

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Grade Six Social Studies Program
Ancient Civilizations

DESCRIPTION

The sixth-grade curriculum encompasses the study of several major ancient civilizations. As students explore open-ended questions about the past, they move further and further from concrete thinking toward the capacity to wrestle with complexity. Through their encounter with ancient peoples whose lives were in many ways profoundly different from our own, our hope is that students will gain a deep understanding of the complexities of society and government and skill in analyzing historical and current events.

Sixth graders will study the origins of settled life, the emergence of civilization, and the flowering of several ancient/classical civilizations. They will study the government, trade, philosophies, art and religions of these civilizations, as well as the powerful ideas that arose in the ancient world and profoundly shaped the course of world history. During this time they should consider concepts related to geography, history and time, and economics as they apply to the civilizations they are studying and the current world around them. Teachers should take time early in the year to review/introduce these concepts and skills and then continue to integrate them into specific units of study throughout the year.

The curriculum is organized around a set of essential questions. In each unit, the content studied should provide students with opportunities to explore answers to some or all of these complex questions.

- *How do we know about the past?*
- *What is a civilization?*
- *Why do civilizations rise and fall?*
- *How do the lives of ancient peoples affect us today?*
- *How has human history been shaped by geography and environment?*
- *How have structured forms of government evolved over time?*
- *How did ancient societies meet the wants and needs of their peoples?*

TEACHING STRATEGIES

The Social Studies Curriculum in the Acton Public Schools will consist of a wide variety of activities, including the study of artifacts, mapping, role playing and simulations, art activities, class discussions, music, projects, as well as reading/being read to. Whenever possible, activities should be planned to allow for integration with other disciplines, such as mathematics, language arts and science. Students should be asked to think critically about information and to ask and answer questions whenever possible.

HABITS OF MIND FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

One goal of the Acton Public Schools Social Studies Curriculum is to help students develop ways of reflecting, inquiring, and acting, often referred to as “habits of mind,” that they will carry with them beyond their formal education. How do we approach new situations? What kinds of attitudes do we bring to things we see and do? What kind of responsibility do we see ourselves having in relation to society? We encourage students to:

- Ask rigorous questions, try new things, act on beliefs, resist peer pressure, and take other appropriate risks;
- Recognize the importance of multiple viewpoints for understanding people, events and issues;
- Empathize with people of different historical periods, places, and backgrounds;
- Make connections and look for patterns to construct meaning from historical and current events;
- Learn that most issues encountered in social studies are complex, need thoughtful analysis, and may lack simple solutions;
- Form and express opinions by weighing information and evidence, but be willing to revise these opinions in light of additional information and perspectives;
- Inquire into the costs and benefits of competing alternatives;
- Visualize a better future and become active and responsible members of their communities;
- Use peaceful and just strategies for resolving strongly-conflicting opinions.

Overview of the Year

The time spent on social studies in grade six is expected to be at least the equivalent of:

- three 45-minute periods of study per week
- one 15 – 30 minute “current events” study per week
- additional time spent on content-related fiction, math, science and interdisciplinary projects.

SUGGESTED NUMBER OF WEEKS PER UNIT OF STUDY
--

• 4 weeks	GEOGRAPHY REVIEW/ARCHEOLOGY/NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION
• 2-3 weeks	MESOPOTAMIA
• 6 weeks	EGYPT
• 2-3 weeks	INDUS RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATION
• 4 weeks	GREECE
• 4 weeks	ROME
• 3 weeks	TEACHER/STUDENT-SELECTED STUDY Students could select an ancient civilization for a study group, or the teacher could select another civilization, such as China, for a whole class study.
• 2 weeks	COMPARISON OF THE FIVE CIVILIZATIONS STUDIED, “PULLING IT TOGETHER.” This time could be used for students to compare themes that occur in all of the studies (e.g., government, geography, religion, farming, monumental architecture, social hierarchy).

<u>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</u>	<u>ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS</u>	<u>TOPICS/THEMES</u>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>History/Time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do we know about the past? ▪ What is a civilization? ▪ Why do civilizations rise and fall? ▪ How do the lives of ancient peoples affect us today? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ History is reconstructed using a variety of tools and the knowledge and point of view of those who interpret the artifacts and the written word of peoples, cultures and civilizations. ▪ Ancient civilizations have influenced modern civilizations in their art, architecture, tools, technology, language and belief systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Archaeology ▪ Neolithic Period ▪ Mesopotamia ▪ Egypt ▪ Greece ▪ Rome ▪ Indus River Valley
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Geography</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How has human history been shaped by geography and environment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Differences in resources (e.g., natural resources, climate, geography, flora, fauna) led societies to develop differently 	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Government</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How have structured forms of government evolved over time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Societies can be organized in many different ways. Different forms of government have varied strengths and weaknesses and provide different groups with advantages and disadvantages. ▪ Democratic and republican forms of government evolved over time. 	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Economics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did ancient societies meet the wants and needs of their peoples? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The emergence of surplus led to specialization of tasks that made the emergence of civilization possible. Specialization led to technological and social change that transformed what was produced and how it was distributed. 	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Civics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How have structured forms of government evolved over time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Before the emergence of civilizations, small societies had little or no hierarchy and government. Civilizations evolved governmental systems including theocracy, kingdoms, empires and various forms of democracy. Each form of governmental organization has strengths and weaknesses. 	

GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

GEOGRAPHY

Concepts

Throughout their study of ancient civilizations and current events, students will consider:

- Why civilizations arose where they did/the impact of rivers on early farming civilizations.
- How climate affected the interaction between people and land.
- How the movement of groups of people, their ideas and goods were affected by geography.
- How people used and changed the lands on which they lived.

Skills

Throughout their study of ancient civilizations and current events, students will practice:

- Interpreting a map using information from its title, compass rose, scale and legend and considering map projections.
- Creating maps including title, compass rose, scale and legend.
- Identifying the location of the North and South Poles, the Equator, the Prime Meridian, Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Hemispheres.
- Finding specific locations on a map when given the absolute location (longitude and latitude).
- Finding the absolute location (longitude and latitude) when given political name/location.
- Explaining the difference between absolute and relative location.
- Making climatic predictions based on latitude and longitude.
- Interpreting thematic maps, including:
 - ~ political
 - ~ landform
 - ~ topographical (elevation and contour)
 - ~ climate
 - ~ precipitation
 - ~ population.
- Comparing maps of modern and historical maps of the same region.
- Identifying an area's geographical features and using the following terms correctly:
 - ~ mountain
 - ~ hill
 - ~ river
 - ~ valley
 - ~ desert
 - ~ island
 - ~ delta
 - ~ isthmus
 - ~ peninsula
 - ~ erosion
 - ~ climate
 - ~ drought
 - ~ flood
 - ~ monsoon

Concepts

Throughout their study of ancient civilizations and current events, students will consider:

- Why people study history.
- How history is reconstructed using a variety of tools.
- The study of archaeology: most of what we know about the ancient past is based on archeological evidence, which is used to prove/disprove a theory (hypothesis).
- Ways of interpreting archaeological evidence from societies leaving no written records.
- The impact of the knowledge and point of view of those who interpret the artifacts and written word of peoples, cultures and civilizations on the reconstruction of historical events.
- The differences between primary and secondary sources and ways in which each is used in interpreting history.
- Causes and effects when explaining historical events.
- The connections between the contributions of ancient civilizations and civilizations today.
- The differences between the lives of people in ancient times and our own lives today.

