  
242 did early humans adapt to new environments and climate changes?
- 243 • How did people live by the gathering and hunting way of life?
- 244 • Why did some people develop agriculture and pastoral nomadism? What  
245 were the effects of these new ways of life?

246 In the first unit, students learn about the emergence and migrations of early  
247humans, the gathering and hunting way of life, and the emergence of village  
248agriculture and pastoral nomadism. To frame the topic of the emergence and  
249migrations of early humans, the teacher uses these questions: **How did the**

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**250environment influence the migrations of early humans? How did early**

**251humans adapt to new environments and climate changes?** For millions of

252years, the genetic ancestors of humans, known as hominins (or hominids), used

253stone tools and lived on foods found by gathering and hunting. Archeological

254evidence shows students that our earliest forebears evolved in eastern Africa

255and that small bands of those ancestors migrated into Eurasia about 1.9 million

256years ago, driven by population gains and increased competition for food. Around

257800,000 years ago, early humans discovered how to control fire, allowing them to

258cook food, keep away predators, and burn areas of land in order to flush out

259game.

260 *Homo sapiens*, that is, anatomically modern humans, evolved in Africa

261around 200,000 years ago. Modern humans adapted well to new environments,

262developing increasingly diverse stone and bone tools for collecting and

263processing food. About 100,000 years ago, our species developed the capacity

264for language, which accelerated technological change. Spoken language and the

265evolution of pro-social mental and social structures enabled humans to teach

266complex skills to each other, cooperate with others, pass down ideas to the next

267generation, and talk about their world and the cosmos.

268 After leaving Africa 90,000 to 100,000 years ago, humans may have reached

269Australia 60,000 or more years ago and Europe 40,000 years ago. In the Middle

270East and Europe, humans encountered Neanderthals, a related hominid species,

271who became extinct about 28,000 years ago. Early humans reached the

272Americas from Eurasia at least 12,000 years ago, possibly earlier. Students use

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273 maps to identify the patterns of early human migration and settlement which  
274 populated the major regions of the world. Reading climate zone maps and  
275 studying climate change during the Pleistocene (glacial and interglacial periods)  
276 helps students develop an understanding of the effects of climate on the Earth  
277 and on the expansion of human settlements. In California EEI Curriculum Unit  
278 6.1.1, “Paleolithic People: Tools, Tasks and Fire,” students analyze why humans  
279 chose certain migration routes, settled in particular locations, developed  
280 lifestyles, cultures, and methods to extract, harvest, and consume natural  
281 resources to understand how early humans adapted to the natural systems and  
282 environmental cycles in different regions, and how these factors influence the  
283 settlement of human communities. Students analyze how human migrants might  
284 adapt to a colder or hotter climate, growth of human population, competition with  
285 another hominid species, floods, or droughts.

286 Although humans made many adaptations to the conditions of their  
287 environments, until about 10,000 years ago, they all lived by the same way of life,  
288 hunting and gathering. The teacher introduces the first of the ways of life  
289 students will study in this course with this framing question: **How did people live**  
290 **by the gathering and hunting way of life?** There was a division of labor  
291 between women and men, but they contributed equally to supporting the band.  
292 Adult men were more likely to travel away from the camp to forage or hunt, while  
293 women, who were likely to be pregnant or have small children to care for,  
294 collected edible plants and trapped small animals close to home. Because  
295 gatherers and hunters need a large area to support themselves, bands were

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296small. Social cooperation was very important, but there were few social

297differences between people.

298 To understand the gathering and hunting way of life and appreciate the  
299linguistic and cognitive advantages of *Homo sapiens*, students analyze primary  
300sources from this long time period before written language. Our knowledge of this  
301era depends on evidence from material remains, especially from bones and  
302stone tools, and, more recently, from research on human DNA and long-term  
303climatic and geological change. Students can analyze cave paintings from  
304Chauvet, Lascaux, and Altamira, with pairs of students first answering a  
305descriptive question, such as: **What colors did the artist use? What kinds of**  
306**animals are shown in the painting?** and then making an interpretation about:  
307**What was important to hunter-gatherer people? Why do you think the artist**  
308**painted this?** Student pairs can then share their interpretations, claims, and  
309evidence with the whole class. Students use academic language to articulate  
310their observations and interpretations to another student and the whole class,  
311supporting the development of oral discourse ability. Students investigate the  
312dramatic changes that took place when some humans began to domesticate  
313plants and animals and settle in one place year round, with these questions: **Why**  
314**did some people develop agriculture and pastoral nomadism? What were**  
315**the effects of these new ways of life?** Teachers begin by asking students why  
316a gatherer might start planting seeds. **How might a hunter start to tame an**  
317**animal?** Archaeological evidence indicates that in the Middle East, and probably  
318Egypt, foraging bands settled near stands of edible grasses, the genetic

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319ancestors of wheat and other grains. People began deliberately to sow plants

320that had favorable qualities, for example, varieties that were large, tasty, and

321easy to cook. In this way, they gradually domesticated those plants.

322Domesticated plants and animals became increasingly important to human diets

323regionally and turned people into farmers, that is, *producers* of food rather than

324simply *collectors* of it.

325 This huge change introduced a new way of life for humans – village

326agriculture. They could therefore live in larger settlements and accumulate more

327material goods than when they foraged for a living. Teachers emphasize that

328agriculture involved not only the act of farming but also a whole new way of life

329based on food production. Improved production meant that not everyone in a

330village had to spend all of their time securing the food supply. Food surplus also

331invited conflict with neighboring tribes eager to expand their own reserves.

332Another result of village agriculture is the development of tools. Early farmers

333gradually developed more varied stone tools, such as sickles to cut grain and

334grinding stones to make flour. They used fire to transform clay into durable

335pottery. They wove wool, cotton, and linen into textiles. Because the early

336millennia of agriculture involved more sophisticated stone tools, it is known as the

337Neolithic, or New Stone Age.

338 One of the major effects of the village agricultural way of life was an increase

339in social differences. In early villages adult men and women probably worked

340together to perform many necessary tasks and treated each other with near

341equality. Because villages likely included several extended families living closely

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342together, however, leaders inevitably emerged to guide group decisions and  
343settle personal conflicts. Also, as soon as some families accumulated more  
344stored food than did others and appointed guards to protect their wealth, the  
345conditions for social inequality appeared. Teachers may ask students to examine  
346differences in the contents of graves that archaeologists have excavated—some  
347graves having jewelry, shells, or other fine materials and some having none of  
348these things—for evidence about social ranking and inequality in early  
349agricultural communities.

350 Agriculture developed independently in different areas of the world between  
35112,000 and 5,000 years ago and gradually spread outward from those areas.  
352Students should compare physical and environmental maps with maps of the first  
353sites of food production to make interpretations.

354 In some areas of the world, such as the steppes of Central Asia, the climate  
355was unfavorable for farming, but ideal for supporting herds of domesticated  
356animals, such as sheep, cattle, or horses. In these areas, some people created a  
357new way of life based on the products of their livestock. They were nomadic and  
358did not settle in villages. In fact, they were highly mobile, and often came into  
359contact with settled societies, often to trade and sometimes to attack and  
360conquer. By 4000 BCE there were three ways of life followed by humans –  
361gathering and hunting, village agriculture, and pastoral nomadism.

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### 363**The Early Civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Kush**

364 • How did civilizations, complex urban societies, develop in Mesopotamia,



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365 Egypt, and Kush?

366 • What environmental factors helped civilizations grow? What impact did

367 civilizations and complex urban societies have on the surrounding

368 environment?

369 • How did people’s lives change as states and empires took over these

370 areas (increase in social differences, rule by monarchs, laws)?

371 • From 4000 BCE to 500 BCE, how did contact, trade, and other links grow

372 among the urban societies of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Kush, India, and the

373 eastern Mediterranean?

374 Between 10,000 and 4,000 BCE, farming spread widely across Africa and

375 Eurasia. In the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates (Fertile Crescent) and Nile

376 rivers, people adapted to the rivers’ flood cycles and the related seasonal cycles

377 of plants and animals. Their adaptations allowed them to produce a surplus of

378 food, which led to other changes in their cultures. Students learn that people who

379 lived near the banks of those rivers began to use irrigation techniques to control

380 water and extend farming, despite an increasingly arid climate. A similar process

381 got under way in the Indus River valley in India and in the Huang He (Yellow)

382 River valley in northern China some centuries later. To frame the study of the

383 emergence of civilizations, the teacher uses the question: **How did civilizations,**

384 **complex urban societies, develop in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Kush?** When

385 communities began to intensify farming with new techniques, they were able to

386 produce surplus food. Early farmers increased the size of their farms and used

387 more resources in order to increase their yield. Focusing on the relationships

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388between resource requirements, agricultural production, and population growth,  
389students learn that the population growth near agricultural areas was a first step  
390in the development of larger settlements and cities. The surpluses they produced  
391led to the rise of more complex social, economic, and political systems in those  
392valleys.

