

# Unit 2: Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples: Ancient River Valley Civilizations

Content Area: **Social Studies**  
Course(s): **Social Studies 6**  
Time Period: **December**  
Length: **17 weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Overview

---

In this unit, ancient river valley civilizations (RVC) are explored. The 4 major RVC are Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. For each of the RVC, we will examine their geography, religion, achievements, political structure, economy, and social structure (GRAPES). As we examine each RVC, we will compare and contrast their similarities and differences. Students will be able to eventually determine common factors that make up what an ancient RVC is and why they are so important to understanding the development of civilization in general.

These RVC were the first civilizations in the world. Students will investigate how these river valleys helped to support growing populations, and how these populations were then able to advance into civilizations. Students will learn through study and apply the following flow chart: agriculture, surplus, barter, division of labor, complex culture, and advanced civilization. This flow chart of activity appears in every civilization, and if any part of the flow fails, students will discover how the civilization will fall apart. Each part depends on the part before it.

Two of these RVC (India and China) will turn into classic civilizations, which is the next unit of study.

## Priority Standards

---

SOC.6.2.2	Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples: Early River Valley Civilizations (4000–1000 BCE)
SOC.6.2.8.CivicsPI.2.a	Explain how/why different early river valley civilizations developed similar forms of government and legal structures.
SOC.6.2.8.CivicsHR.2.a	Determine the role of slavery in the economic and social structures of early river valley civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.GeoSV.2.a	Compare and contrast physical and political maps of early river valley civilizations and their modern counterparts and determine the geopolitical impact of these civilizations, then and now (i.e., Mesopotamia and Iraq; Ancient Egypt and Modern Egypt; Indus River Valley and Modern Pakistan/India; Ancient China and Modern China).
SOC.6.2.8.GeoHE.2.a	Determine the extent to which geography influenced settlement, the development of trade networks, technological innovations, and the sustainability of early river valley civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.EconGE.2.a	Explain how technological advancements led to greater economic specialization, improved weaponry, trade, and the development of a class system in early river valley civilizations.

SOC.6.2.8.HistoryCC.2.a	Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the early river valley civilizations over time.
SOC.6.2.8.HistoryCC.2.b	Analyze the impact of religion on daily life, government, and culture in various early river valley civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.HistoryCC.2.c	Explain how the development of written language transformed all aspects of life in early river valley civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.HistoryCA.2.a	Analyze the factors that led to the rise and fall of various early river valley civilizations and determine whether there was a common pattern of growth and decline.

## Essential Questions

---

- How did religions and philosophies impact the daily lives and social structures of ancient citizens?
- How did technology help people overcome their geography?
- How did technology improve the lives of ancient humans?
- How did the geography of the Fertile Crescent impact Mesopotamian civilization?
- How did their religious beliefs influence daily life?
- How did writing and record keeping allow civilizations to grow more complex?
- How do religions and philosophies contribute to the advancement of society?
- How were the social classes structured in ancient societies?
- In comparing the ancient River Valleys, what made them similar and what made them unique?
- What are the most important legacies of the ancient River Valleys?
- What are the similarities and differences between Judaism and the religions of Mesopotamia and Egypt?
- What has been the lasting impact of Mesopotamian civilization on current society?
- Where were the earliest civilizations located?
- Why are written laws so important?
- Why did ancient civilizations develop in river valleys?
- Why did the Code of Hammurabi play an important role in shaping Mesopotamia?
- Why did the three kingdoms of ancient Egypt decline?
- Why/How do religions and philosophies develop?

## Unit Learning Goals

---

Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast the major religions of ancient India.
- Complete vocabulary worksheets including simple compound, and complex sentences for each section in the chapter
- Diagram the social order of ancient societies.
- Explain forms of government in river valley civilizations
- Explain how advancements led to economic specialization, trade, and a class system in early river valley civilizations.

- Explore polytheistic beliefs and some of the major gods and their roles in early river valley civilizations' religion.
- Identify contributions of early river valley civilizations.
- Understand the impact of religion on daily life and culture in early river valley civilizations.
- Use map skills to chart location of different river valleys and their features.
- Write well-written paragraphs including vocabulary words using varied sentences such as simple, compound, and complex sentences

## Unit Learning Targets

---

Students know:

- Analyze the development of the Chinese civilization during the Shang, Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties.
- Analyze the different beliefs and practices of ancient Egyptian religion.
- Analyze the key beliefs of early Sumerian religion.
- Analyze the law code of King Hammurabi of Babylon and its impact on modern laws.
- Analyze the reasons for the success of the Phoenician people and their legacy.
- Analyze the use of plentiful natural resources
- Compare and contrast the philosophies of Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism.
- Describe the geography and climate of the Indian subcontinent.
- Describe the history of the Gupta Empire.
- Describe the impacts of the Aryan invasion of India.
- Describe the major beliefs of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.
- Describe the major events and achievements of Egypt during the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms.
- Explain the common features of Hindu literature, art, architecture, and clothing.
- Identify common geographic attributes of River Valley Civilizations
- Identify the different contributions of the Akkadians, Hittites, Assyrians, and Chaldeans to civilization in Mesopotamia.
- Identify the different Egyptian scripts and write their own name in hieroglyphics.
- Identify the different geographical features of China and their impact on the people living there.
- Identify the different geographical features of Egypt and their impact on the people living there.
- Identify the different geographical features of Mesopotamia and their impact on the people living there.
- Identify the different powers and roles of the pharaoh in Egyptian government and religion.
- Identify the different steps & stages in the history of Egyptian tomb building.
- Identify the most important contributions of ancient Sumerians in education, architecture, art, and technology.
- Map the growth of trade and describe its impact.
- Summarize the achievements and innovations of Indians in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine.
- Summarize the achievements of the ancient Chinese civilization.
- Summarize the early history of Egypt and describe the rise of the Upper & Lower Kingdoms.

- Summarize the history and achievements of the Harappan civilization.
- Summarize the rises, achievements, and declines of the Mauryan and Gupta Empires.
- Summarize the roles played by people in the different levels of Sumerian society

## Cross Curricular Standards

---

LA.RL.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
LA.RL.6.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
LA.RL.6.6	Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
LA.RL.6.7	Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
LA.RL.6.8	(Not applicable to literature)
LA.RL.6.9	Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
LA.RI.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.RI.6.2	Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
LA.RI.6.3	Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
LA.RI.6.10	By the end of the year read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above, with scaffolding as needed.
LA.W.6.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
LA.W.6.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
LA.W.6.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.6.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
LA.W.6.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.
LA.W.6.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.L.6.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.6.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

LA.L.6.3

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

LA.L.6.4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

### Learning Plan (Skills and Activities)

Week	Topic	Lessons/Activities	Goals/Targets	Materials
4 Weeks	Mesopotamia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign vocabulary</li> <li>• PowerPoint:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Map skills</li> <li>○ Civilization Flow Chart</li> <li>○ Fertile Crescent</li> <li>○ Irrigation</li> <li>○ Civilization Flow Chart</li> <li>○ Ubaid</li> <li>○ Sumerians</li> <li>○ Common Culture</li> <li>○ Emergence of barter</li> <li>○ Ur</li> <li>○ Sumerian Achievements</li> <li>○ Social Classes</li> <li>○ Akkadian Empire</li> <li>○ Babylon/Hammurabi</li> <li>○ Kassites/Assyrians</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Study Guide</li> <li>• Close Reading Assignment</li> <li>• Chapter Tests</li> <li>• Geography Skills</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Content</li> </ul>	<p><b>Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use map skills to chart location of different river valleys and their features.</li> <li>• Explore polytheistic beliefs and some of the major gods and their roles in early river valley civilizations' religion.</li> <li>• Diagram the social order of ancient societies.</li> <li>• Identify contributions of early river valley civilizations.</li> <li>• Explain forms of government in river valley civilizations</li> <li>• Explain how advancements led to economic specialization, trade, and a class system in early river valley civilizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geography Skill</li> <li>• Vocabulary Tes</li> <li>• Content Test</li> <li>• Close Reading</li> <li>• Worksheets</li> <li>• Exit Tickets</li> <li>• Irrigation projec</li> <li>• History Alive! T</li> <li>• TCI</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mrd/geography.htm">http://www.mrd/geography.htm</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mrg">http://www.mrg</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.phil/hammurabi/hor">http://www.phil/hammurabi/hor</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.edu/kids/socsci/ca/t/AC_04_109_fe_fertile.html">https://www.edu/kids/socsci/ca/t/AC_04_109_fe_fertile.html</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mes/menu.html">http://www.mes/menu.html</a></li> </ul>

- Understand the impact of religion on daily life and culture in early river valley civilizations.