Skills

Throughout their study of ancient civilizations and current events, students will practice:

- Using correctly the words or abbreviations for identifying periods or dates in historical narratives (decade, age, era, century, millennium, A.D./C.E., B.C./B.C.E., c. and circa).
- Identifying in B.C./B.C.E that dates with a higher number indicate the older year (example, 3000 B.C./B.C.E. is earlier than 2000 B.C./B.C.E.).
- Constructing and interpreting timelines.
- Identifying what time zones are, the function and location of the international date line, and the function of the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England and giving examples of differences in time in countries in different parts of the world.

CIVICS/GOVERNMENT

Concepts

Throughout their study of ancient civilizations and current events, students will consider:

- How structured forms of government evolved based on the religious/cultural beliefs, societal/economic needs, and geographic features of the civilization.
- The relationship between religion and government in ancient civilizations.
- How the ancient forms of government compare to our current form of government in the U.S.
- The difference between a pure democracy and a representative government.
- The strengths and weaknesses of varied forms of government.

Skills

Throughout their study of ancient civilizations and current events, students will practice:

- Participating as “citizens” in their classroom community.
- Sharing and supporting their ideas and opinions in writing and in small group and class discussion and debate.
- Analyzing the impact of government on the lives of everyday people in both the ancient and modern world.
- Monitoring and analyzing current local, national and world events.
- Describing and analyzing major form/s of government in each civilization studied, including:
 - ~ monarchy
 - ~ oligarchy
 - ~ anarchy
 - ~ tyranny
 - ~ democracy
 - ~ republic

ECONOMIC

Concepts

Throughout their study of ancient civilizations and current events, students will consider:

- How trade contributed to the growth of civilizations.
- What food sources and natural resources are available to people living in a certain place and time.
- How the development of technology affected the ability of civilizations to produce and distribute goods.
- How and why labor is divided or specialized within different civilizations.

- The relationship between agricultural surplus and the development of ancient civilizations.
- The differences between the lives of different classes of people, such as slaves, peasants, merchants, noblemen, religious leaders and royalty.
- Ways in which slavery affected the economies/civilizations studied; i.e., many of the major contributions of ancient civilizations would not have been possible without the economic contributions of the common people and the slaves.

Skills

Throughout their study of ancient civilizations and current events, students will practice:

- Tracing and comparing important trade patterns or routes in ancient civilizations.
- Applying their knowledge of the following economic terms to their study of history and current events;

~ barter	~ market/marketplace	~ supply/demand
~ currency	~ surplus	~ natural resources
~ taxes	~ trade/specialization	
- Researching the products, the methods of distribution, and the ways people made a living in ancient civilizations.
- Researching or using the number and monetary systems of ancient civilizations.
- Monitoring current economic activities and events of significance.

ARCHAEOLOGY/NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION CURRICULUM

Introduction

The tools and methods of archaeologists have uncovered (literally) the secrets of life on earth from its very beginnings. The Acton Public Schools (APS) has chosen to introduce students to the advent of civilizations by focusing in on the principles/practices of archaeology and the study of at least one Neolithic settlement such as Çatalhöyük (in present-day Turkey).

The “Short Story” of The Neolithic Revolution

For many thousands of years, we were all hunters and gatherers. As our Human “toolkits” expanded, so did our geographic range. Human population expanded so rapidly, in fact, that social scientists now believe that mass extinctions of large animals sometimes followed the arrival of hunter/gatherers into a new region, as humans became better hunters. In the Near East, between 12,000 and 9,000 years ago, as animals became less plentiful, some hunter/gatherers began to experiment with domestication of plants. Others experimented with domestication of animals.

Over time, these new “farmers” stayed put to guard and tend their crops. As they became better farmers, it became possible to subsist on the land. Tribes became self-sufficient, subsistence farm families. Other Neolithic farmers became nomadic herders. (pastoralists). The term Neolithic Revolution is given to the time in human history when farming and the domestication of animals were “invented.” The domestications of plants and animals were revolutionary because it changed human experience forever. These two developments led to:

- Settled life
- Land ownership
- Housing and pottery and thus, storage of goods
- Increased population
- Use of animal power for work and transport
- The triad of farming, pastoral nomadism, and hunting/gathering
- The possibility of epidemic diseases (a product of civilization) resulting from the domestication of animals and settled life.

Ultimately, people in those parts of the world who possessed farming and large domesticated animals developed large populations and civilizations. Where the farming environment held up, the world’s most powerful civilizations emerged. It is interesting that gender roles in Neolithic times were more equal than in the succeeding thousands of years.

ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA CURRICULUM

Introduction

The Acton Public Schools (APS) has chosen to study Mesopotamia as an excellent example of an ancient river civilization and the origin of significant advancements in the ancient world such as the domestication of animals, the introduction of a code of laws, and the development of a written language.

In total, ancient Mesopotamian civilization spans from 3500 B.C.E to 1200 B.C.E., and its history is filled with significant inventions, facts and milestones.

The “Short Story” of Ancient Mesopotamia¹

The term "mesopotamia" means "The land between two rivers", the Tigris and the Euphrates, located in parts of what is now Iran, Iraq and Turkey. It is part of what is called the "Fertile Crescent", and fertile farming area in what is now Iran, Iraq and Turkey in a region that is otherwise predominantly desert.

Mesopotamia was the first river valley civilization (and thus the first civilization in human history). Some of the first cities were established; animals and plants were domesticated, building on the advances of neolithic villages in the region; mathematics and astronomy were born; a writing system was developed; empires were created and monumental buildings were constructed. Mesopotamian civilizations were the first in the world to domesticate animals and plants. The epic of Gilgamesh is the first written story on Earth. This area was also the location of many famous Bible stories such as the Garden of Eden and Noah’s Ark.

Mesopotamia was settled in turn by the Sumerians, the Babylonians, and Assyrians, each of whom brought changes and advancements to the region.

As each new group of people moved into the region, or took control of the government, they adopted some of the culture, traditions and beliefs of the people who had come before them. Therefore, certain aspects of civilization in Mesopotamia remained the same, and some changed over time. Much of Mesopotamian history lay buried beneath the sand and soil for thousands of years. However, there were clues, such as the mounds known as 'tells', and the ruins of ziggurats, that treasures lay below the surface. In the past two hundred years, people have begun to excavate objects and buildings that reveal the ancient history of this region.

¹ The British Museum website: http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/time/home_set.html

GEOGRAPHY

Location/Climate

Mesopotamia, the "land between the rivers" was located in western Asia in parts of what is now Iran, Iraq, and Turkey and is called "The Fertile Crescent".