393 The civilization of Mesopotamia, located in the valley of the Euphrates and  
394Tigris Rivers (modern Iraq and part of Syria), and Egypt, which stretched along  
395the Nile River, both arose in the fourth millennium BCE. Kush, a civilization in the  
396upper Nile River region south of Egypt emerged in the second millennium BCE.  
397Teachers introduce students to the environmental roots of civilization with this  
398question: **What environmental factors helped civilizations grow? What**  
399**impact did civilizations and complex urban societies have on the**  
400**surrounding environment?** All these societies depended on their river locations  
401to build dense agricultural societies. First students examine maps to identify the  
402environmental factors, such as climate, topography, and flood patterns, that  
403caused these civilizations to rise up along rivers. The teacher might use either of  
404the California EEI Curriculum Units 6.2.1.River Systems and Ancient Peoples, or  
4056.2.2 Advances in Ancient Civilizations. These lessons emphasize environmental  
406causes and effects and the influence that the rise of civilization along these rivers  
407had on the organization, economies, and belief systems of Mesopotamia and  
408Egypt.

409 Teachers guide students through the development of each of these three  
410civilizations separately, while frequently pointing out connections, similarities, and

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411 differences among the civilizations (and also the Harappa civilization along the  
412 Indus River and Chinese civilization along the Huang He [Yellow] River). The  
413 following section discusses Mesopotamia first, followed by Egypt, and then by  
414 Kush.

415 In the third millennium BCE, Mesopotamia was divided into a number of  
416 kingdoms. Beginning in Sumer, the region of southern Mesopotamia, those early  
417 kingdoms were dominated by large walled cities, each enclosing a royal palace  
418 and a temple dedicated to the local god, along with densely packed housing for  
419 the population. Walls were built around many of these cities in response to  
420 aggression by neighboring kingdoms and competing warlords seeking to expand  
421 their territory through conquest. By around 3,000 BCE, a second cluster of cities  
422 arose in northern Mesopotamia and the area of modern-day Syria. Rulers of  
423 these cities claimed to possess authority divinely bestowed by their city's god or  
424 goddess. The city-states of Mesopotamia frequently fought one another over  
425 resources, but they also formed alliances. At the end of the third millennium,  
426 Sargon of Akkad (2270-2215 BCE) managed briefly to forge a unified empire  
427 through conquest.

428 Students also examine the connections between Mesopotamia and other  
429 areas with this question: **From 4000 BCE to 500 BCE, how did contact, trade,**  
430 **and other links grow among the urban societies of Mesopotamia, Egypt,**  
431 **Kush, India, and the eastern Mediterranean?** Trade was extensive, not only  
432 among the Mesopotamian kingdoms, but also between Mesopotamia and  
433 surrounding regions. The land had rich soil that produced abundant crops, but it

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434 had no minerals. Merchants imported a red stone called carnelian from the Indus  
435 Valley, a blue stone called lapis lazuli from what is now Afghanistan, and silver  
436 from Anatolia (modern Turkey), which were used for jewelry and decorations in  
437 temples and palaces. From the Elamites on the Iranian plateau, merchants  
438 imported wood, copper, lead, silver, and tin. In some periods, trade and  
439 diplomatic exchanges took place between Mesopotamia and Egypt. Teachers  
440 introduce students to Mesopotamia’s numerous technological and social  
441 innovations, including the wheel, the wooden plow, the seed drill, and improved  
442 bronze metallurgy, as well as advances in mathematics, astronomical  
443 measurement, and law. Essential for the functioning of the legal system and of  
444 the administrative structure of Mesopotamian kingdoms was the cuneiform  
445 writing system. The signs were written on clay tablets and could be used to  
446 represent phonetically many ancient languages, including Sumerian and  
447 Akkadian, the languages of Mesopotamia. Mesopotamians had a complex legal  
448 system and written laws, of which Hammurabi’s are the best preserved, though  
449 not the earliest.

450 Next students explore the development of Mesopotamia society with this  
451 question: **How did people’s lives change as states and empires took over**  
452 **this area?** In the Mesopotamian cities and states, a small elite group of political  
453 leaders (officials, warriors, “nobles”) and priests held the most wealth and power,  
454 while the majority of people remained poor farmers, artisans, or slaves.  
455 Supported by the elites, kings established dynasties, and built large palaces.  
456 Social groups were increasingly divided into a true social hierarchy. Mesopotamia

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457was a patriarchy and men had more power than women. However, priestesses  
458and noblewomen did have some access to power. For example, Sargon placed  
459his daughter in the powerful position of high priestess of the moon god, starting a  
460tradition that continued in the reigns of subsequent kings. Monarchs' wives  
461sometimes controlled their own estates. In the Mesopotamian cities (and in all  
462civilizations) the increase in social differences was a dramatic change for  
463humans.

**Grade Six Classroom Example: Hammurabi's Code**

To build student understanding of how human life changed in these early civilizations, Mrs. Stanton organizes a close reading of excerpts from Hammurabi's laws. Knowing that the text will be challenging for English Learners, she identifies the key passages in the text, the unfamiliar names, the academic vocabulary, and the literacy challenges that students will face. After putting students in groups of four, Mrs. Stanton distributes excerpted texts containing the first sentence of Hammurabi's prologue and the first six phrases of the second sentence (for all groups) and sets of six laws (different selections for each group which all show differentiated punishments for different classes of people.) Mrs. Stanton then explains that students will be analyzing this primary source to gather evidence to answer the question: **How did people's lives change under the rule of Hammurabi and the civilization in Mesopotamia?** She reminds students of the egalitarian life of the hunter-gatherers and limited hierarchy of villages. The students read their texts silently first and then discuss in their groups: **What is this text about? What crimes do the laws punish?** For the

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second reading, Mrs. Stanton guides students through a sentence deconstruction chart of the first sentence, followed by a whole class discussion of Hammurabi’s claims to divine authority as a protector of the people. For the third reading, the students mark up the text and write annotations in the margins. The teacher then models the structure of a social hierarchy pyramid on the board. For the fourth reading, each group analyzes their selection of laws, identifies the social groups, draws a social hierarchy diagram of those groups, and reports to the class orally and in writing. After class discussion, students answer text-dependent questions in a fifth reading. The students then write a summary paragraph about Hammurabi’s Laws, using the words: monarch, prince, rule, Babylon, Marduk, conquered, righteousness, and social hierarchy.

**CA HSS Standards:** 6.2.4

**CA HSS Analysis Skills (6–8):** Research, Evidence, and Point of View 3,  
Historical Interpretation 1

**CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy:** RI.6.3, RI.6.10, SL.6.1, SL.6.4, L.6.4, RH.6–8.1,  
RH.6–8.2, RH.6–8.4, WHST.6–8.2, WHST.6–8.9

**CA ELD Standards:** ELD.PI.6.1, 2, 6, 11; ELD.PII.6.1

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465 Next students look at how the states and empires in Mesopotamia changed  
466 over time, focused on this question: **How did civilizations, complex urban**  
467 **societies, develop in Mesopotamia?** Over the centuries, the cities of  
468 Mesopotamia were divided into multiple states, conquered by invaders, and  
469 combined into new states. While it is not possible or desirable to teach all the  
470 states and groups that ruled over Mesopotamia, it is critical that students

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471 understand the importance of the Persian Empire. The names of the empire  
472 changed often with changes in the ruling groups (Achaemenids, Seleucids,  
473 Parthians, Sasanians), but the Persian Empire maintained its continuity and its  
474 domination over Mesopotamia, Persia, and often wide areas of southwestern  
475 Asia and Egypt, from c. 500 BCE to c. 630 CE. It was the primary political and  
476 cultural presence in western Asia during that period. Because the Persians  
477 fought wars with the ancient Greeks, Greek writers often criticized the Persians.  
478 However, the Persian ruled over a very large empire, from the Aegean Sea to the  
479 Indus River, with policies of multicultural tolerance. After conquest by Alexander  
480 the Great, Persia became a Hellenistic state under the Seleucids until the  
481 Parthians conquered the area. The Parthians nevertheless maintained some  
482 Hellenistic features and trade and diplomatic connections with other Hellenistic  
483 states from Carthage to Bactria. Parthian Persia was the main rival of the Roman  
484 Empire in the eastern Mediterranean. The Sasanians, who took over in 224 CE,  
485 actively promoted Persian nationalism and Zoroastrianism as a state religion. As  
486 the main heir of Mesopotamian civilization, the Persian Empire played as large a  
487 role in world history as the Greeks or Romans.

