**Unit Backwards Design Planning (UBD) Template**

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**River Civilization:** Mesopotamia

# *Step One: Identify Desired Results (Essential Question(s) National/State/Common Core Standards)*

**Unit Summary and Rationale:**

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| **Summary**  Students will complete a 5 day unit covering the characteristics that make up the ancient river civilization, Mesopotamia. They will learn about the influence of the geography on the creation of Mesopotamia as well as its individual governments, cultures, economic systems, technologies, and agricultural practices/products. Students will investigate the meaning of the word Mesopotamia and how it reflects its location as well as the regional features of the civilization. They will complete Webquests and analyze videos in order to investigate Mesopotamian achievements and influences on the environment as well as their specific trade routes and customs. Students will wrap the unit up with a diorama project/skit to represent the physical and human characteristics that they have learned througout the past week. Students will be assessed with a variety of formal and summative assessments in order to be given the opportunity to properly portray their understanding of this topic.  **Rationale**  Students need to be provided with a variety of learning activities and assessments in order to grasp a concept with such a wide array of content as ancient civilizations. This unit will allow students to be able to describe the influence of geography on development of Mesopotamia along with its governments, cultures, economic systems, technologies, and agricultural practices/products. Students also need to be able to understand and describe how the influences of Mesopotamia have created present day traditions, geographical characteristics, and cultures in the Eastern Hemisphere. |

**Essential Question(s):**

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| * How did the geographical characteristics influence the creation and sustainability of the Mesopotamian civilization? * How did the ideas and events of ancient Mesopotamia shape the Eastern Hemisphere today? |

**National Standard(s) or Choose any of your Current National Standards**Optional

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| Use NCSS Standards. Please write out Thematic Strand and Performance Expectations, and indicate page number(s). Use more than one Strand.  **Thematic Strand:** People, Places, and Environments  **Performance Expectation:** The study of people, places, and human-environment interactions leads learners to create their spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world. Today’s social, cultural, economic, and civic demands on individuals require that learners understand the world in spatial terms and possess knowledge of places and regions, physical systems, and the interactions of environment and society.  **Thematic Strand:** Time, Continuity, and Change  **Performance Expectation:** The study of time, continuity, and change and how historians study the past allows learners to understand their historical roots and to locate themselves in time. Learning how to read and reconstruct the past allows them to develop a historical perspective |

**State Standard(s)/Common Core:**

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| Use the ONLS for Social Studies.  **Strand:** History  **Skill Topic:** *Early Civilizations*-The eight features of civilizations include cities, well-organized central governments, complex religions, job specialization, social classes, arts and architecture, public works and writing. Early peoples developed unique civilizations. Several civilizations established empires with legacies influencing later peoples  **Content Statement:** Early civilizations (India, Egypt, China and Mesopotamia) with unique governments, economic systems, social structures, religions, technologies and agricultural practices and products flourished as a result of favorable geographic characteristics. The cultural practices and products of these early civilizations can be used to help understand the Eastern Hemisphere today  **Strand:** Geography  **Skill Topic:** *Spatial Thinking and Skills*-Spatial thinking examines the relationships among people, places and environments by mapping and graphing geographic data. Geographic data are compiled, organized, stored and made visible using traditional and geospatial technologies. Students need to be able to access, read, interpret and create maps and other geographic representations as tools of analysis. thinking examines the relationships among people, places and environments by mapping and graphing geographic data. Geographic data are compiled, organized, stored and made visible using traditional and geospatial technologies. Students need to be able to access, read, interpret and create maps and other geographic representations as tools of analysis.  **Content Statement:** Latitude and longitude can be used to identify absolute locatio**n.**  **Strand:** Geography  **Skill Topic:** *Places and Regions*-A place is a location having distinctive characteristics, which give it meaning and character and distinguish it from other locations. A region is an area with one or more common characteristics, which give it a measure of homogeneity and make it different from surrounding areas. Regions and places are human constructs  **Content Statement:** Regions can be determined, classified and compared using various criteria (e.g., landform, climate, population, cultural, or economic).  **Strand:** Geography  **Skill Topic:** *Human Systems*-Human systems represent the settlement and structures created by people on Earth’s surface. The growth, distribution and movements of people are driving forces behind human and physical events. Geographers study patterns in cultures and the changes that result from human processes, migrations and the diffusion of new cultural traits.  **Content Statement:** Variations among physical environments within the Eastern Hemisphere influence human activities. Human activities also alter the physical environment.  Include at least 1 Common Core Literacies Standard  **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.7:** Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.  **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2:** Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study. |