- Northern Mesopotamia is made up of hills and plains and has fertile soils for farming.
- In the south, marshes offered wet areas and rivers that were used for irrigating the dry plains.

Major Features

- Tigris and Euphrates Rivers

Settlements/Key Places

Mesopotamia was the first site in which we find significant "monumental architecture", a hallmark of emerging civilizations. Mesopotamians built large structures called ziggurats, thought to be temples.

GOVERNMENT/HISTORY

Development of Civilization/Government

Mesopotamia developed a system of city-states that began with the Sumerians. They built temples and schools, domesticated animals and plants, and developed an irrigation system. They developed specialization of roles. Some people still farmed and herded, but others were craftsmen, priests, scholars, traders, or government officials.

RELIGION

- Mesopotamians were polytheistic; they believed in many gods. Most archaeologists believe that their ziggurats were temples.

ECONOMY/SCIENCE/MATHEMATICS

- The development of farming practices such as irrigation allowed Mesopotamians to store a surplus of food, which enabled them to develop economic specialization. Traders brought goods from other lands.
- In order to keep track of taxes and crops sold, Mesopotamians developed a system of writing. It began with pictograms, and eventually developed into the script called cuneiform. It was done with clay tablets and sharpened reeds used as writing implements.
- Mesopotamians were the first people to domesticate animals.

ART/ARCHITECTURE

- The mud-brick structures called ziggurats that were built in Sumerian times were large and impressive. They were probably religious, but that is not known for certain. Over hundreds of years, more temples were built on the remains of previous ones, so the structures grew higher.
- Mesopotamians created large relief sculptures and mosaics.

- The epic of Gilgamesh is perhaps the oldest written story on Earth. Gilgamesh was a Sumerian king, and he eventually became the central character in an epic story, in which he becomes part-god, and part man.
- Mesopotamians were the first peoples to work with metals, initiating the “Bronze Age”
- The oud, a stringed instrument similar to a lute, was developed.

SOCIETY/DAILY LIFE

Comparison of the Daily Life the Social Pyramid

There were several classes of people in ancient Sumer - the priests (who eventually came to be considered priest-kings); peasants who were mostly farmers and laborers; Slaves who had been captured when nearby towns were conquered. There was a class of craftsmen in addition to the priests and peasants who devoted most of their time to producing things for either the temples or the warrior-soldiers who protected the temple community. The people were to devote their lives to pleasing the gods to prevent calamities from befalling the community.

There was mobility between classes, for example, children could train to become scribes or priests and move up to a higher class than their parents held.

MESOPOTAMIA’S LEGACIES

written language	domesticated animals/ plants	legal system
irrigation	canals/dams	plows
astronomy	astrology	twelve-month calendar
mathematics	360 ⁰ circles	24 hour day
city-building	cobblestone streets	pottery
cylinder seals		

KEY PEOPLE

Hammurabi

Gilgamesh

VOCABULARY

cuneiform	astrology	priest-king
ziggurat	scribe	edubba
stylus	irrigation	
“cradle of civilization”	city-state	

ANCIENT EGYPT CURRICULUM

Introduction

The Acton Public Schools (APS) has chosen to study Egypt as an excellent example of an ancient river civilization.

In total, ancient Egyptian civilization spans from 5000 B.C.E to C.E 640, and its history is filled with captivating stories, facts and details. While teacher and student interest may drive the focus of lessons or projects, the APS curriculum provides an overview of this expansive period and key objectives, by strand, with which students should be familiar.

The “Short Story” of Ancient Egypt

The Egyptians benefited from the crops and animals that were domesticated during the Neolithic period and from technologies such as cuneiform writing, the wheel, and large-scale irrigation that were first developed in Mesopotamia. As in Mesopotamia, in Egypt the presence of a large river and the technology of irrigation made it possible for farmers to produce large amounts of food. The food supply was large enough to feed a large population of farmers and beyond that, through a surplus, to support non-farming specialists, including a ruling class. This surplus enabled the Egyptians to build one of the world’s first civilizations. Herodotus, a famous Greek historian, described Egypt as “the gift of the Nile,” and after studying ancient Egypt, students should understand the way that the geography and the resources of the world’s largest river drove the development of this amazing civilization. They should also come to understand how, as technology and travel improved, the civilization eventually fell into decline. The Egyptians relied on the Nile as their source of life. The rich soil left behind after the river flooded each year allowed the Egyptians to grow crops and sustain their existence along the riverbanks. The regular cycle of the Nile fostered a feeling of cyclical stability among the Egyptian people. The river and landscape also initially inhibited them from traveling freely. As a result, they valued structure and regularity and avoided new ideas and change.

Their reliance on the geography led to the development of their religious beliefs. The Egyptians developed stories to explain natural events, such as the rising of the sun and the flooding of the Nile. They were in awe of the creatures of the river valley and believed that immortal spirits inhabited the bodies of these creatures and saw the sun as the most important deity, Ra. The pharaoh's (or god-king's) main duty was to appeal to the gods responsible for different natural events, such as the flood, on which the people depended.

The cycle of the river symbolized life, death and rebirth, and the Egyptians believed that, like the sun and the crops, they too could return to life after death. As a result, the Egyptians developed rituals, traditions and technologies that supported their belief in life after death. This drove their interests in engineering and mathematics (to build tombs, monuments and pyramids), learning about the human body (to preserve the body through mummification), and language (to record the stories of the gods and their own journeys into the afterlife with hieroglyphics).

The ancient Egyptians lived for thousands of years, content with their stable lives under the pharaoh. They lived orderly lives in an organized society with a clear class structure. During this time, they studied and developed their skills as farmers, artists, architects, astronomers, and chemists. Their studies of these topics serve as the basis for our understandings today. There were three main periods during the history of ancient Egypt:

- The Old Kingdom (c. 2700-2200 BCE)
- The Middle Kingdom (c. 2000 – 1700 BCE)
- The New Kingdom (c. 1500-1000 BCE)

GEOGRAPHY

Location/Climate

- Located on the continent of Africa
- Desert climate (discuss how climate affects water and temperature)
- Dry, arid conditions due to the climate

Major Features

- The Nile River
 - ~ flows South to North (coming from highlands in the South to lowlands in the North)
 - ~ 4,000 miles long – longest river in the world
 - ~ Two branches feed the Nile
 - ~ Width ranges from one to twelve miles
 - ~ delta in the north
 - ~ unique ecosystem (waterfowl, fish, amphibians, papyrus)
 - ~ annual inundation, three seasons (flood season, planting season, harvest season) allowed for fertile soil along its banks, two types of land (Red – desert, and Black – fertile)

Settlements/Key Places

- Valley of Kings, Pyramids at Giza, Step Pyramid at Saqqara
- Temples at Karnak, Luxor and Thebes
- Abu Simbel
- Cairo, Alexandria, Khartoum, Memphis

Unique Topographical Features That Isolated the Civilization From Invaders/ Foreigners