488 Teachers point out that Mesopotamia and Egypt (as well as many other early  
489 states) were dominated by a combination of religion and kingship. As they study  
490 Egypt, students focus on the question: **How did civilizations, complex urban**  
491 **societies, develop in Egypt?** They learn that from 3000 to 1500, unlike  
492 Mesopotamia, Egypt was usually united under a single king. Egyptian kings  
493 claimed not only to have divine approval but to be deities themselves. The

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494 Egyptians built immense pyramid tombs and grand temples for their rulers.

495 Teachers focus students' attention on the social and political power structures

496 with this question: **How did people's lives change as states and empires took**

497 **over this area?** The Egyptians prized order (*ma'at*) in all aspects of life,

498 including social rules and even careful preparations for the afterlife. Their social

499 hierarchy was an elaborate structure dominated by small elite groups of political

500 leaders (regional lords, officials, and warriors) and priests. The teacher points

501 out the similarity to Mesopotamia. Students analyze the Egyptian writing system

502 in comparison with Mesopotamian cuneiform. Both used a combination of signs

503 that represented sounds (phonemes) and ones that signified word or phrase

504 meanings (logograms). The Egyptians, however, used hieroglyphs and papyrus

505 and stone as writing surfaces rather than clay tablets.

506 Around 1500 BCE, Egypt entered the era known as the New Kingdom. Kings

507 such as Thutmose III expanded the Egyptian empire far up the Nile River into

508 what is now Sudan, and into the Levant, that is, the coastal region at the eastern

509 end of the Mediterranean. Teachers highlight Queen Hatshepsut (ca. 1479-1458

510 BCE) and King Ramses II, also known as Ramses the Great (1279-1212 BCE).

511 During Hatshepsut's reign, as throughout the whole New Kingdom, Egyptian art

512 and architecture flourished, and trade with distant lands brought enormous

513 wealth into Egypt. Ramses II's long reign was a time of great prosperity. He

514 fought battles to maintain the Egyptian Empire and built innumerable temples

515 and monuments throughout Egypt. Students can analyze artistic representations

516 of Hatshepsut, Ramses, and other pharaohs to make interpretations about the



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517divine authority of the pharaoh (how artists represented their power, what  
518qualities a pharaoh should have, and how Egyptian pharaohs were similar to and  
519different from Hammurabi.) After the New Kingdom period, different empires,  
520such as Kush, Persia, and Rome, took over Egypt.

521 Egypt held long trade connections in Eurasia and Africa. Teachers return to  
522question: **From 4000 BCE to 500 BCE, how did contact, trade, and other**  
523**links grow among the urban societies of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Kush, India,**  
524**and the eastern Mediterranean?** Representatives of the king sailed up the Nile  
525to Kush and penetrated the Red Sea coasts to obtain incense, ivory, and ebony  
526wood. To the northeast, they acquired timber from the forests of Lebanon. New  
527Kingdom pharaohs also nurtured ties through treaties and marriage with Middle  
528Eastern states, notably Babylonia (in Mesopotamia), Mittani (in Syria), and the  
529kingdom of the Hittites in Anatolia. Diplomatic envoys and luxury goods circulated  
530among these royal courts, so that they formed the world’s first international  
531community of states. Students may create maps showing the trade routes and  
532products that circulated among Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Anatolia, Persia, and  
533South Asia, as well as in the eastern Mediterranean. Students recognize that the  
534number of states and the intensity of trade connections increased steadily from  
5351500 BCE to 300 CE.

536 The teacher transitions to the study of African civilization of Kush with this  
537question: **What environmental factors helped the Kush civilization grow?**  
538**What impact did civilizations and complex urban societies have on the**  
539**surrounding environment?** Kush lay in the upper Nile Valley, where rainfall was

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540 higher and where farm and cattle land stretched far beyond the banks of the  
541 river. Kush had complex relations with Egypt. In some periods, Egyptian  
542 pharaohs dominated Kush, taxing the population and extracting goods,  
543 particularly gold. After the New Kingdom faded, Kush reasserted its  
544 independence, though maintaining close contacts with Egypt. Next students  
545 explore the question: **From 4000 BCE to 500 BCE, how did contact, trade,**  
546 **and other links grow among the urban societies of Mesopotamia, Egypt,**  
547 **Kush, India, and the eastern Mediterranean?** Teachers may introduce  
548 comparisons between the societies of Kush and Egypt through pictorial  
549 representations of the two architectural traditions. For example, kings of Kush  
550 built pyramids, although they were smaller than Egypt's structures. In the first  
551 millennium BCE, however, Kush developed a distinctive cultural style that  
552 included painted pottery, the elephant as an artistic motif, an alphabetic writing  
553 system, and a flourishing iron industry. The similarities between Egypt and Kush,  
554 and the distinct features of each civilization, offer an opportunity for students to  
555 analyze how one culture adopts products, styles, and ideas from another culture,  
556 but adapts those borrowings to fit its own needs and preferences. Another way to  
557 compare these civilizations is to have students trace how popular goods traded in  
558 the Egyptian world were related to the natural resources available in Egypt and  
559 Kush. They learn that Egyptian trade influenced the development of laws,  
560 policies, and incentives on the use and management of ecosystem goods and  
561 services in the eastern Mediterranean and Nile Valley, which had the long-term  
562 effects on the functioning and health of those ecosystems, through California EEI

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563Curriculum Units 6.2.6/8, “Egypt and Kush: A Tale of Two Kingdoms.”

564 In the eighth century BCE, Kush’s ruler took advantage of political weakness  
565in Egypt to conquer it, uniting a huge stretch of the Nile Valley under the twenty-  
566fifth dynasty for nearly a century. Mapping the trade of Kush merchants with the  
567Arabian Peninsula, India, and equatorial Africa shows students how networks of  
568trade expanded to more and more areas. The Kush state did not seriously  
569decline until the fourth century CE.

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### 571The Ancient Israelites (Hebrews)

572 • What were the beliefs and religious practices of the ancient Israelites?

573 How did the religious practices of Judaism change and develop over  
574 time?

575 • How did the environment, the history of the Israelites, and their  
576 interactions with other societies shape their religion?

577 • How did early Judaism support individuals, rulers, and societies?

578 The ancient Israelites, also known as the Hebrew people, emerged in the  
579eastern Mediterranean coastal region about the twelfth century BCE. To begin  
580the unit, the teacher introduces this question: **How did the environment, the  
581history of the Israelites, and their interactions with other societies shape  
582their religion?** Originally a semi-nomadic pastoral people living on the  
583Mesopotamian periphery, by the eleventh century BCE they organized the  
584kingdom of Israel. Founding a capital in the city of Jerusalem, they terraced the  
585hillsides in their land and built up an agricultural economy. While their state did

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586not long survive, their religion, which became known as Judaism, made an

587enduring contribution of morality and ethics to Western civilization.

588 In their study of Judaism as a monotheistic religion, students also have the

589opportunity to analyze how the religion changed over time. Students focus on the

590questions: **What were the beliefs and religious practices of the ancient**

591**Israelites? How did the religious practices of Judaism change and develop**

592**over time?** While many of main teachings of Judaism, such as a weekly day of

593rest, observance of law, practice of righteousness and compassion, and belief in

594one God, originated in the early traditions of the Jews, other early traditions

595disappeared over time to be replaced by increased emphasis on morality and

596commitment to study. The teacher poses this historical investigation question to

597students: **How did the religious practices of Judaism change and develop**

598**over time?** as they read selected excerpts from the Torah, the first five books of

599the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), which Christians refer to as the Old Testament.

600 Judaism was heavily influenced by the environment, the history of the

601Israelites, and their interactions with other societies. The students return to the

602question: **How did the environment, the history of the Israelites, and their**

603**interactions with other societies shape their religion?** The many farming

604metaphors in the Torah show the pastoral/agricultural environment. The fragile

605position of Canaan in the Fertile Crescent between more powerful neighboring

606states dramatically affected the history of the Israelites. The Exodus from Egypt

607was an event of great significance to Jewish law and belief, especially the

608concept of a special relationship or covenant between the Israelites and God.

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609After the Exodus, Saul, David, and Solomon—three successive kings who  
610probably lived in the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE—united the land of Israel  
611into a state. However, after Solomon’s reign, the unified kingdom split into two:  
612Israel in the north and Judah (from which we get the words Judaism and Jews) in  
613the south.

