

# Ancient Civilizations Project

**Step One: Choose and research an early civilization with your group members.**

**Step Two: Create a Power Point document to use during your presentation.  
Bibliography to be included of sources used.**

**Step Three: Give a 10-15 minute presentation about your civilization to the class.**

**Step Four: Use the listening sheet to take notes from the presentations.**

## Step One: The Research

Together with your group members, choose an early civilization to research and present to the class. Begin looking at the textbook, books in the library and doing research on the internet.

## Step Two: Power Point

As part of your presentation you will create a Power Point which includes the following:

- \*Geography
- \*Writing
- \*Time Period
- \*Slavery
- \*Government
- \*Arts
- \*Economy
- \*Rise and Fall
- \*Beliefs
- \*Technology
- \*Contributions

### **Step Three: The Presentation**

\*Everyone in the group must speak during the presentation.

\*Stand up and speak loudly and clearly.

\*Listen to one another and help each other during the presentation.

\*Be respectful when other groups are presenting.

\* Make sure you include all the information that your classmates need to fill out their listening sheets.

IMPORTANT: Do not type paragraphs of text onto each screen of your document and then read them during your presentation. Do not simply just read from the power point you made. Know your information well.

### **Step Four: The Listening Sheet**

You will have a large piece of paper on which you will write notes about all of the different civilizations.

## **Sumerians: The Ones Who Started it All**

One of the first peoples to live in Mesopotamia were the Sumerians. They began to form city-states around 3000 BCE. They spoke a language unrelated to any other human language we know of. They developed one of the world's first systems of Monarchy. The states of Sumer were ruled by a priest-king called "a".

## **Hittites: The Traders**

The Hittites are perhaps one of the most important peoples in Mesopotamian history. Since their empire was so large, their main activity was trading. They were the people responsible for moving Mesopotamian thought, law, political structure, economic structure, and ideas around the Mediterranean, from Egypt to Greece.

## **Assyrians: War Makers and Conquerors**

The Assyrians loved to conquer. The army was the largest standing army ever seen in the Middle East or Mediterranean. The needs of war created technological innovation which made the Assyrians almost unbeatable: iron swords, lances, metal armor, and battering rams.

## **Persians: The Inventors of Good and Evil**

The Persians were the largest and most powerful empire ever known in human history up until that point. They created the first Charter of Human Rights under Cyrus the Great.

## **The Babylonians: An Eye for an Eye**

The Babylonians are another river valley civilization of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. One of their most famous rulers was Hammurabi, who developed the very strict "Code of Hammurabi".

## **Indus Valley Civilization: Early Indian Civilization**

The Indus Valley civilization grew around 2,500 BC in the western part of South Asia, in what today is Pakistan and western India. It was not discovered until the 1920's. Most of its ruins, including major cities, remain to be excavated. We know they had writing, but no one has yet been able to read it.

## **Incas: The Engineers**

The Inca Empire consisted of over one million individuals, spanning land from Ecuador to northern Chile. The Inca built large forts with stone slabs so perfectly cut that they didn't need glue – and they're still standing today in near-perfect condition. They built roads through the mountains from Ecuador to Chile with tunnels and bridges. Of all ancient peoples, they were the most advanced in medicine and surgery.

## **The Aztecs: an Early Mexican Civilization**

The Aztecs had not one, but two calendars, a complicated religion, and a system of slavery that was not racial or permanent. Human sacrifice was a large part of their religious practices.

## **Mayans: A Rainforest Civilization**

The Mayans lived very spread out from one another, but they still build advanced urban centers, science and mathematics among the best in the world, and the most developed system of writing in the Americas. Much of Maya culture is still a vital aspect of Native American life in Guatemala and Honduras.

## **Ghana: Masters of Iron-Working**

Ghana people spread iron making techniques across Africa, but they were also responsible for sharing agriculture, particularly good harvest crops such as yams, bananas, and plantains.

## **Mali: Chief Centre of Islamic Scholarship**

Mali people were Islamic which became a force uniting people of northern and western Africa. The Mandinka people were the founders of Mali and they played a variety of musical instruments.

## **The Shang dynasty: The Yellow River Civilization**

The Shang Dynasty existed from 1766-1050 BCE. They left us a large number of written records. Most of these records are "oracle bones," which were used to divine the future. These bones, however, contain the names of the kings of the dynasties and prove that the Chinese accounts of Shang history are incredibly precise.

# Research Notes:

These research notes are to help you maintain focus on the task at hand.

**Geography** – Where were they located? What is that place called today? What effect did the geographic setting have on the civilization that grew there? Were they geographically isolated from other civilizations? Were they exposed to large bodies of water?

**Time Period** – When did they emerge as a civilization? When were they at their peak? How long were they around? When did they fall?

**Government** – What type of ruler ship did they have? How were they organized? What type of laws did they have? What were their courts like?

**Economy** – What role did trade and commerce have in this civilization? What were their major products for trade? How did their geography affect their trade? Was their economy based on a division of social classes?

**Beliefs** – What kind of religion or worship did they practice? Were they Polytheistic? Monotheistic? Was their religion and their government combined? Did they believe in life after death?

**Technology** – What innovations were made in this civilization? Did they have a calendar? Did they have irrigation systems? How did they build their buildings? Roads?

**Writing** – What form of communication did they use? What type of writing did they have: Was it pictographic? Can we read it today? Why did it develop? Was it used by other civilizations as well?

**Art/Architecture** – What role did the arts have in this civilization? What were their main forms of art? What was their architecture like? What can we learn about them from their art?



**Slavery** – How was slavery a part of this civilization? Were the cities built by forced labor? Was slavery based on race? Was it permanent?

**Rise and Fall** – What caused this civilization to rise and fall? Did they conquer another civilization? Were they conquered? How many times were they conquered? Could they have stayed in power if their geographic location had been different?

**Contributions** – What were the major contributions of this civilization to the world at their time?  
Are there any lasting contributions still seen today? What did they leave us?

**Golden Age?** - Did this civilization have a golden age? Was there a period in their history when they had a lot of money, power, art, trade, and food? How long did it last? Why did it end? What caused it?