- desert on either side
- rapids to the south
- swampy marshes to the north
- cataracts along river
- vastness of Red Sea on East
- Mediterranean to the North (ref. *Early Times: The Story of Ancient Egypt*, pgs. 1-3)

GOVERNMENT/HISTORY

Development of Civilization/Government

- 5000 B.C.E. Nomads settled along the banks of the Nile.
- 4000 B.C.E. Monarchs began to rule small areas.
Local governments developed to monitor irrigation systems.
Local government led to the rise of the dynasties.
- 3100 B.C.E. King Menes (MEE-nes) united Upper and Lower Egypt and became the first king/pharaoh.
No separation of church and state; pharaoh was seen as a god-king.
- 2700 B.C.E. – 2200 B.C.E. Old Kingdom: period when tombs, temples, and pyramids built
- 2000 B.C.E. – 1700 B.C.E. Middle Kingdom: wealthy, prosperous, trade, commerce, creation of a great deal of art and architecture
- 1600 B.C.E. – 1100 B.C.E. New Kingdom: built an empire by conquering other areas, including Kush (Nubia). Surrounding countries began to travel and expand, and foreign rulers began to take control of Egyptian territories.
- 700 B.C.E. Kush invaded and conquered Egypt.
- 670s B.C.E. The Assyrians drove the Kushites out of Egypt.
- C.E 30 Egypt became a Roman province.
- C.E 640 Arabs conquered Egypt.

RELIGION

- No separation of church and state
- Creation Myth
- Polytheistic – Ra, Osiris and other main gods
- Religious practices:
 - ~ Idea of afterlife essential to religion: Egyptians loved life so much they didn't want it to end. Like the crops and the sun, they wanted to be born again after death.
 - ~ Embalming/mummification/rituals
 - ~ Role of the priest/role of the vizier
 - ~ Hieroglyphics/Rosetta Stone
 - ~ Book of the Dead
 - ~ Pyramids/tombs

ECONOMY

- The development of farming practices allowed Egyptians to store a surplus of food, which enabled them to develop economic specialization.
- Pharaoh provided necessities of everyday life to his people (food, place to live, etc.) so that people could do what they were good at. Everything belonged to the pharaoh, and in return he made sure the Gods were appeased.
- Industrious peoples – produced an abundance of crops, tools, etc. which could be used for trade. Surplus led to trade up and down the river. Trade eventually expanded to the Mediterranean (Asian and Cretan merchants).
- Barter system
- Trade/Resources
 - ~ Papyrus, flax, linen, salted fish, ox hides, alabaster, and crafts used to trade with other cultures
 - ~ Gold, ebony, ivory, panther skins, slaves and ostrich feathers obtained from Nubia
 - ~ Olive oil, pottery from Crete
 - ~ Silver, pottery and lapis lazuli from Syria
 - ~ Cedar wood from Byblos
 - ~ Spices, frankincense, myrrh, and exotic animals from Punt

ART/ARCHITECTURE

- Afterlife influenced all aspects of art and architecture
- Art was purposeful and structured
- Tomb paintings
- Sculptures
- Models of items from life for tombs/afterlife
- Pyramids/Tombs/Monuments

SOCIETY/DAILY LIFE

Comparison of the Daily Life of Social Pyramid

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| • Pharaoh | • Scribes |
| • Priests | • Artisans/Farmers |
| • Government officials: viziers | • Laborers/Slaves |

EGYPT'S LEGACIES

- Measuring system of knots and surveyance of land
- Shadow clocks and water clocks
- Irrigation systems
- Systems of geometry
- Weights and measures
- Astronomy
- Solar calendar
- Biology – human anatomy

KEY PEOPLE

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| ~ Menes | ~ Cleopatra |
| ~ Tutankhamen | ~ Akhenaten/Amenhotep V |
| ~ Nefertiti | ~ Hatsheput/Thutmose III |

VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| ~ afterlife | ~ Egyptologist | ~ papyrus |
| ~ amulet | ~ embalm | ~ pharaoh |
| ~ cataract | ~ fertile | ~ sarcophagus |
| ~ delta | ~ hieroglyphics | ~ scribe |
| ~ drought | ~ irrigation | ~ vizier |
| ~ dynasty | ~ mummy | |

ANCIENT GREECE CURRICULUM

Introduction

The Acton Public Schools have chosen to study the civilization of ancient Greece for a variety of reasons. The lives of the ancient Greeks have had a huge impact on our lives today. The roots of our government, art, architecture, literature, sports and entertainment can be traced back to classical ancient Greece. Sixth graders studying ancient Greece not only will enjoy the mythical adventures of the Greek gods but also will develop a sense of cause and effect and a better understanding of the history of the world around them today.

The “Short Story” of Ancient Greece

“Future ages will wonder at us, as the present age wonders at us now,” stated Pericles, an ancient Greek statesman when speaking the praises of the city-state of Athens. The Greeks of the Golden Age were creative and thoughtful people who thought highly of themselves. Athens flourished during the age of Pericles, in the 400s B.C.E.

Long before then, Crete had been settled by mariners from Asia who were traveling on the Mediterranean Sea. Like other ancient peoples, the early Greeks did not understand the natural events that happened around them, and so they attributed these happenings to the powers of gods and goddesses. Early in the settlement of Greece, each village had its own local deities. The stories later evolved into a collection of stories, called myths, with a hierarchy of gods and goddesses with human-like form. The Greeks accepted these stories as truth, as they explained the unknown to curious people.

By 2000 B.C.E., the island of Crete was a network of cities, each ruled by a king. In 1600 B.C.E., King Minos of Knossos ruled the entire island. His people were skilled sailors known as Minoans.

The rocky but fertile soil of southern Greece allowed the settlers of the peninsula to grow crops, and eventually they discovered that they could grow flourishing grapevines and olive trees in the Mediterranean climate. The geography of Greece gave its people easy access to the sea, and traveling from port to port via ship was actually easier than traveling over the mountainous land. This encouraged the settlers to develop better ships and to expand their trade. It also led to the development of tiny “kingdoms” close to the coastline. The leaders of these kingdoms built walled fortresses, called citadels, around their land, and despite their culture bonds, kingdoms often fought with each other over land.

Some larger kingdoms emerged, and by 1600 B.C.E., Mycenae became the most powerful kingdom. The Mycenaean ruled the Peloponnesus and beyond for over 500 years.

The Mycenaean and Minoans interacted with one another, and the Mycenae learned a great deal from the Minoans, who as sailors and travelers knew much more about the world around them. This interaction continued until 1450 B.C.E., when an earthquake and volcano destroyed the eastern part of the island of Crete and its people. The Mycenae took advantage of this opportunity and took control of Crete and its access to the Mediterranean.

In 1200 B.C.E. the Mycenae invaded and overtook Troy, which controlled the strait that connected the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea. Only a few hundred years later, Mycenae began to decline and was overtaken by the Dorians, a culture of nomadic horsemen who brought little to Greece but tools and weapons. During this Dark Age period, which lasted until 800 B.C.E., trade came to a stand still, written language disappeared, and people lived in isolated villages, but oral tradition kept the early history of Greece alive. Storytellers retold the legends and myths of their past.