**Unit goal(s)**

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| **Unit Goal(s)** | * Through investigations of maps and research of the region, learn about and be able to describe the influence of geography on development of Mesopotamia * Learn about and create a presentation that reflects the characteristics of ancient Mesopotamia such as its governments, cultures, economic systems, technologies, and agricultural practices/products * Conduct research in order to determine the influence of Mesopotamia in Eastern Hemisphere today |

**Description of Teaching Methodology**

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| **Teaching Methodology** | Discuss the various teaching methods you will be using and why you have chosen these methods.   * **Jigsaw Teaching:** Allowing students to work in groups to research a topic and become the “expert” allows them to take responsibility for the information they are learning. When they are then repaired and asked to teach their peers about the topic it reinforces their understanding and memory of the information on a deeper level. “Student work should reflect a balance between retrieval and recitation of content and a thoughtful examination of concepts in order to provide intellectual challenges.” (socialstudies.org). * **Webquests:** This method is a fun way for students to be able to gather information on a topic on their own and begin to analyze it themselves. Starting the Webquest with a witty narrative gets students excited about completing the task at hand. Giving students more responsibility in their learning makes it that much more meaningful for them * **Historical Videos:** Using short clips with a clear end goal given at before watching allow students to focus in on the video and task at hand. It’s a fun way to provide students with information especially when you allow them to analyze and apply that information in a hands-on way following the video. * **Hands-On/Minds-On Projects:** Allowing students to demonstrate their understanding through hands-on/minds-on projects is an important teaching method to utilize. These types of projects gives way for more opportunities for students with different learning styles the chance to shine (kinesthetic, visual, auditory). “Active learning is not just “hands-on,” it is “minds-on.” (socialstudies.org) |

**Context for Teaching**

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| **Context for**  **Teaching** | Discuss the circumstances in which you will teach. Type of school, class size, room arrangement, schedule, available resources including technology, hard copy etc.  **Type of School:** Rural, Public Elementary School  **Class Size:** 25 students  **Room Arrangement:** Pods of four  **Schedule:** 60 minute class periods  **Resources:** chromebooks for each student, individual dry-erase boards, Elmo projector |

# *Step Two: Determine Acceptable Evidence*

How will you know if students have answered the essential questions, reached the desired results and met the standards? What will you accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency? List pre-, formative, and summative assessments here. Be sure to include a range of appropriate activities along the continuum, including informal checks for understanding, observation/dialogue, quizzes/tests, academic prompts, and performance tasks/projects.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Pre- | Formative | Summative |
| Student Predictions  Mapping  Discussions/Questions | Webquest Worksheet  Jigsaw Teaching | Presentations  Written/Illustrated Explanations  dioramas/Skits or Still-Lifes |

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| Using the chart above, explain why you chose these assessments to meet your unit standards and essential question(s). Describe the assessments themselves and what content or concepts they will measure. Discuss ways in which you might use formative assessments to inform your instruction. This description should be in narrative form.  **Student Predictions:** Getting students talking about their own thoughts and background knowledge on the very first day will help me as the teacher get a feel for what they may already know or what they need more assistance one. These predictions will help me to measure their understanding of the regional characteristics of Mesopotamia.  **Mapping:** Asking students to illustrate different types of maps of Mesopotamia will not only help them understand how places and regions can be defined but will allow me to assess their understanding of these different concepts and any further instruction I need to provide before moving on to more in depth concepts around this topic.  **Discissions/Questions:** Similarly to their predictions, discussions and questions will help me measure student undertsanding throughout each lesson and then provide support or extension where needed. Students will have the opportunity to discuss any changes they’d like to make in their original predictions during lesson 1 which will show me informally how much they’ve learned from their research so far.  **Webquest Worksheet:** As a formal assessment this worksheet will allow me to check in with my students throughout their Webquest. Based on the notes they are taking and the information they are collecting through their research, I can assess their understanding and provide extra guidance where needed before the students move on to their summative assessments on these days.  **Jigsaw Teaching:** This process in general is a great way to formally assess student understanding on a topic. While observing students in their original groups collecting information on their topic I am able to guide them without giving them the information directly. Allowing the students to then teach on another is yet another way for me to observe their understandign through their abilities to relay the information they have learned to their peers in a way that will help them learn about the topic. This shows me that not only have they obtained the information through research but understand it (or not) on a deep enough level to explain it in their own words to another student. If they have collected the information but can not explain it then I know that they are lacking the in depth understanding they need to have and so further instruction may be needed.  **Poster Board/Presentations:** Allowing students to form their own opinions on the importance of certain topics is important at this age. It allows them to become more passionate about what they are learning about and gain a greater appreciation for the topic. This also allows for deeper understanding that I as the teacher am able to more easily assess. Asking students to create both a poster board and presentation on the achievements they believe are the most important shows me how well they have grasped the information thorugh their ability to display their information through different forms.  **Written/Illustrated Explanations:** Giving students choice is very important when it comes to summative assessments and gives students more responsibilty since they are deciding how they want to present their understanding. I am able to assess their understanding of the effects humans can have on the environment easily through these two forms of explanation as well.  **diorama/Skit or Still-Life:** This culminating project brings everything the students have learned full circle in a creative and fun way for the students. The diorama itself will show me exactly how much of the physical features they were able to grasp and the skit/still-life allows me to assess not only their understanding but their interpretation of the human characteristics of the Mesopotamians. Splitting up the human characteristics and allowing the students to present their topic to the rest of the class also allows for another opportunity for students to gain understanding of the concepts in a different way. |