614 In addition to paying attention to change over time, the teacher asks students  
615to consider: **How did early Judaism support individuals, rulers, and**  
616**societies?** Between the tenth and six centuries BCE, Assyria and then  
617Babylonia absorbed all of Mesopotamia, some of Anatolia, and the Levant,  
618including the two Jewish states, into their huge empires. The Babylonians  
619deported many Jews to Mesopotamia, but in 539 BCE, Cyrus the Great, emperor  
620of the new empire of Persia, allowed the exiled Jews to return home. Later their  
621homeland was taken over by both Greek and Roman rulers. In 70 CE, the  
622Roman army destroyed the Jews’ temple in Jerusalem. As Jews lost their states  
623and spread out into many other lands, their religious practice and community life  
624had to adapt. During the Babylonian period, exiled Jews wrote down the sacred  
625texts that had previously been orally transmitted. When the temple was  
626destroyed, those texts were carried to new communities and preserved and  
627studied by religious teachers or sages, such as Yohanan ben Zaccai in the first  
628century CE, and passed on to younger generations. Many Jews left Canaan,  
629dispersing to lands throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. They  
630carried with them the beliefs, traditions, and laws that served them in constituting  
631new social and economic communities in many lands.

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### 633Ancient Greece

- 634 • How did the environment of the Greek peninsula and islands, the  
635 Anatolian coast, and the surrounding seas affect the development of  
636 Greek societies?
- 637 • What were the differences in point of view and perspective between the  
638 Persians and the Greeks, and between Athenians and Spartans?
- 639 • What were the political forms adopted by Greek urban societies? What  
640 were the achievements and limitations of Athenian democracy?
- 641 • How did Greek thought (a cultural package of mythology, humanistic art,  
642 emphasis on reason and intellectual development, and historical, scientific  
643 and literary forms) support individuals, states, and societies?
- 644 • How did Greek trade, travel, and colonies, followed by the conquests of  
645 Alexander the Great and the spread of Hellenistic culture, affect increasing  
646 connections among regions in Afroeurasia?

647 In this unit students learn about the ancient Greek world, which was centered  
648on the Aegean Sea, including both the Greek peninsula and the west coast of  
649Anatolia (modern Turkey). They begin with the question: **How did the**  
650**environment of the Greek peninsula and islands, the Anatolian coast, and**  
651**the surrounding seas affect the development of Greek societies?** An  
652elongated coastline and numerous islands stimulated seaborne trade, as well as  
653easy communication between one community and another. The peninsula's  
654interior of mountains and deep valleys, by contrast, encouraged the

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655 independence of small communities and city-states, rather than a unified empire.

656 Several waves of migration through the area brought significant changes to the

657 population and culture. Greeks were oriented toward the sea, dependent on

658 trade to feed themselves, and willing to move and settle colonies.

659 The ancient Greek world developed on the periphery of the Egyptian and

660 Mesopotamian civilizations. Greek foundations were laid by the Minoan

661 civilization on Crete and the Mycenaeans on the Greek peninsula. In the eighth

662 century BCE, Greek-speaking people began a major expansion. They developed

663 more productive agriculture, traded olive oil and wine to distant ports, and

664 founded colonies around the Black Sea, on the northern African coast, and in

665 Sicily and southern Italy. These developments contributed to an increasing sense

666 of shared Greek identity, as well as interchange of ideas and goods with

667 Egyptians, Phoenicians, and other neighboring peoples. Around 800 BCE, the

668 Greek language was written down, and shortly afterwards, Homer wrote the *Iliad*

669 and the *Odyssey*, two foundational epic poems, which shed light on the

670 Mycenaean world of fearless warriors who valued public competition and

671 individual glory.

672 Next teachers introduce the focus question: **What were the differences in**

673 **point of view and perspective between the Persians and the Greeks?** The

674 Greek city-states engaged in a pivotal conflict with the Persian (Achaemenid)

675 Empire in the fifth century BCE, and Greek identification of the Persians as their

676 enemies has heavily influenced later European and American perceptions. The

677 Persian Achaemenid Empire was centered in present-day Iran and had

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678conquered Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and Anatolia. Its rulers represented  
679themselves as agents of Ahuramazda, the supreme god in the regionally  
680important religion of Zoroastrianism. The Persians subjugated the Greek city-  
681states of western Anatolia, but they failed in three attempts to invade the Greek  
682peninsula and defeat the Greeks, including those in the cities of Athens and  
683Sparta, the most powerful city-states. Herodotus (ca 484-425 BCE) was a Greek  
684scholar who wrote a vivid narrative of these events in *The Persian Wars*, the first  
685history book. The clear distinction between the Greeks and Persians and the  
686continuing influence of Greek sources (rather than a balance between Greek and  
687Persian sources) gives the teacher a good opportunity to teach students about  
688point of view or perspective. Students can use images of the palace art at  
689Persepolis, particularly the tribute bearers staircase, to see the differences  
690between the ways the Greeks represented the Persians and the Persians  
691represented themselves.

692 Because the Greeks experimented with so many different forms of  
693government and wrote so much about politics, this is the ideal point for teachers  
694to focus on government types and citizenship, with the questions: **What were the**  
695**political forms adopted by Greek urban societies? What were the**  
696**achievements and limitations of Athenian democracy?** In contrast to large  
697empires such as the Persian Achaemenids, the Greeks organized the city-state,  
698or *polis*, with central government authority, control of surrounding farmland, and  
699the concept of citizenship. In most city-states, the earliest rulers were wealthy  
700aristocrats, but they were eventually replaced by tyrants, or personal dictators,

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701and later by oligarchies, that is, small groups of privileged males. A major  
702exception to this pattern was Athens, where a series of reforms in the sixth  
703century broadened the base of civic participation and paved the way for a limited  
704democratic system in the following century. In political and cultural terms, Athens  
705in the fifth century BCE was a highly innovative city. Students may compare its  
706system of direct democracy with modern representative democracy. In Athens,  
707every adult male citizen could vote on legislation, and citizens were chosen for  
708key offices by lot. These principles ensured that decision-making lay mostly in the  
709hands of average citizens. Students may analyze the advantages and limits of  
710this system. For example, women, foreigners, and slaves were excluded from all  
711political participation. In contrast to democratic Athens, Sparta was nearly the  
712equivalent of a permanent army base, its male citizens obligated to full-time  
713military training and rigorous discipline. To investigate the question: **What were**  
714**the differences in point of view and perspective between Athenians and**  
715**Spartans?** students use short quotations from Xenophon’s writing about the  
716Spartans (about the training of boys and girls) to contrast with short quotations  
717from *Pericles’s Funeral Oration*, recorded by Thucydides (from the first four  
718sentences of the third paragraph which address Athenian democracy and self-  
719image, and the fifth paragraph, which contrasts Athenian and Spartan military  
720training.) Since the sentences in these sources are long and complex, the  
721teacher has students underline the subjects, circle the verbs, and draw boxes  
722around the complements or objects of the sentence, points out parallel phrases  
723and clauses, and guides students through identifying references. After this

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724 literacy activity, the teacher guides students through identifying the perspectives

725 of Xenophon and Pericles. While Xenophon was an Athenian who greatly

726 admired the Spartans, Pericles was the leader of Athens in the Peloponnesian

727 War against Sparta (431-404 BCE). His funeral oration was propaganda

728 designed to build Athenian morale and support for the war. The teacher then

729 divides the students into groups, and assigns them text-dependent questions.

730 For each of primary sources, students write out a statement of the author's

731 perspective and one piece of evidence in the text (such as a loaded word or a

732 statement that favors one side). Fighting between Greek city-states was chronic

733 and destructive. Athens at that time ruled large areas of the Aegean basin, but

734 Sparta's victory in the Peloponnesian War brought the Athenian empire to an

735 end. It also ended the classical age of Greece. Conflicts among the city-states

736 contributed to the military conquest of Greece by Philip II of Macedonia.

737 The cultural achievements of the classical Greeks were numerous. Teachers

738 have students consider the question: **How did Greek thought (a cultural**

739 **package of mythology, humanistic art, emphasis on reason and intellectual**

740 **development, and historical, scientific and literary forms) support**

741 **individuals, states, and societies?** Athens produced several philosophers

742 (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle), historians (Herodotus, Thucydides), and orators

743 (Demosthenes, Pericles). It also nurtured drama, both tragedy (Sophocles,

744 Euripides) and comedy (Aristophanes). The Greek art and architecture of the era

745 emphasized naturalistic representations of human forms and buildings of

746 beautiful proportions. The rich tales of Greek mythology influenced all forms of

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747 literature and art. Students may consider examples of ways in which Greek

748 culture has had an enduring influence on modern society.