**Targets**

- Define and apply relevant academic vocabulary
- Identify common geographic attributes of River Valley Civilizations
- Analyze the use of plentiful natural resources
- Identify the different geographical features of Mesopotamia and their impact on the people living there.
- Analyze the key beliefs of early Sumerian religion.
- Summarize the roles played by people in the different levels of Sumerian society
- Identify the most important contributions of ancient Sumerians in

			<p>education, architecture, art, and technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze the law code of King Hammurabi of Babylon and its impact on modern laws.</li> <li>Identify the different contributions of the Akkadians, Hittites, Assyrians, and Chaldeans to civilization in Mesopotamia.</li> </ul>	
4 Weeks	Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign vocabulary</li> <li>PowerPoint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map skills</li> <li>Benefits of agriculture &amp; domestication of animals</li> <li>Adapting to your environment</li> <li>Complex societies</li> <li>Technological advances</li> <li>Economic &amp; social change</li> <li>Settlements</li> <li>Division of labor</li> <li>Cities &amp; civilizations</li> </ul> </li> <li>Study Guide</li> <li>Close Reading Assignment</li> <li>Chapter Tests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geography Skills</li> <li>Vocabulary</li> <li>Content</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use map skills to chart location of different river valleys and their features.</li> <li>Explore polytheistic beliefs and some of the major gods and their roles in early river valley civilizations' religion.</li> <li>Diagram the social order of ancient societies.</li> <li>Identify contributions of early river valley civilizations.</li> <li>Explain forms of government in river valley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PowerPoint</li> <li>Geography Skill</li> <li>Vocabulary Tes</li> <li>Content Test</li> <li>Close Reading</li> <li>Worksheets</li> <li>Exit Tickets</li> <li>Irrigation projec</li> <li>History Alive! 1 TCI</li> <li><a href="http://www.mrd/geography.htm">http://www.mrd/geography.htm</a></li> <li><a href="http://www.mrg">http://www.mrg</a></li> <li>Vocabulary</li> <li>Lesson Question</li> <li>Maps</li> <li>Worksheets</li> </ul>

civilizations

- Explain how advancements led to economic specialization, trade, and a class system in early river valley civilizations.
- Understand the impact of religion on daily life and culture in early river valley civilizations.

Targets

- Define and apply relevant academic vocabulary
- Identify the different geographical features of Egypt and their impact on the people living there.
- Summarize the early history of Egypt and describe the rise of the Upper & Lower Kingdoms.
- Describe the major events and achievements of Egypt during the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms.
- Identify the different powers



			<p>and roles of the pharaoh in Egyptian government and religion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze the different beliefs and practices of ancient Egyptian religion.</li> <li>• Identify the different Egyptian scripts and write their own name in hieroglyphics.</li> <li>• Identify the different steps &amp; stages in the history of Egyptian tomb building.</li> </ul>	
3 Weeks	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign vocabulary</li> <li>• PowerPoint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Map skills</li> <li>○ Subcontinent</li> <li>○ Well Planned Cities</li> <li>○ Harappans</li> <li>○ Aryan Migration</li> <li>○ Caste System</li> <li>○ 3 Major Religions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hinduism</li> <li>• Buddhism</li> <li>• Jainism</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Study Guide</li> <li>• Close Reading Assignment</li> <li>• Chapter Tests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Geography Skills</li> <li>○ Vocabulary</li> <li>○ Content</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use map skills to chart location of different river valleys and their features.</li> <li>• Explore polytheistic beliefs and some of the major gods and their roles in early river valley civilizations' religion.</li> <li>• Diagram the social order of ancient societies.</li> <li>• Identify contributions of early river valley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Lesson Question</li> <li>• Maps</li> <li>• Worksheets</li> <li>• Geography Skill</li> <li>• Vocabulary Test</li> <li>• Content Test</li> <li>• Close Reading</li> <li>• Worksheets</li> <li>• Exit Tickets</li> <li>• Irrigation project</li> <li>• History Alive! TCI</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mrd/geography.htm">http://www.mrd/geography.htm</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mrg">http://www.mrg</a></li> </ul>

civilizations.

- Explain forms of government in river valley civilizations
- Explain how advancements led to economic specialization, trade, and a class system in early river valley civilizations.
- Understand the impact of religion on daily life and culture in early river valley civilizations.

**Targets**

- Define and apply relevant academic vocabulary
- Describe the geography and climate of the Indian subcontinent.
- Describe the history of the Gupta Empire.
- Summarize the history and achievements of the Harappan civilization.
- Describe the impacts of the Aryan invasion of India.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the major beliefs of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.</li> <li>• Summarize the rises, achievements, and declines of the Mauryan and Gupta Empires.</li> <li>• Explain the common features of Hindu literature, art, architecture, and clothing.</li> <li>• Summarize the achievements and innovations of Indians in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine.</li> </ul>	
3 Weeks	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign vocabulary</li> <li>• PowerPoint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Map skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Study Guide</li> <li>• Close Reading Assignment</li> <li>• Chapter Tests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Geography Skills</li> <li>○ Vocabulary</li> <li>○ Content</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mulan Activity</li> <li>• Group Projects</li> </ul>	<b>Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use map skills to chart location of different river valleys and their features.</li> <li>• Explore polytheistic beliefs and some of the major gods and their roles in early river valley civilizations' religion.</li> <li>• Diagram the social order of ancient societies.</li> <li>• Identify</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Mulan Movie</li> <li>• The True Story</li> <li>• Project Material</li> <li>• Tests</li> <li>• Close Reading M</li> <li>• Geography Skill</li> <li>• Vocabulary Tes</li> <li>• Content Test</li> <li>• Close Reading</li> <li>• Worksheets</li> <li>• Exit Tickets</li> <li>• Irrigation projec</li> <li>• History Alive! T TCI</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mrd/geography.htm">http://www.mrd/geography.htm</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mrg">http://www.mrg</a></li> </ul>