During the 700s B.C.E., the Dark Age came to an end, and the poet Homer wrote epic poems recording the oral stories that kept history and the rich Greek mythology alive. His epic poem, *The Odyssey*, recounted the adventures of warriors returning from the Mycenaean war in Troy. It was one of the most important literary achievements of the early Greeks.

Isolated villages developed into cities; cities grew; and trade increased. Leaders arose among the people in each city, and the era of the cities-states – independent, self-governing units, began. These grew and flourished, including two large, though significantly different, city-states – Sparta and Athens. Athens was the literary, cultural, philosophical center, whereas Sparta was a militaristic state. They united together temporarily against the common threat of the Persian Empire during the Persian Wars.

During the Golden Age of Pericles, Athenians pursued beauty and democracy. The period from 460 – 429 B.C.E. was a period of cultural and political change when Athens enjoyed peace and prosperity. Under the watchful eye of Pericles, a democratic system was developed; the city was beautified; and the navy was strengthened to better protect the Athenian citizens. This was a period of time when philosophy, art, architecture, literature, science, medicine and mathematics flourished. These attainments, however, came at a cost. Slaves and women had few or no rights in ancient Athens. Also, Athens' democracy was enriched through conquest and through tribute from weaker cities. Through much of its Golden Age, Athens was at war with Sparta and that city-state's allies.

After the ravages of the 27 years of the Peloponnesian War, Athens ultimately surrendered to Sparta. Following defeat, life in Athens changed dramatically. The decline of democracy, the death of Socrates, and a fierce plague were all factors that contributed to the ending of the Golden Age.

From 404 to 338 B.C.E., the cities fought among each other until Macedonia (under the rule of King Philip) conquered Greece. It wasn't until 338 B.C.E. and the rule of Alexander the Great, the son of King Philip, that Greek society again flourished. Alexander began a 20,000-mile conquest of surrounding kingdoms and civilizations. During the 13 years of his rule, he created the largest empire in the western world and spread the ideas and arts of Greece far and wide, thus initiating the Hellenistic Age. No one individual ruler was strong enough to maintain control of the empire after Alexander's death in 323 B.C.E. His generals split his empire into five pieces, and eventually the Romans conquered these lands.

In teaching the story of Ancient Greece, the following content is recommended/required.

GEOGRAPHY

Location/Climate

- Greece is located on the continent of Europe.
- The peninsula juts into the Mediterranean Sea.
- Climate is temperate with moderate fall and winter months, hot and dry summer months.
- Aegean Sea is to the east.

Major Features

- Rugged mountains cover over 3/4 of the mainland.
- Southern portion is called the Peloponnese with the island of Crete offshore.
- Peloponnese is connected to the northern half by the Isthmus of Corinth.
- Mt. Olympus, the highest peak in Greece, rises 9,570 feet above sea level.

Unique Topographical Features That Affected the Development of Greece

- Early people cut down trees from the forested hillsides to build houses and boats, so land is now more suitable for grazing animals than for crops.
- Soil is rocky but fertile; olives and grape vines flourish.
- Greece's topography was directly responsible for the rise of the Greek city-state, and small, isolated kingdoms developed over time.
- Access to the Mediterranean allowed the Greeks to become sailors and traders.

Settlements/Key Places

- Crete/Knossos
- Peloponnese
- Mycenaean
- Athens
- Sparta
- Troy
- Mount Olympus
- Aegean Sea

GOVERNMENT/HISTORY

The historical timeline for this unit can be divided into three main historical sections: The Early Greeks, The Rise of the City-State/The Golden Age of Athens, and The Later Years/The Fall of Greece. The major emphasis should be on the Rise of the City-State/The Golden Age of Athens. **Note:** The Early Greek period, which includes the early settlement of Greece, Bronze Age, Dark Age, and Archaic Period, is an important foundation for The Rise of the City State but not the primary focus of this 6th-grade unit.

The Early Greeks

- Small kingdoms arose (monarchy – rule by kings).
- Minoan civilization on Crete
- Mycenaean Age on Peloponnese
- Mycenaean took over Crete after Minoans destroyed by earthquake/volcanic eruption.
- Mycenaean invaded Troy to gain access to the Black Sea.
- Dorians overtook Mycenae; the Dark Ages began.
- Homer wrote *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

The Rise of the City-State/The Golden Age of Athens

- Populations grew; villages expanded; a few powerful ruled each polis, or city-state (oligarchy – rule by a few).
- Athens and Sparta emerged as the two largest city states – Athens: a center of creativity, philosophy and beauty; Sparta: a military state
- Athens and Sparta united together to fight the Persian Empire.
- Greece entered The Golden Age/Classical Period.
- Athens organized into a democratic government with three branches of government.
- Other city-states began to adopt democracy.
- Pericles was elected leader in Athens and focused on three goals:
 - ~ to fortify Athens against invasion
 - ~ to beautify the city and its buildings and arts
 - ~ to foster democracy
- Daily life in Athens was rich in creativity, entertainment, art, etc., but as Athens attempted to spread its democratic ideals (the Delian League), other city-states worried they would come under the control of Athens and lose their independence.

The Later Years/The Fall of Greece

- The Athenians saw themselves as protecting the rights of individuals, while other Greeks saw the Athenians as tyrants who were trying to tell them what to do.
- The Spartans formed their own alliance. A 30-year war broke out between those allied with Sparta and those allied with Athens (the Peloponnesian War).
- Life in Athens declined; a plague broke out, killing 1/4 of the population, including Pericles.
- The Spartans took control of Greece until they were overpowered by the Thebans and then the Macedonians
- King Phillip of Macedonia died, and control of Greece went to his son, Alexander the Great.
- Alexander ruled for many years and expanded his empire throughout the west.
- After Alexander's death, his generals divided his territory into several parts, which were eventually overtaken by the Romans.

Greek Life and Culture: Topics to Include:

RELIGION

- Polytheistic
- Gods had humanlike characteristics.
- All natural phenomena due to the whims of the gods
- Creation myth – Zeus
- Mythology can be explored as part of the social studies curriculum or as an interdisciplinary study with language arts.

ECONOMY

- Agora – main marketplace
- Trade: many port cities; because of the mountains, sailing from port-to-port is easier than traveling on land.
- Products included olives, grapes/wine.

ART/ARCHITECTURE

- Columns (Ionic, Doric, Corinthian)
- The Parthenon sits atop the Acropolis in Athens.
- Other temples
- Sculpture
- Pottery
- Theater/Plays/Drama/Comedy
- Poetry

SOCIETY/DAILY LIFE

- Positive attitude about themselves and their bodies
- Sports, games and athletics were an important part of their lives.
- Olympic Games held in Olympia to honor Zeus.
- Women and slaves were not equal with free, land-owning men.