# *Step Three: Matrix (Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction)*

Plan for at least five consecutive days. Be sure to include more than one strategy and assessment each day. Add more days as needed. You do not have to sue this Table –feel free to use any format you want for each lesson (as shown in the Cmap examples)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Topic/Content/**  **Geography Themes** | **Strategies/Activities** | **Assessment** | **Materials** |
| Monday | **Topics:** History, Geography  **Content Statements:** 2, 4, 5  **Themes:** Region, Location | Students will look up the word Mesopotamia for a definition/meaning of the actual word (between rivers). Students will predict why this region was named in this way and discuss. Students will locate the absolute and relative locations of Mesopotamia. Teacher will divide the class into small groups and assign each group to find, illustrate, and present the following locations: latitude/longitude, continent, hemisphere, and neighboring countries. Revisit and discuss student predictions and any changes they might want to make about their thoughts after locating the Mesopotamian region on a map. Put students into small groups and have them research different characteristics of this region (language, culture, physical, traditions, governments, etc.) then jigsaw group them and have them “teach” each other about their specific characteristics.  Example Research Site:  Ancient Mesopotamia: This history, our history. Life in Mesopotamia. Retrieved July 31, 2016, from http://mesopotamia.lib.uchicago.edu/mesopotamialife/article.php?theme=First%20Farmers | Teacher will informally observe student predictions/discussion using a formative observation chart. Teacher will examine student charts for accuracy on their researched topic as well as observe student jigsaw teaching. | -Dictionaries or chromebooks with access to internet  -Student maps  -Blank paper/coloring utensils for illustrations  -Chart for note-taking on group work assignment  -Observation Chart |
| **Tuesday** | **Topics:** History, Geography  **Content Statements:** 2, 5  **Themes:** Place, Region | Students will use the Webquest below to research achievements made by Ancient Mesopotamians and give a presentation to the Museum Board to convince them which achievements are most significant. Webquest: <http://questgarden.com/52/41/5/070613164641/index.htm> | Students will be assessed on a strict rubric for their completion of their worksheet, poster board, presentation, and persuasive paragraph. | -Chromebooks  -Webquest link  -Webquest worksheet  -Poster board/materials to decorate  -Lined paper or notebooks for persuasive paragraphs  -Rubric |
| **Wednesday** | **Topics:** History  **Content Statements:** 2, 6  **Theme:** Movement | Ask students to use their social studies journals to make predictions about the types of goods the Mesopotamians traded as well as the types of transportation they used. Students will watch the Discovery video below about Mesopotamia trade and transportation  Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ri-x3dXBQM>.  Following the video, have students map out the different trade routes, including illustrations of the types of transportation used along with specific routes and the types of goods that were traded. Ask students to include captions of why as well.  Supplemental Activity:  Trade challenge. Retrieved July 31, 2016, from http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/trade/challenge/cha\_set.html | Student maps will be examined and graded on a rubric scale determing their understanding of Mesopotamian trade routes, transportation, and types of goods. | -Social studies journals  -T.V. or projector to show video  -Blank maps and materials to illustrate  -Rubric |
| **Thursday** | **Topics:** History, Geography  **Content Statements:** 2, 6  **Theme:** Human-Environment Interaction | Students will complete the Webquest below individually or with a partner/small group in which They explore how the region once known as the Fertile Crescent is now a desert.  <http://zunal.com/process.php?w=254298>. Students will see and understand the long term effects humans can have on the environment and share their learning through either a drawing or written explanation of their choice. | Students will be assessed on a strict rubric for their completion of their drawing or written explanation. | -Webquest link  -Chromebooks  -Blank paper/materials for drawings  -Lined paper for written explanations  -Rubric |
| **Friday** | **Topics:** History, Geography  **Content Statements:** 2, 5  **Theme:** Place | Sudents will be asked to create a 3D diorama of the physical features of Mesopotamia, including depictions of climate, plant and animal life, mountains, rivers, etc. Assign groups of students to different human characteristics such as religion, agriculture, food, etc. and ask each group to create their own props and present these characteristics in either a skit/play or a still-life picture with a “presenter” who narrates a summary of the scene.  Supplementary Video (How to Make a Diorama): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\_DJKyM3JIAI | Teacher will examine student understanding of physical features of Mesopotamia but observing their 3D dioramas. Student understanding of both physical and human characteristics of the Mesopotamians will be graded on a rubric. | -Extra shoe boxes for dioramas  -Materials to create dioramas  -Materials that could used to make props  -Lined paper for narrator’s summary  -Rubric |

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by Design*. Alexandria, VA: USCD.