			<p>contributions of early river valley civilizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain forms of government in river valley civilizations</li><li>• Explain how advancements led to economic specialization, trade, and a class system in early river valley civilizations.</li><li>• Understand the impact of religion on daily life and culture in early river valley civilizations.</li></ul> <p><b>Targets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define and apply relevant academic vocabulary</li><li>• Identify the different geographical features of China and their impact on the people living there.</li><li>• Analyze the development of the Chinese civilization during the Shang, Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties.</li><li>• Summarize the</li></ul>	
--	--	--	---	--

			<p>achievements of the ancient Chinese civilization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map the growth of trade and describe its impact.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast the philosophies of Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism</li> </ul>	
--	--	--	--	--

### Unit Assessments (Required)

---

- Close Readings
- Content Test
- Egypt Project
- Geography Skills Test
- Vocabulary Test

### Unit Assessments (Optional)

---

- Exit Tickets
- Lesson Questions
- Notes
- Primary/Secondary Sources Worksheet
- River Valley Project (Irrigation) <http://teachers.egfi-k12.org/lesson-way-to-flow-water-irrigation/> or <https://www.polk-fl.net/districtinfo/departments/schoolbased/schoolchoice/vpsc/documents/Tab7.pdf>
- Technology Integration Activity
- Worksheets

### Materials and Resources

---

- Daily Geography Practice, Grade 6+, Evan-Moor Educational Publishers
- Exit Slips
- History Alive! The Ancient World, TCI
- Lesson Questions
- Movie – Mulan
- Movie – The Prince of Egypt
- PowerPoints
- Vocabulary
- World History Detective® by John De Gree

## Technology Integration

---

- Use Chromebooks
- Use Google Classroom
- Use Google Docs/Slides/Sheets

CS.6-8.8.1.8.DA.1	Organize and transform data collected using computational tools to make it usable for a specific purpose.
CS.6-8.8.1.8.IC.1	Compare the trade-offs associated with computing technologies that affect individual's everyday activities and career options.
CS.6-8.8.1.8.IC.2	Describe issues of bias and accessibility in the design of existing technologies.
CS.6-8.8.1.8.NI.1	Model how information is broken down into smaller pieces, transmitted as addressed packets through multiple devices over networks and the Internet, and reassembled at the destination.
CS.6-8.8.2.8.ITH.2	Compare how technologies have influenced society over time.

## 21st Century Life & Career Ready Practices

---

CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP9.1	Career-ready individuals consistently act in ways that align personal and community-held ideals and principles while employing strategies to positively influence others in the workplace. They have a clear understanding of integrity and act on this understanding in every decision. They use a variety of means to positively impact the directions and actions of a team or organization, and they apply insights into human behavior to change others' action, attitudes and/or beliefs. They recognize the near-term and long-term effects that

management's actions and attitudes can have on productivity, morals and organizational culture.

CAEP.9.2.8.B.3

Evaluate communication, collaboration, and leadership skills that can be developed through school, home, work, and extracurricular activities for use in a career.

CAEP.9.2.8.B.4

Evaluate how traditional and nontraditional careers have evolved regionally, nationally, and globally.

## **Strategies for Supports for At-Risk, Special Ed., 504, and ELL**

---

- Choice Boards/Menus
- Chunk assignments, tests, notes
- Copies of notes with fill in the blanks
- Extended Time
- Independent lesson extensions
- Modify assignments and variety of assignment options (tier)
- Modify assignments/assessments as needed
- Provide a variety of ways to learn - visual, auditory, kinesthetic
- Provide graphic organizers
- Provide word banks
- Provide written copy of notes
- Use color coding
- Utilize visual aids
- Vocabulary cards with graphics

## **Strategies to Support Gifted & Talented**

---

- Article extension with Newsela
- Challenge Projects
- Flexible Groupings based on topic interest
- IXL Resource
- Mini projects with focus on Choice
- Webquests