749 Next students investigate how Greek culture spread in the Hellenistic era,

750 with the question: **How did Greek trade, travel, and colonies, followed by the**

751 **conquests of Alexander the Great and the spread of Hellenistic culture,**

752 **affect increasing connections among regions in Afroeurasia?** Philip II's son

753 Alexander of Macedonia (ruled 336-323) led a military campaign of

754 unprecedented scope, conquering the Persian Empire, Egypt, Central Asia, and

755 even to the Indus River valley. Following his death, his generals and their sons

756 carved his short-lived empire into separate states. The following two centuries

757 are known as the Hellenistic period. "Hellenistic" refers to the influence of Greek

758 cultural forms in regions far beyond the Aegean, though in fact a lively

759 interchange of products and ideas took place in the broad region from the

760 Mediterranean to India. Athenian democracy did not survive, but Greek ideas,

761 such as language, sculpture, and city planning, mingled creatively with the

762 cultural styles of Egypt, Persia, and India. For example, the Egyptian goddess

763 Isis took on a Greek-like identity and came to be venerated widely in the

764 Hellenistic lands. The era also brought innovations in science and mathematics,

765 for example, the principles of geometry came from Euclid, who lived in the

766 Hellenistic Egyptian city of Alexandria. During the Hellenistic period, exchanges

767 of products, ideas, and technologies across Afroeurasia increased greatly and

768 penetrated into many more regions, culminating with connections to China via

769 the Silk Road. Cosmopolitan Hellenistic cities became sites of encounter for

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770 people of different cultures, religions, and regions. Eventually, the Hellenistic

771 kingdoms west of Persia succumbed to the greater military power of Rome,

772 which in turn absorbed many aspects of Greek culture.

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#### 774 **The Early Civilizations of India**

775 • How did the environment influence the emergence and decline of the  
776 Harappa civilization?

777 • How did the religion of Hinduism support individuals, rulers, and societies?

778 • How did the religion of Buddhism support individuals, rulers, and  
779 societies?

780 • During the Harappa civilization, the Vedic period, and the Maurya Empire,  
781 how did the connections between India and other regions of Afroeurasia  
782 increase?

783 In this unit students learn about ancient societies in India. They begin with the  
784 environment: **How did the environment influence the emergence and decline**

785 **of the Harappa civilization?** The earliest civilization, known as Harappan

786 civilization after one of its cities, was centered in the Indus River valley, though its  
787 cultural style spread widely from present-day Afghanistan to the upper Ganga

788 plain (Ganges River). The Indus River and its tributaries, along with Saraswati (or

789 Saraswati) River, flow from the Himalaya mountains southward across the plain

790 now called the Punjab, fan out into a delta, and pour into the Arabian Sea. The

791 river valley was much larger than either Mesopotamia or Egypt, and its soil was

792 very rich. Lessons two and four of the California EEL Curriculum Unit 6.5.1, “The

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793 Rivers and Ancient Empires of China and India,” have students locate and  
794 describe the physical features of the Indus and Ganges river systems in India.  
795 Investigating regional seasonal cycles, especially the summer monsoons,  
796 students provide examples of how these cycles benefitted the permanent  
797 settlement of early Indian civilization, helping them to recognize that humans  
798 depend on, benefit from, and can alter the cycles that occur in the natural  
799 systems where they live.

800 Arising in the third millennium BCE, the Harappan civilization attained its  
801 zenith between about 2600 and 1900 BCE. It was discovered by archaeologists  
802 in the 1920s. Digs have revealed that many Harappan cities, including Harappa  
803 and Mohenjo-daro, were well planned with streets laid out in grids and well-  
804 engineered sewers. Artifacts include pottery, seals, statues, jewelry, tools, and  
805 toys. The seals contain writing that has not yet been deciphered. Some of the  
806 statues and figurines, as well as images on the seals, show features that are all  
807 present in modern Hinduism, such as a male figure that resembles the Hindu  
808 God Shiva in a meditating posture, as well as small clay figures in the posture of  
809 the traditional Hindu greeting “namaste.” Evidence reveals active commerce  
810 between the cities of the Harappan civilization as well as foreign trade with  
811 Mesopotamia by sea. A flourishing urban civilization developed in India from as  
812 early as 3300 BCE along the Indus River. Archaeologists believe this civilization  
813 had its greatest stage of expansion from 2600 - 1700 BCE. The economic basis  
814 of the civilization was surplus agriculture, though the cities of Mohenjo-daro and  
815 Harappa carried on extensive trade. The Harappan civilization steadily declined

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816after 1900 BCE, perhaps owing to ecological factors such as seismic events,  
817deforestation, salt buildup in the soil, and persistent drought, including the drying  
818up of the Sarasvati River around 2000 BCE.

819 Indian history then entered the Vedic period (ca. 1500-500 BCE), an era  
820named for the *Vedas*, Sanskrit religious texts passed on for generations through  
821a complex oral tradition. In that period, according to many scholars, people  
822speaking Indic languages, which are part of the larger Indo-European family of  
823languages, entered South Asia, probably by way of Iran. Gradually, Indic  
824languages, including Sanskrit, spread across northern India. They included the  
825ancestors of such modern languages as Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali. The early Indic  
826speakers were most likely animal herders. They may have arrived in India in  
827scattered bands, later intermarrying with populations perhaps ancestral to those  
828who speak Dravidian languages, such as Tamil and Telugu in southern India and  
829Sri Lanka today. In the same era, nomads who spoke Indo-Iranian languages  
830moved into Persia. Indic, Iranian, and most European languages are related.  
831There is another point of view that suggests that the language was indigenous to  
832India and spread northward, but it is a minority position.

833 Later in the Vedic period, new royal and commercial towns arose along the  
834Ganges (aka Ganga), India's second great river system. In this era, Vedic culture  
835emerged as a belief system that combined the beliefs of Indic speakers with  
836those of older populations. Teachers focus students on the question: **How did**  
837**the religion of Hinduism support individuals, rulers, and societies?**

838Brahmins, that is, priestly families, assumed authority over complex devotional

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839rituals, but many important sages, such as Valmiki and Vyasa, were not  
840brahmins. Ancient Hindu sages (brahmins and others) expounded the idea of the  
841oneness of all living things and of Brahman as the divine principle of being. The  
842Hindu tradition is thus monistic, the idea of reality being a unitary whole.  
843Brahman, an all-pervading divine supreme reality, may be manifested in many  
844ways, including incarnation in the form of Deities. These Deities are worshipped  
845as distinct personal Gods or Goddesses, such as Vishnu who preserves the  
846world, Shiva who transforms it, and Sarasvati, the Goddess of learning. Vedic  
847teachings gradually built up a rich body of spiritual and moral teachings that  
848formed the foundation of Hinduism as it is practiced today. These teachings were  
849transmitted orally at first, and then later in written texts, the *Upanishads* and,  
850later, the *Bhagavad Gita*. Performance of duties and ceremonies, along with  
851devotion and meditation, became dimensions of the supreme quest to achieve  
852oneness with God. That fulfillment, however, demands obedience to the moral  
853law of the universe, called dharma, which also refers to performance of social  
854duties. Dharma consists of natural, universal laws that underlie every person's  
855duty towards themselves, their family, their community and nation. Success or  
856failure at existing in harmony with dharma determines how many times an  
857individual might be subject to reincarnation, or repeated death and rebirth at  
858either lower or higher positions of moral and ritual purity. Progress toward  
859spiritual realization is governed by karma, the principle of cause and effect by  
860which human actions, good and bad, affect this and future lives. Many of the  
861central practices of Hinduism today, including home and temple worship, yoga

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862and meditation, rites of passage (samskaras), festivals, pilgrimage, respect for  
863saints and gurus, and, above all, a profound acceptance of religious diversity,  
864developed over this period.

865 As in all early civilizations, Indian society witnessed the development of a  
866system of social classes. Ancient Indian society formed into self-governing  
867groups, jatis, that emphasized birth as the defining criteria. Jatis initially shared  
868the same occupation and married only within the group. This system, often  
869termed caste, provided social stability and gave an identity to each community.  
870The *Vedas* also describe four main social categories, known as varnas, namely:  
871Brahmins (priests); Kshatriyas (kings and warriors); Vaishyas (merchants,  
872artisans, and farmers) and Sudras (peasants and laborers). A person belonged to  
873a particular varna by his professional excellence and his good conduct, not by  
874birth itself. In addition, by 500 CE or earlier, there existed certain communities  
875outside the jati system, the “Untouchables,” who did the most unclean work, such  
876as cremation, disposal of dead animals, and sanitation.

