World History: Journey Across Time, The Early Ages

Chapter 1: The First Civilizations

Student Web Activity
"The First Civilizations"

Introduction

In this chapter you have studied the first civilizations, learning how they arose in the river valleys of southwest Asia. It was in these river valleys that the world's first empires were born. Trade was an important part of these early times. In this activity, you'll learn more about the city of Babylon, which prospered from trade and became the world's largest and wealthiest city. Visit the British Museum's Mesopotamia exhibit to learn more about the trade and transport of goods to and from this amazing ancient city.

Destination Title: Mesopotamia

Note: Clicking on the link above will launch a new browser window. Need help using your browser for this activity? Click here for tips.

Directions

Begin at The British Museum's online exhibit featuring Mesopotamia.

- Select “Babylonia, Trade and Transport” and read through the “Trade and Transport” section.
- Next, select the “Explore” link to learn more about the methods used to transport goods from place to place.
- Make certain to click on the underlined words throughout the Web site to gain a better understanding of their meanings.
- After you've read through the section, be sure to read the interactive story in which you'll travel with one of three merchants and make important decisions along the way.
After you have read these pages, answer the following questions.

1. Which trade items were native to Babylonia? What type of goods did merchants receive in exchange for these items?

2. Local Babylonian merchants traveled by foot, selling goods to people in local villages. What types of goods did these merchants trade and why?

3. Which method of transport was used to move goods from southern Mesopotamia to the Gulf? What type of cargo could be found on these boats as they traveled between their destinations?

4. Mesopotamia did not have many natural resources, so they were imported from other places. What types of natural resources were imported?

5. Imagine that you traveled with a merchant. Write a short story detailing your adventure, explaining the logic behind the choices you made.