*Use of differentiated instruction – Give this a TRY!*

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| *Bullet list the accommodations you will provide for individuals and subgroups within your class (accelerated, ELL, special needs, etc.). This does not mean simply requiring students to do more or less; it means helping them access content and produce satisfactory work in ways best suited to their academic needs. This might include teacher modeling, utilizing graphic organizers, translation websites, differentiated reading materials, tiered activities, choice boards, etc.*  **Accellerated:** Students will be encouraged to create 3D models of their work on the Webquests instead of 2D illustrations or written explanations. Students will be asked to combine the physical and human characteristics in the final project into one overall presentation within their skit/play or still-life instead of separating the two assignments.  **ELL:** Students will be provided with extended vocabulary assistance at the fore-front of each lesson to prepare them beforhand. Students will also be provided with concrete examples of assignments in order to further reinforce their understanding of expectations. Translations will be provided when necessary.    **Special Needs:** Students will be provided with further options on assignments such as oral presentation of information learned instead of written or illustrated. Students will be proivded with graphic organizers in order to organize the information during individual and group research more effectively. Students will be provided with concrete examples of assignments to reinforce final expectations. |

*Self-analysis:*

Using the table below, please describe how the content, strategies, and assessments you have planned meet at least FIVE criteria from our Social Studies Best Practices (BP) in class Activity:

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| Active | Students learn by reaching their own conclusions and knowledge through hands-on AND minds-on lessons and activities. They are engaged in their learning through activities such as Webquests in which they must research and identify important information on their own. |
| In-Depth | Students learn by covering less topics in more depth, creating a passion to continue further exploration on their own. Students must investigate topics in depth to analyze and come up with their own conclusions such as how the Fertile Crescent became a more desert area. |
| Independent and Cooperative | Students learn by working individually and within diverse groups. Students will investigate topics through individual mapping, creation of personal dioramas, and participating in jigsaw teachings. They come together in small and large groups to work cooperatively create still-life or other representations of Mesopotamia characteristics. |
| Challenging | Students should be challenged through higher order thinking skills and questions. Students will be asked to gather information through Webquests and research in order to solve problems and create a culminating project that depicts an overarching depiction of Mesopotamia. |
| Integrative | Social studies disciplines should be integrated as well as other content areas. Students are asked to effectively utilize technology through Webquests and research as well as reading/writing skills and communication through their presentations. Geography standards are tightly woven within the history content using all 5 of the themes. |

**Diorama and Skit/Still-Life Rubric**

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| Required Element | Target 10-8 | Acceptable 7-5 | Unacceptable 4-0 |
| Diorama | Student creates a 3D representation of Ancient Mesopotamia that depicts physical features including: rivers, mountains, plant/animal life, climate, etc. | Student creates a 3D representation of Ancient Mesopotamia but only includes 2-3 correct physical features. | Student creates a 3D respresentation of Ancient Mesopotamia but includes less than 2 correct physical features. |
| Skit/Still-Life | Students work together to create a skit or still-life that accuractely depicts their assigned human characteristic of Ancient Mesopotamia. Students write a summary of their skit/Still-Life to be read-aloud when presenting that accurately describes their assigned human charactersitic. | Students create a skit or still-life but it is missing one or two accurate depictions of their assigned human characteristic. Student summaries are missing one or two accurate depictions of their assigned human characteristics. | Students create a skit or still-life but it does not accurately depict their assigned human characteristic and they are missing their summary completely or it does not depict their assigned human characterisitc accurately. |
| Group Participation | Student works very well with their group, actively participating throughout the creation and presentation stages. | Student works with their group members but does not participate throughout the entire creation and/or presentation stages. | Student does not work with their group members and/or does not participate at all during the creation and/or presentation stages. |
| Total:\_\_\_\_\_\_/30 |  |  |  |

**Project and Rubric Description:**

The purpose of this culminating project is to bring everything the students have learned full circle in a creative and fun way for the students. The diorama itself will show me exactly how much of the physical features they were able to grasp and the skit/still-life allows me to assess not only their understanding but their interpretation of the human characteristics of the Mesopotamians. Splitting up the human characteristics and allowing the students to present their topic to the rest of the class also allows for another opportunity for students to gain understanding of the concepts in a different way as well as demonstrate their ability to work productively in a group setting.

Bibliography of Resources

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