877 Relations between classes came to be expressed in terms of ritual purity or  
878impurity, higher classes being purer than lower ones. This class system became  
879distinctive over the centuries for being especially complex and formal, involving  
880numerous customs and prohibitions on eating together and intermarrying that  
881kept social and occupational groups distinct from one another in daily life. Over  
882the centuries, the Indian social structure became more rigid, though perhaps not  
883more inflexible than the class divisions in other ancient civilizations. When  
884Europeans began to visit India in modern times, they used the word “caste” to

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885characterize the social system because of the sharp separation they perceived  
886between groups who did not intermarry and thus did not mix with each other.  
887Caste, however, is a term that social scientists use to describe any particularly  
888unbending social structure, for example, slave-holding society in the American  
889south before the Civil War, which can make the “caste” label offensive. Today  
890many Hindus, in India and in the United States, do not identify themselves as  
891belonging to a caste. Teachers should make clear to students that this was a  
892social and cultural structure rather than a religious belief. As in Mesopotamia and  
893Egypt, priests, rulers, and other elites used religion to justify the social hierarchy.  
894Although ancient India was a patriarchy, women had a right to their personal  
895wealth, especially jewelry, gold, and silver, but fewer property rights than men.  
896They participated equally with their husbands in religious ceremonies and festival  
897celebrations. Hinduism is the only major religion in which God is worshipped in  
898female as well as male form.

899 One text Hindus rely on for solutions to moral dilemmas is the *Ramayana*, the  
900story of Rama, an incarnation or avatar of Vishnu, who goes through many  
901struggles and adventures as he is exiled from his father’s kingdom and has to  
902fight a demonic enemy, Ravana. Rama, his wife Sita, and some other characters  
903are challenged by critical moral decisions in this epic work. The teacher might  
904select the scene in which Rama accepts his exile, or the crisis over the broken  
905promise of Sugriva, the monkey king, and then ask students: **What is the moral**  
906**dilemma here? What is the character’s dharma?** In this way, students can

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907deepen their understanding of Hinduism as they are immersed in one of ancient

908India's most important literary and religious texts.

909 Students now turn to the question: **How did the religion of Buddhism**

910**support individuals, rulers, and societies?** Buddhism emerged in the sixth

911century BCE in the moral teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, the "Buddha".

912Through the story of his life, his Hindu background, and his search for

913enlightenment, students may learn about his fundamental ideas: suffering,

914compassion, and mindfulness. Buddhism waned in India in the late first

915millennium CE as the result of a resurgence of Hindu tradition. Buddhist monks,

916nuns, and merchants, however, carried their religion to Sri Lanka (Ceylon),

917Central Asia, China, and Southeast Asia, where many people continue to follow it

918today. In India, through the teachings of Mahavira, Jainism, a religion that

919embraced the dharmic idea of ahimsa, or nonviolence, paralleled the rise of

920Buddhism. It has continued to play a role in modern India, notably in Mohandas

921Gandhi's ideas of nonviolent disobedience.

922 In the late fourth century BCE Chandragupta Maurya unified most of India

923through conquest and diplomacy and established the Maurya Empire. Teachers

924pose the question: **During the the Maurya Empire, how did the connections**

925**between India and other regions of Afroeurasia increase?** Governing a

926powerful empire with a million-man army, the Maurya dynasty maintained strong

927diplomatic and trade connections to the Hellenistic states to the west. The

928Maurya Empire reached its peak under the rule of Chandragupta's grandson

929Ashoka (268-232). Beginning his reign with military campaigns, he had a strong

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930change of heart, converted to Buddhism, and devoted the rest of his rule to

931promoting nonviolence, family harmony, and tolerance among his subjects. The

932Maurya Empire broke up into small states in the early second century BCE.

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### 934**The Early Civilizations of China**

935 • How did the environment influence the development of civilization in  
936 China?

937 • What factors helped China unify into a single state under the Han  
938 Dynasty? What social customs and government policies made the  
939 centralized state so powerful?

940 • How did the philosophical system of Confucianism support individuals,  
941 rulers, and societies?

942 • How did the establishment of the Silk Road increase trade, the spread of  
943 Buddhism, and the connections between China and other regions of  
944 Afroeurasia?

945 In this unit students study early Chinese civilization, that emerged first in the  
946Huang He (Yellow) River valley with the Shang dynasty (ca.1750-1040 BCE) and  
947later spread south to the Yangzi River area. Students begin their study with the  
948question: **How did the environment influence the development of civilization**  
949**in China?** The Huang He could be a capricious river, exposing populations to  
950catastrophic floods. On the other hand, farmers supported dense populations and  
951early cities by cultivating the valley's loess, that is, the light, fertile soil that  
952yielded bountiful grain crops. Through lesson five of California EEI Curriculum

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953Unit, “The Rivers and Ancient Empires of China and India,” students learn about  
954the importance of ecosystem goods and services to the early Chinese. Humans  
955and human communities benefit from the dynamic nature of rivers and streams in  
956ways that are essential to human life and to the functioning of our economies and  
957cultures. Building on its agriculture and natural resources, the Shang society  
958made key advances in bronze-working and written language. Some of the  
959evidence about the Shang comes from “oracle bones,” that is, records of  
960divination inscribed on animal bones. The script on the oracle bones is the direct  
961ancestor of modern Chinese characters, a logographic script that differs from the  
962alphabetic systems that developed in other parts of the world.

963 The Zhou dynasty (1122-256 BCE), the longest lasting in China’s history,  
964grew much larger than the Shang by subjecting local princes and chiefs of  
965outlying territories to imperial authority. By the eighth century BCE, however,  
966many of these subordinate officers built up their own power bases and pulled  
967away from the center, partly by perfecting iron technology to make armaments.  
968The Zhou gradually weakened, plunging China into a long period of political  
969instability and dislocation, especially during the Warring States Period, which  
970lasted nearly two centuries.

971 In those times of trouble, the scholar Confucius (551-479 BCE) lived and  
972wrote. His teachings were the basis of the philosophical system of Confucianism  
973which had a major influence on the development of Chinese government and  
974society. Students focus on the question: **How did the philosophical system of**  
975**Confucianism support individuals, rulers, and societies?** He tried to make

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976sense of the disrupted world he saw, and he proposed ways for individuals and  
977society to achieve order and goodness. By examining selections from the  
978*Analects*, or “sayings” of Confucius, students learn that, as with Socrates and  
979Jesus, his ideas were written down by others at a later time. In Confucian  
980teachings, which were elaborated by other scholars in later centuries, good  
981people practice moderation in conduct and emotion, keep their promises, honor  
982traditional ways, respect elders, and improve themselves through education.  
983Confucius emphasized ritual, filial piety and respect for social hierarchy, and  
984promoted the dignity and authenticity of humanity. He encouraged the most  
985educated, talented, and moral men to serve the state by becoming scholar-  
986officials, which later made the government of China stronger. He also, however,  
987instructed women to play entirely subordinate roles to husbands, fathers, and  
988brothers, though some educated Chinese women produced Confucian literary  
989works.

**Grade Six Classroom Example: The Impact of Confucianism**

In order to help her students understand the social impact of Confucianism, Ms. Aquino asks them to read “Selections from the Confucian Analects,” available on the Asia for Educators website from Columbia University in short excerpts with DBQ questions by topic. Specifically, she has students read and analyze Analects 1.2, 4.16, and 12.2, on filial piety and humaneness, excerpts from the *Classic of Filiality*, and Ban Zhao’s *Admonitions for Women* (the first three paragraphs) written by a woman during the Han dynasty, all on the Asia for Educators website from Columbia University.

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Ms. Aquino first introduces the sources and explains the purpose of the reading is to help answer the question: **How did the philosophical system of Confucianism support individuals, rulers, and societies?** Students undertake close readings of each document one at a time. They attempt the first reading alone.

In the second reading, Ms. Aquino provides sentence deconstruction charts to show students the cause-and-effect structure of the compound sentences of these texts. As her students are reading, Ms. Aquino clarifies that “humaneness” refers both to good individual behavior and social order. Ms. Aquino then asks student pairs to discuss: **What is the relationship between individual good behavior and social order (or the greater good of society)?** Each pair writes down their answer and cites one piece of evidence from the reading to support their answer. Ms. Aquino then has pairs of students share out their answers and evidence, and points out that to Confucius nothing was more important to social order than the good behavior of all individuals.

In the third reading, students mark up the text, underline the positive things that a person should do or be, circle the negative things that a person should not do or be, and draw a box around any words they don’t understand. After students have gone through the first two texts, Ms. Aquino asks students to share out the words that they have underlined while the teacher records those words on the board under the title “Men.” Then she explains that the final text, Ban Zhao’s *Admonitions*, was written by a woman for an audience of women, unlike the first two texts, which were written by men mostly for an audience of men. Students do

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the above close readings with the Ban Zhao text, and the teacher records the positive attributes they have underlined on the board under the title “Women.” Next student groups fill out a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the positive features for men and those for women. As a group, they decide which are the most important similarities and differences, and write a group claim to answer the question: How was the Confucian ideal behavior different for men and women?