- Education and written language were valued, which led to the written recording of:
 - ~ Mythology
 - ~ Plays
 - ~ Poetry/Music
 - ~ History (Herodotus, the Father of History)
 - ~ Philosophy

GREECE'S LEGACY

Science

- Architecture
- Foundations of democracy
- Art
- Literature
- Sculpture
- Philosophy

Key People

- King Minos
- Pericles
- Homer
- Socrates
- Plato
- Aristotle
- Alexander the Great
- Euclid
- Archimedes
- Pythagoras

Vocabulary

- agora
- anarchy
- aristocracy
- citizen
- city-state
- comedy
- conquest
- democracy/ democratic
- Hellenistic
- lyric poetry
- monarchy
- oligarchy
- philosopher
- plague
- sanctuary
- tragedy
- tyranny

ANCIENT ROME CURRICULUM

Introduction

The Acton Public Schools have chosen to include the study of ancient Rome in the sixth-grade social studies curriculum because Roman political institutions, art, architecture, language literature, and the rise of Christianity have all had deep and lasting influence on the civilizations of the Western World, of which the United States is a part.

The “Short Story” of Rome

In the seventh century B.C.E., the people living in hilltop villages along the Tiber River were united by a common language and way of life. These villages eventually expanded and united to form the city of Rome. In the myth recorded by the Roman Historian, Livy, the legend states that Rome was founded by Romulus, brother of Remus.

The Etruscans, an industrious and sophisticated people living north of Rome, gained control of Rome by 600 B.C.E. and brought advances in farming, a system of writing, the arch, religion, and knowledge of metals to the Latin people. The Etruscans established Rome as a monarchy and ruled as kings until the overthrow of Tarquin the Proud in 508 B.C.E. The influence of the Etruscans on the Latin people foreshadows the eagerness of later Romans to adapt and incorporate Greek ideas.

In place of a monarchy, the Latins sought to devise a government where the people would play an integral role. Due to the fight for rights of the common man, the Romans established their first written law, The Twelve Tables. The struggle for power between the Plebeians and the Patricians resulted in a balance of power and the Republican form of government. This period in ancient Roman history is known as the Republic Era, and its influence can be seen in many of our founding documents and governmental structure.

During this era, Rome was conquering Italy and the surrounding areas. Carthage, a Phoenician city on the Northern shore of Africa, soon became Rome’s adversary over the control of the Mediterranean Sea during the Punic Wars (264 B.C.E. – 149 B.C.E.). The First Punic War lasted 23 years; as the result of a bitter defeat, the Carthaginians were forced to concede the island of Sicily to the Romans. The Second Punic War, led by the Carthaginian General Hannibal, also resulted in a Roman victory and the end of Carthage’s Empire. The Carthaginians attempted to rebel during the Third Punic War and were once again

defeated. Rome became the most important influence in the Mediterranean, and by 50 B.C.E., Rome had established provinces in Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Gaul and Northern Africa.

Domestically, Rome was having serious problems. Farmers had left their land to fight the Punic Wars. Upon their return, the farmers lacked the resources to repair their farms and were unable to gain employment in the cities due to the large number of slaves captured during the wars. As the numbers of poor and unemployed grew, so did the desperation of the slaves to gain their freedom. Conflicts broke out between the rich and the poor. Concurrently, the Roman army evolved into a powerful entity whose loyalty lay with the generals who paid them, rather than with the city of Rome. Due to these circumstances, Julius Caesar was able to gain control over Rome and declare himself dictator, thus ending the Roman Republic Era.

After the assassination of Julius Caesar, there followed a power struggle that led to a stable Roman Empire under Augustus. For several hundred years, the Roman Empire was at some times led by “good” emperors and at other times by “bad” emperors, yet in totality this period from 27 B.C.E. to C.E 180 was a remarkable time, known as the Pax Romana (the Peace of Rome). This time of peace and prosperity was established in part by the intelligent and thoughtful rule of the first emperor, Augustus. Augustus restored order in the city of Rome and supported the further expansion of the empire. At its peak in C.E 117, the Roman Empire had a population of 60 million, which was more than 1/5 of the total world population. During this time, Christianity began to spread, and its followers were persecuted by the Romans. Many Romans saw the Christians as a threat to Roman order and patriotism. Eventually, Christianity was declared illegal, though it continued to flourish.

It was a monumental undertaking to maintain control over the empire. As a result, the Romans granted citizenship over the people in the provinces and even allowed for representation of the provinces in the central government. The Pax Romana ended with the death of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. This signified the beginning of a period of decline when military leaders fought for power. Over the next 50 years, there were 25 different emperors, and all but one were killed. The economy was disastrous, and prices were out of control. In addition, the empire was under attack by external tribes and food was scarce. Poverty and unemployment increased, and trade was disrupted by the barbarians. By

C.E 284, the empire was in a state of disintegration. In an attempt to improve domestic and foreign affairs, Emperor Diocletian divided the empire into two parts, the Eastern Empire and the Western Roman Empire.

In C.E 324, Emperor Constantine reunited the empire and established a new capitol in Constantinople. He also declared that Christians could openly practice their religion. By then there

were over 5 million Christians in Rome. Many people, including the poor and slaves, converted to Christianity, believing that a better life after death would await them if they followed the teachings of Jesus.

Constantine died in C.E 337, and by C.E 400 the empire was permanently split into two halves. Christianity had become the official religion (394 C.E). The Eastern Roman Empire, with Constantinople as its capitol, lasted for an additional 1,000 years, while the Western Roman Empire was near its end.

The fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century C.E was the result of a combination of factors. The Empire was in a state of economic and moral decline. In addition, the decadence and materialism of the Roman society contrasted with Christian ideals and fundamentals. Christians were more devoted to the church than to the state. In addition, the government hired too many barbarians, who felt no loyalty to Rome, to protect its borders. Eventually, the attacks by barbarians overwhelmed the Empire's defense, and the empire collapsed.

GEOGRAPHY

Location/Climate

- Located on the continent of Europe on the Italian peninsula
- Climate: Summers are hot and dry; winters are mild and rainy.

Major Features

- 3/4 of the peninsula is mountainous and mainly used as pastureland.
- The wide coastal plains of Etruria, Latium and Campania have rich soil for farming.

Settlements/Key Places

- Rome, Sicily, Carthage

Unique Topographical Features That Affected the Development of Rome

- Rome flourished due to location on Tiber River, which allowed the Romans to control trade.
- Rome's proximity to the Mediterranean Sea
- Rome was situated along the Via Salaria (Salt Road), trade route for this important commodity.

GOVERNMENT/HISTORY

The historical timeline for this unit can be divided into three eras: The Kingdom Era, The Republic, and The Empire. The major emphasis should be on the Republic and the Empire. Note: Interact refers to the first period as the Kingdom Era; Early Times divides Roman History into the Republic and the Empire. Other texts may refer to the Kingdom Era as the Era of Etruscan Influence.

Kingdom Era: 753 B.C.E. – 508 B.C.E.

- Creation Myth – Romulus and Remus
- Seven Kings – Etruscan influence

The Rise of the Republic, c 509 B.C.E.