To help English learners with academic vocabulary, Ms. Aquino gives them sentence starters as a model, such as “While under Confucianism men were supposed to \_\_\_\_\_ and women were supposed to \_\_\_\_\_, both had the responsibility to \_\_\_\_\_.” and “To maintain order in society, Confucians believed that both men and women should \_\_\_\_\_, but only men had the responsibility to \_\_\_\_\_, while women \_\_\_\_\_.” Finally, each group cites and analyzes three pieces of evidence (one from each source) on an evidence analysis chart.

**CA HSS Standards:** 6.6.3, 6.6.4

**CA HSS Analysis Skills (6–8):** Research, Evidence and Point of View 5

**CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy:** SL.6.1, L.6.5, L.6.6, RH.6-8.1, RH.6-8.2, WHST.6-8.1, WHST.6-8.7, WHST.6-8.9

**CA ELD Standards:** ELD.PI.6.1, 3, 6a, 6b, 10b, 11a; ELD.PII.6.1, 6

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991 Daoism was a second important philosophical tradition begun in this early  
992period. According to Chinese tradition, Laozi (Lao-tzu) was another sage who,  
993lived around the same time as Confucius and developed an alternative set of  
994teachings. Daoism emphasized simple living, shunning of ambition, harmony with

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995nature, and the possibility of a blissful afterlife. Teachers should note that the  
996Pinyin Romanization system (Laozi and Daoism) is now more widely used than  
997the Wade-Giles system (Lao-tzu and Taoism) used in the standards.

998 Next students turn to Chinese imperial government, with the questions: **What**  
999**factors helped China unify into a single state under the Han Dynasty? What**

1000**social customs and government policies made the centralized state so**

1001**powerful?** China’s long era of division ended when Shi Huangdi (221-210 BCE),

1002a state-builder of great energy, unified China from the Yellow River to the Yangzi

1003River and created the Qin dynasty. In less than a dozen years, he laid the

1004foundations of China’s powerful imperial bureaucracy. He imposed peace and

1005regularized laws. He also severely punished anyone who defied him, including

1006Confucian scholars, and he uprooted tens of thousands of peasant men and

1007women to build roads, dykes, palaces, the first major phase of the Great Wall,

1008and an enormous tomb for himself. Teachers may introduce students to the

1009excavations of this immense mausoleum, which have yielded a veritable army of

1010life-sized terra cotta soldiers and horses. Shi Huangdi is also well known for

1011employing scholars to standardize and simplify the Chinese writing system,

1012which provided the empire with a more uniform system of communication.

1013 Shi Huangdi’s Qin Dynasty soon fell to the longer-lasting Han dynasty (206

1014BCE-220 CE), which unified even more territory and placed central government

1015in the hands of highly educated bureaucrats. Immersed in Confucian teachings,

1016these scholar-officials promoted the idea that peace in society requires people to

1017think and do the right thing as mapped out by tradition. Harmony in the family



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1018 was seen by Confucians as the key to harmony in the world. Ethical principles  
1019 should uplift the state. Rulers should govern righteously because when they do  
1020 they enjoy the trust of their subjects. The benevolent ruler demonstrates that he  
1021 possesses divine approval, or the “mandate of heaven,” an idea that first  
1022 emerged in Zhou dynasty times. But if the monarch is despotic, he risks losing  
1023 that mandate, bringing misfortune on his people and justifiable rebellion.  
1024 Promotion of Confucianism helped create a strong, stable government and social  
1025 order in China. All educated men (from the emperor on down) were trained to  
1026 serve the state and act morally for the good of the people, rather than to seek  
1027 profit. The highest social rank (under the imperial family) was to be a scholar-  
1028 official, rather than a warrior, priest, or merchant.

1029 In the first century CE, Han officials governed about 60 million people, the  
1030 great majority of them productive farmers. Major technological advances of the  
1031 era include new iron farm tools, the collar harness, the wheelbarrow, silk  
1032 manufacturing, and the cast-iron plow, which cultivators used to open extensive  
1033 new rice-growing lands in southern China. Han power declined in the second  
1034 century CE, as regional warlords increasingly broke away from centralized  
1035 authority, leading to some 400 years of Chinese disunity. However, the ideal that  
1036 China should be unified was never lost, and later dynasties modeled themselves  
1037 after the Han, as they united the whole territory under one centralized state,  
1038 governed by Confucian principles using scholar-officials, and tried to keep the  
1039 Mandate of Heaven.

1040 The Han Dynasty also established important connections with other cultures,

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1041as students investigate with the question: **How did the establishment of the**  
1042**Silk Road increase trade, the spread of Buddhism, and the connections**  
1043**between China and other regions of Afroeurasia?** The spread of the Han  
1044empire to the north and west, concern about nomadic raiders from the north led  
1045to seek contact with societies to the west. At the end of the second century BCE,  
1046the Han Chinese empire and the Parthian Persian empire exchanged  
1047ambassadors. Chinese ambassadors (and merchants) gave gifts of silk cloth to  
1048the Parthians, Kushans, and other Central Asian states. Quickly realizing the  
1049value of silk, merchants from Persia, the Kushan and Maurya empires, and other  
1050Central Asian states began to trade regularly with Chinese merchants. Caravans  
1051of luxury goods regularly traveled the overland trade route, “the Silk Road” (really  
1052a number of routes, trails and roads) that crossed the steppes north of the  
1053Himalayas. Maritime commerce along the chain of seas that ran from the East  
1054China Sea to the Red Sea also developed rapidly in that era. Students outline the  
1055land and sea trade routes on a map, preferably a map of Afroeurasia, so that  
1056they can see that connections now spread all the way across the middle of  
1057Afroeurasia, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Ideas also spread along the trade  
1058routes. In the climate of insecurity after the fall of the Han empire, missionaries  
1059began spreading Buddhism along the Silk Road to China. Students analyze the  
1060style of carvings of Buddhas and paintings from Dunhuang and Yungang which  
1061combine Indian, central Asian, and Chinese artistic influences.

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1063**The Development of Rome**

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1064 • What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Roman Republic? Why

1065 did the Roman Republic fall?

1066 • How did the Romans advance the concept of citizenship?

1067 • How did the environment influence the expansion of Rome and its

1068 integrated trade networks?

1069 • How did other societies (the Greeks, Hellenistic states, Han China,

1070 Parthian Persia) influence and affect the Romans?

1071 The final unit on Rome presents a challenge to teachers because it is also

1072taught in seventh grade. The sixth-grade teacher emphasizes the development of

1073the Roman Republic and the transition to the Roman Empire, focusing on the

1074themes of environment, political systems and citizenship, and increasing trade

1075and connections between societies. The teacher also uses this unit to draw

1076together major themes from the course by comparing Rome to earlier and

1077contemporaneous societies and provide closure to the course. The teacher

1078begins with the influences of the Greeks and Hellenistic culture on Rome, with

1079this question: **How did other societies (the Greeks, Hellenistic states, Han**

1080**China, Parthian Persia) influence and affect the Romans?** Originally a small

1081farming community on the central west coast of the Italian peninsula, Rome was

1082on the edge of the prosperous eastern Mediterranean sphere dominated by

1083Greeks, Egyptians, and peoples of the Levant. The Roman Republic grew in the

1084Hellenistic environment and drew on the trade, technology, and culture of the

1085Greeks. Through military action, diplomacy, and the practice of granting

1086citizenship to conquered peoples, the Romans were able to unite the entire

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1087coastal area around the Mediterranean into a single empire and to extend that  
1088empire into Europe. Roman culture absorbed much of the Greek and Hellenistic  
1089traditions. Rome’s own innovations included the arch, concrete, technologically  
1090sophisticated road building, and a body of laws that has had immense influence  
1091on legal systems in Europe, the United States, and other parts of the world.

1092 Students probe more deeply into Roman politics with this question: **How did**  
1093**the Romans advance the concept of citizenship?** Citizenship, republican  
1094institutions, and the rule of law are major Roman contributions to civics.

1095According to Roman tradition, Vergil’s *Aeneid*, and the works of the historian Livy,  
1096Romulus, a descendant of the Trojan Aeneas, founded the city in 753 BCE.