- 509 – 264 B.C.E. Rome conquered all of the Italian peninsula.
Conflict between the classes of Patricians, Plebeians, and Slaves led to the first written law of the Republican form of government.
Key terms: Twelve Tables (451 B.C.E.), Senate, Counsels, Assembly and Tribune
Balance of power between Patricians and Plebeians attained
Good example of how an ordinary person can make a difference.
(Connect to life today and the importance of education.)

The Decline of the Republic

- 265 – 146 B.C.E. The three Punic Wars extended Rome's reach far beyond the Mediterranean, ending with the defeat of Hannibal by Scipio Africanus.
Farmers left to join the army to expand the Republic; slaves were left in control and eventually took control over land.
- 49 – 44 B.C.E. Julius Caesar emerged as preeminent general, with a powerful vision for Rome. Caesar made himself dictator for life and was soon murdered, plunging Rome into ten years of civil war.

The Rise of the Roman Empire

- 31 B.C.E. First emperor (Octavian and later named as Augustus)
- 27 B.C.E. – C.E 180 the Pax Romana (Prosperity and Peace)

Very involved and complicated, there were good emperors and bad emperors. Each died in an interesting way and a new emperor took over – very tumultuous.

The Pax Romana ended with Marcus Aurelius.

The Roman Army was well organized.

The Decline of the Empire - Empire Splits in Two – East and West

- C.E 235 – 285 Rapid succession of emperors – many corrupt, many murdered
Farmers left to join the army to protect new borders that were constantly under attack. This caused food shortages.
Economic decline/heavy taxation/rapid price inflation
Moral decline/decadence/rebellion
- C.E 300s Growth of the Christian church. Early Christians were more devoted to faith than state. Emperor Constantine helped to legitimize the new faith.
Barbarian attacks weakened the Republic.
- C.E 476 Germanic tribe defeated the last Roman emperor, and the Western Roman Empire ended.

RELIGION

- Early Latins believed nature spirits (numina) inhabited all things. Later, the Etruscans brought the Greek religion to Rome. The Romans saw many similarities between the Greek pantheon and their own deities and eventually merged the two. The result was a Roman equivalent of Greek deities.
- Polytheistic; gods had humanlike qualities and ability to control the lives of men and women.
- Romans also practiced worship of ancestors.
- Religion had a political nature as well as a religious one.
- Christianity, a monotheistic religion, began with the birth/teachings of Jesus Christ (1st century, C.E/C.E.) and grew, despite being banned.

ECONOMY

- Agricultural economy (grain, olives, wine, etc.); needed slave labor to run
- Mining: marble, gold, silver (from other territories in the Empire)
- Manufacturing: pottery, glassware, weapons, tools, and textiles
- Were able to make coins because there was metal available
- Slave trading

ART/ARCHITECTURE/ENGINEERING

- Coliseum
- Mosaics
- Roads/Arches/Domes
- Aqueducts: provided water and plumbing to the cities

SOCIETY/DAILY LIFE

Rome at its peak during Pax Romana

- Social rank and elitism
- Slavery
- “Bread and Circus” – give the people enough to eat and plenty of entertainment and they will stay happy
- Gladiators
- Baths

ROME’S LEGACY

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Belief in written law/legal system | • Architecture |
| • Many ideas built on from the Greeks (Roman-Greco) | • Language (Latin roots) |
| • Gods | • Armies |
| • Christianity | • Central heating |
| • Literature | • Engineering – aqueduct, arches, concrete, dome, roads, bridges |
| • Roman alphabet/Latin language | • Monasteries/religious communities |
| • Roman Proverbs/sayings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">~ <i>When in Rome, do as the Romans do.</i>~ <i>Rome wasn’t built in a day.</i>~ <i>All roads lead to Rome.</i>~ <i>“Et tu, Brute?”</i> | |

KEY PEOPLE

- Romulus/Remus
- Cleopatra
- Hannibal/Scipio Africanus
- Julius Caesar/Brutus
- Augustus
- Marcus Aurelius
- Constantine
- Jesus Christ

KEY VOCABULARY

- omen
- empire/emperor
- capital
- suburbs
- senate
- republic
- province
- consul
- monotheism
- patrician
- plebeian
- debt/bondage
- dictator
- bulla
- aqueduct
- assassinate
- elite
- pagan
- barbarian
- monastery

INTRODUCTION TO ANCIENT INDIAN CURRICULUM

The Acton Public Schools has chosen to include a study of Ancient India and the Indus River Valley in its curriculum because of the long-lasting impact of India's religious traditions and mathematical, scientific, and artistic achievements.

The "Short Story" – Ancient India

The early Indus Valley Civilization was located in current day Pakistan and parts of India. The villages that began to develop on the Indus River over 5000 years ago are among the oldest in the world. From 7000 B.C.E. to 3000 B.C.E., the people were living in small villages or towns. At first, almost every villager was a farmer. As farming practices improved, it freed some to become merchants, traders and craftsmen. Villages turned into towns, and some towns turned into cities. By 2500 B.C.E., the Indus Valley Civilization was large enough to have two major cities, Mohenjo-Daro and, 400 miles to the NE, Harappa.

The years 2600 B.C.E. to 1900 B.C.E. include the high point of this civilization, although we still know very little about it and no one yet has deciphered their written language. Ancient cities were large, up to 35,000 inhabitants covering an area twice the size of ancient Egypt. There is no archaeological evidence that they fought wars or constructed great temples or palaces, but they built cities, made laws, and took care of the basic needs of the people, including elaborate sewer systems.

After lasting 1000 years, the Indus Valley Civilization finally vanished around the year 1500 B.C.E. Perhaps an earthquake caused great floods or invaders finished off an already weakened civilization. Their legacy continues in the traditions of weaving, raising chickens for food, and wearing jewelry – all of which are still practiced in India today and in the rest of the world.

The Indus Valley is no longer a watered plain. The Indus River passes through a barren desert-like landscape. Perhaps the river shifted its course; perhaps overgrazing caused deforestation. No one really knows.

The Indo-European Migration/Vedic Period (1500 B.C.E. – 600 B.C.E.)

Around 2000 B.C.E., conditions in Central Asia changed for some reason, and thousands of people began to migrate from their homes to find new territories. Many of these people, called Aryans, made their way through the Hindu Kush Mountains by way of the Khyber Pass (c. 1500 B.C.E.). This nomadic herding group changed India forever, and they were also changed by their arrival on the subcontinent. They brought the influence of the Persian arts/architecture, religion and clothing to India. Over time, the Aryans settled down and became farmers. By about 800 B.C.E., the Aryans had developed a stable agricultural society. By that time, they had pushed the indigenous people to the southern part of the subcontinent.

Some archaeologists believe that the roots of Hinduism go back all the way to the Indus River Valley Civilization. We are certain that it goes back at least as far as the Aryan period and the writing down of the “Vedas” from approximately 1500 B.C.E. to 1000 B.C.E. (Vedas is a Sanskrit word for “wisdom.”) Though they started as oral lessons, these sacred poems, stories and songs were eventually written down and have become the foundation for Hindu beliefs.