1097Kings first ruled Rome, but a republic replaced the monarchy in 509 BCE. The  
1098Romans adopted a distinct form of democracy, based on the Athenian model,  
1099with legislative power resting not with the entire mass of citizens, but with their  
1100representatives. Even though the political system experienced many problems as  
1101Rome grew in size, Roman culture provided very stable idea of citizenship.

1102Whereas the ancient Greeks valued competition and individual achievement, the  
1103highest virtue to the Romans was duty to their families, to the state, and to the  
1104gods. They idealized the virtue of public service, as depicted in the story of  
1105Cincinnatus, who according to Roman sources was living on a farm when he was  
1106chosen to serve as dictator during a hostile invasion in 458 BCE. Cincinnatus  
1107gave up his power after the defeat of the enemy to return to his simple life on the  
1108farm. His selfless devotion to public service inspired later leaders such as  
1109George Washington. Just as Confucian teachings on the ideal of government

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1110service strengthened Chinese government and society, the Roman ideal of the  
1111duty of a citizen to the state gave considerable stability to the state and social  
1112order.

1113 The legend of Cincinnatus also emphasizes that the duty of a Roman to the  
1114state was often to fight. The Roman military was large, tough, and powerful.

1115Environmental factors also influenced Rome’s expansion, which students  
1116analyze with this focus question: **How did the environment influence the**  
1117**expansion of Rome and its integrated trade networks?** During the Early  
1118Republic (509-264 BCE), the Romans took over the entire Italian peninsula,  
1119whose fertile valleys and coastal plains produced bountiful harvests of wheat,  
1120wine, olive oil, and wool. Rome defeated its nearby neighbors in a series of wars  
1121and partially incorporated them into the young state, which ensured a steady  
1122supply of soldiers for the growing army. Expansion around the Mediterranean rim  
1123began in the third century BCE, when Rome defeated the maritime state of  
1124Carthage in the Punic Wars. By devastating Carthage, Rome gained thousands  
1125of square miles of wheat land in Sicily and North Africa, as well as a windfall of  
1126Spanish silver. In the decades before and after the turn of the millennium, Rome  
1127also conquered the Hellenistic kingdoms of Greece and Egypt.

1128 As Rome grew in size, the republican government that had worked for it as a  
1129small city-state became more and more overwhelmed. The teacher introduces  
1130the focus question: **What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Roman**  
1131**Republic? Why did the Roman Republic fall?** Rome’s constitution distributed  
1132power among elected officials, the citizen body, and the oligarchic senate, but in

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1133practice decision-making lay with the senate, especially with its most influential  
1134members. One problem was that only certain elite citizens, called the patricians,  
1135had access to the senate and thus to political power. Other citizens, called the  
1136plebeians, challenged the elite patricians in violent conflicts. Plebeians finally  
1137won legal protections against patrician power and access to high political offices.  
1138However, as the Roman army conquered the entire Mediterranean basin,  
1139massive wealth from trade and spoils, as well as large numbers of slaves, poured  
1140into Italy. This increased the divide between wealthy (senators, patricians, and  
1141some plebeians) and poor (most plebeians, conquered foreigners, and slaves)  
1142and put great strain on the Roman political system.

1143 By the Late Republic (133-31 BCE), political competition between senators  
1144became intense and increasingly violent. A succession of ambitious generals  
1145used the loyal armies to challenge each other and, increasingly, the authority of  
1146the entire senate, which the statesman and author Cicero symbolized. This  
1147discord culminated in the dictatorship of Julius Caesar and, under his successor  
1148Augustus (31 BCE-14 CE), in the establishment of what was in essence a  
1149monarchy and a new ruling dynasty. Augustus refused the title of king and  
1150pretended to defer to the senate, but his control over Rome was complete.  
1151Rulers afterwards took the title emperor. For much of the first two centuries CE,  
1152the Roman Empire enjoyed political and territorial stability, and the provinces  
1153benefited from new roads, a standardized currency, economic growth, and  
1154peaceful conditions.

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1155 Returning to the question: **How did the Romans advance the concept of**  
1156**citizenship?** students evaluate the Roman Republic. The Roman republic  
1157provided a model for future democratic institutions and the development of civic  
1158culture and citizenship, in the early U.S. and other modern nations. Students  
1159consider ways in which modern writers, artists, and political leaders have  
1160appropriated Greek and Roman ideals, values, and cultural forms as worthy  
1161models for civil society. Besides the borrowed words (senate and capitol, for  
1162example), architectural styles, and rhetorical models, later democratic states  
1163were inspired by the heroic civic models of Cincinnatus, the Horatius brothers,  
1164and Cicero, who defended the state and its republican institutions even when it  
1165was not in their self-interest. The struggle of Roman groups to widen political  
1166participation to the plebeians, to control the growing empire without allowing  
1167individuals to grow too wealthy or too powerful, and to harness the power of the  
1168military leaders to the service of the state, also offered sobering examples of how  
1169republicanism could be undermined by social conflict, individual self-interest, and  
1170military power. The teacher asks students why Romans allowed Julius and then  
1171Augustus Caesar to take over the republic. Both were successful military leaders  
1172who delivered peace after a long period of civil war. **Did the Romans give up**  
1173**freedom for order and peace?**

1174 However, even after Rome became an empire, the idea of citizenship  
1175remained strong. Wealthy Romans regularly contributed their personal funds to  
1176build civic structures, fund entertainments for the general public, and improve city  
1177life. The teacher has students analyze visuals from Pompeii of dedication

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1178plaques and inscriptions that are evidence of Roman civic contributions. **Why did**

1179**wealthy Romans pay for these public structures and events? What did**

1180**citizenship mean to them? How did the Romans advance the concept of**

1181**citizenship?** The teacher connects the Roman example to the responsibilities of

1182students as citizens of the U.S. and to opportunities for service learning projects.

1183 Students make a social hierarchy pyramid of Roman society and recognize

1184that by the Late Republic, Rome had a huge population of slaves. The teacher

1185has them compare and contrast the social hierarchy of Rome and other earlier

1186societies. Roman fathers had power over their families and dependents. Women

1187who were not enslaved could achieve citizenship, though with several

1188restrictions. They could neither attend the popular assemblies that had certain

1189legislative powers nor serve as elected magistrates. They could, however, make

1190wills, sue for divorce, circulate openly in public, and hold certain religious offices.

1191Also, wives and mothers in wealthy families sometimes exerted great influence

1192on public decisions. The teacher emphasizes that all the urban societies studied

1193in the course, like most premodern societies, were patriarchies, with small

1194wealthy and powerful elite groups and very large poor populations who worked at

1195farming. Unlike Han China, however, much of the farming in Rome was done by

1196slaves.

1197 Finally students investigate the question: **How did other societies (the**

1198**Greeks, Hellenistic states, Han China, Parthian Persia) influence and affect**

1199**the Romans?** Rome at its height was at the center of a web of trade routes by

1200land and sea. Huge plantations worked by slave labor produced grain to feed the



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1201 Roman cities. Uniting the diverse environments of Egypt, North Africa, Syria,  
1202 Anatolia, Greece and Europe gave Romans access to vast resources. Roman  
1203 roads united the empire, and trade routes by land and sea connected it with  
1204 eastern Asia. Wealthy Romans dressed in silk imported from China and jewels  
1205 imported from India. Students create maps of the trade routes across Afroeurasia  
1206 that connected the Roman and Han empires with the Persians and Central  
1207 Asians as middlemen. The teacher has student pairs examine a physical map of  
1208 Afroeurasia and a map of the Roman Empire at its furthest extent. He or she  
1209 asks the students to predict where the Romans would expand next. Student pairs  
1210 write down a prediction and give geographical evidence to support it. This  
1211 analysis shows that the Romans had actually conquered all the desirable land  
1212 around them, with the exception of Persia. To the north was a cold land of forests  
1213 and barbarians, to the south and southeast were deserts, to the west, the ocean.  
1214 The teacher points out that this presented huge problems to Rome, which they  
1215 will study in seventh grade.

1216 The Romans could not expand to the east because they could not defeat the  
1217 Persian empire, first under the Parthians and then under the Sasanians. In the  
1218 first century BCE, Roman attacked the Parthians from their base in Syria. This  
1219 resulted in a catastrophic military defeat for Rome and confirmed the Parthian  
1220 empire as Rome's chief rival for control over Mesopotamia. The Parthian and  
1221 Sasanian Persian emperors promoted the religion of Zoroastrianism to  
1222 strengthen the power of their state and build up a national identity. Fighting  
1223 continued between the two empires along the border in a bitter conflict. However,

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1224religious ideas and trade products spread back and forth between the two

1225enemies. Many Romans began to follow Mithraism, a religion from Persia and

1226the east. Christianity spread back and forth across the Roman-Persian border.

California Department of Education  
December 2015