According to the Vedas, society should be divided into classes. These classes, and their associated duties, have come to be known as the “caste system,” which persisted in India until modern times. All people needed to follow the tradition of *dharma*, or obligation.

The Vedas describe four main social classes:

- Brahmins (teachers/priests)
- Kshatriya (lawmakers and warriors)
- Vashya (business/merchant class)
- Shudras (laborers/working class)

Around the year 1000 B.C.E., the Aryans began to write down two major epic poems, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. It is from these writings that we know much about Aryan life during this period (the Vedic Period). Indian schoolchildren today still learn the story of the Aryan king Rama and his defeat of the evil Ravana.

Hindus believe in many gods, with one supreme god, Brahman. Brahman has three “souls”:

- Brahma – the Creator
- Vishnu – the Sustainer (has 10 forms)
- Shiva – the Destroyer (not in a negative sense; in a sense of death/rebirth)

GEOGRAPHY

Location/Climate

- The Indus River Valley was located along the eastern shores of the Arabian Sea (current day Pakistan and Northwest India)
- Climate: There were six seasons with temperatures ranging from 100 degrees to below zero (spring, summer, rainy, autumn, winter and dewy). In later empire periods, people moved into southern areas where monsoons are prevalent.
- Khyber Pass (in present day Afghanistan) provided access from Indo-Europe into Indian Subcontinent to the Ganges River Valley in the East.

Major Features

- Himalayan Mountains were to the northeast (very rocky).
- Parallel river system: the Indus River and the Ghaggar-Hakra River (now a dry river). Between these two rivers there was once a fertile, treed valley that is now arid desert. To the southeast is the Thar Desert.

Settlements/Key Places

- Mohenjo-Daro (city of 35,000 located southeast bank of Indus River)
- Harappa (city of 21,000; 400 miles northeast of Mohenjo-Daro)
- Settlement spread from Indus River Valley to the plains of northern India

Unique Topographical Features That Affected the Development of India

- Himalayan Mountains provided water to the Indus River and its tributaries. They also provided hunting, timber, semi-precious stones and minerals (copper, bronze and iron).
- The Indus River and the Ghaggar-Hakra emptied into the Arabian Sea for easy trading for the Indus River Valley.
- The river valley provided grazing lands and fertile farmland, as well as fish and waterfowl.
- Khyber Pass

GOVERNMENT/HISTORY

The historical timeline for this unit can be divided into two eras: The Indus Valley/ Harappan Civilization, The Indo-European Migration Era/Vedic Period.

The Indus Valley Civilization (2600 B.C.E. – 1500 B.C)

- The two cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa – along with many others (up to 1400) – covered an area of half a million square miles.
- Agricultural civilization: growing wheat, barley, melons, dates, etc.

- Rulers are unknown; some houses were a bit larger than others.
- They had a written language (no one has yet deciphered it).
- Priests and priestesses were probably responsible for fertility rites, health rites and protection from wild animals.
- Cities contained trade fair structures, streets, houses, extensive drainage systems (sewers) and gateways (public buildings).
- This civilization completely died out and was replaced by the Aryans – new language (Sanskrit based).

The Indo-European Migration/Vedic Period (1500 B.C.E. – 600 B.C.E.)

- Arrival of nomadic Aryans, on horseback, through the Khyber Pass from Eastern Europe
- Establishment of small kingdoms
- Rise of caste system – gradual evolution of priests as most important, rather than secular leaders on top
- Beginnings of Hinduism (not allowed to flourish until the Gupta empire)

RELIGION/BELIEF SYSTEM

The Indus Valley Civilization (2600 B.C.E. – 1500 B.C.)

- Fertility cults, priests, priestesses, female and male deities, religious festivals, symbolic animal sacrifices
- No complex funerary services, few burial artifacts
- They had laws and made certain everyone got what they needed.
- No slavery

The Indo-European Migration/Vedic Period (1500 B.C.E. – 600 B.C.E.)

- Nature-based religion with specific gods (including Indra, god of war)
- Vedas (poems, hymns and stories) written approx. 1500 B.C.E.

ECONOMY

The Indus Valley Civilization (2600 B.C.E. – 1500 B.C.)

- Agricultural economy – wheat, barley, peas and corn
- Industries; fishing (turtles, shellfish, eel and porpoise)
- Powerful merchants emerged in Sumer Trade: stone beads, jewelry, metalwork (copper and bronze) cattle, sheep and pigs.
- Dried fish made out-of-season trade possible.

- Trade routes were along the river.
- Depended on the natural flooding of the riverbanks to water their crops

The Indo-European Migration/Vedic Period (1500 B.C.E. – 600 B.C.E.)

- skilled weavers and dyers
- introduction of rice
- cows (as currency)
- continue to deforest, although to clear farmland

ART/ARCHITECTURE/ENGINEERING

Indus River Valley

- Fertility figurines, seals used for trade, primitive jewelry of stone beads
- Art was symbolic of everyday life, geometric designs, painted pottery
- Small mud-brick houses with wooden/grass roofs; no windows on first floor
- Large trade centers were built.
- Drainage systems (indoor plumbing): houses had indoor water and toilets.
- Roads were built.
- Carts/wheel/boats
- Stone and copper weapons (but no evidence of warfare)

Indo-European Migration/Vedic Period

- Stringed instruments, flutes and drums; music was important to religious tradition.

SOCIETY/DAILY LIFE

Indus River Valley

- Trash pick-up daily!
- Elevated baths for the neighborhoods
- Evidence of game pieces indicated they had time to play – dice and an early form of chess.

Indo-European Migration/ Vedic Period

- Semi-nomadic herders

INDIA'S LEGACY

Indus Valley Civilization

- Indus Valley Civilization declined and vanished approximately 1500 B.C.E. Causes for decline could have been a disaster such as an earthquake or a great flood. It could have been Indo-European invaders.
- Although this civilization is long gone, their legacy includes wearing of bracelets, domestication of chickens for food, and the spinning and weaving of cotton cloth.

Indo-European Migration/Vedic Period

- Sanskrit (origins of Hindi)
- Chariots and weapons
- Rice

KEY VOCABULARY

Indo-European Migration/Vedic Period

- Aryan
- Brahmin
- caste
- migration
- vedas
- subcontinent
- moderation
- yoga

Classroom Resources

<u>Title</u>	<u>Source</u>
<u>A Message of Ancient Days</u>	Houghton- Mifflin, 2003
<u>Early Times</u> by Suzanne S. Art	Wayside Publishing, 1993
<i>Prehistoric Peoples</i> by Philip Brooks	Lorenz Books, 2000
“Kids’ Discover” Magazines ~ <i>Ancient India</i> ~ <i>Roman Empire</i> ~ <i>Pyramid</i> ~ <i>Ancient Greece</i> ~ <i>Ancient Egypt</i> ~ <i>7 Wonders</i>	
Eyewitness books: ~ <i>Ancient Egypt</i> ~ <i>Ancient Greece</i> ~ <i>Ancient Rome</i> ~ <i>Archaeology</i> ~ <i>Pyramid</i>	