

Seeds of Civilization Unit 3 Overview: World History I, 9th Grade

Driving Concept 2: Early Societies and Cities (10,000 BCE to 500 BCE)

This driving concept will build upon students' understanding of ways to study historical evidence and make meaning from the past in order to analyze how societies arose, first in Africa, then in Asia, and the Americas. Students will analyze geographic and environmental factors that promoted human societies, as well as how humans developed skills and technology to become complex, successful, agrarian societies. Then, students will analyze how these societies created and were shaped by early cultural traits and belief systems. Teachers should choose at least one of the following societies of focus from each region below to explore as case studies.

Africa: Kush, Nubia, Egypt

The Americas: The Olmecs, Maya, Norte Chico (Peru)

Asia: Mesopotamia, Jericho, China (the Shang Dynasty), Indus Valley

Essential Question

How did the development of agriculture shape early civilizations?

Seeds of Civilization Unit 3 Overview: World History I, 9th Grade

About This Unit

Unit 3: Seeds of Civilization explores how early farming societies developed into the world's first complex civilizations. Building on their understanding of the Neolithic Revolution, students will examine how agriculture laid the foundation for permanent settlements, social hierarchies, organized religion, government, and cultural advancements. Through case studies of civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, Kingdom of Kush, the Shang Dynasty, the Indus Valley, the Olmec, and Caral-Supe, students will analyze archaeological and textual evidence to understand how geography, environmental conditions, and belief systems shaped early societies. They will continue practicing contextualization while developing skills in comparison and sourcing. The unit culminates in a Curated Research Paper (CRP), where students will create an argumentative essay that demonstrates how agriculture fueled the emergence of civilizations during this time period.

Use the Best Practices Repository for information on implementing every strategy and lesson activity!

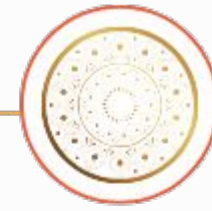
SEEDS OF CIVILIZATIONS

10,000 BCE - 500 BCE



10,000 BCE

Ice Age ends; The Neolithic Revolution begins in the Fertile Crescent



circa 7000 BCE

Emergence of the Indus River Valley Civilization



circa 3500 BCE

Emergence of the Caral-Supe civilization



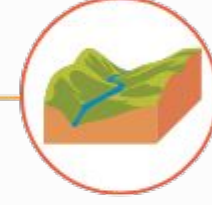
circa 3600 BCE

Cuneiform script developed in Mesopotamia by Sumerians



circa 5000 BCE - 4100 BCE

First ziggurats in Mesopotamia appeared



circa 6,000 BCE

Civilizations along the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates River Valleys inhabited.



circa 3200 BCE

Hieroglyphic script developed in Egypt



circa 2800-1900 BCE

Rise of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa



circa 2700 BCE

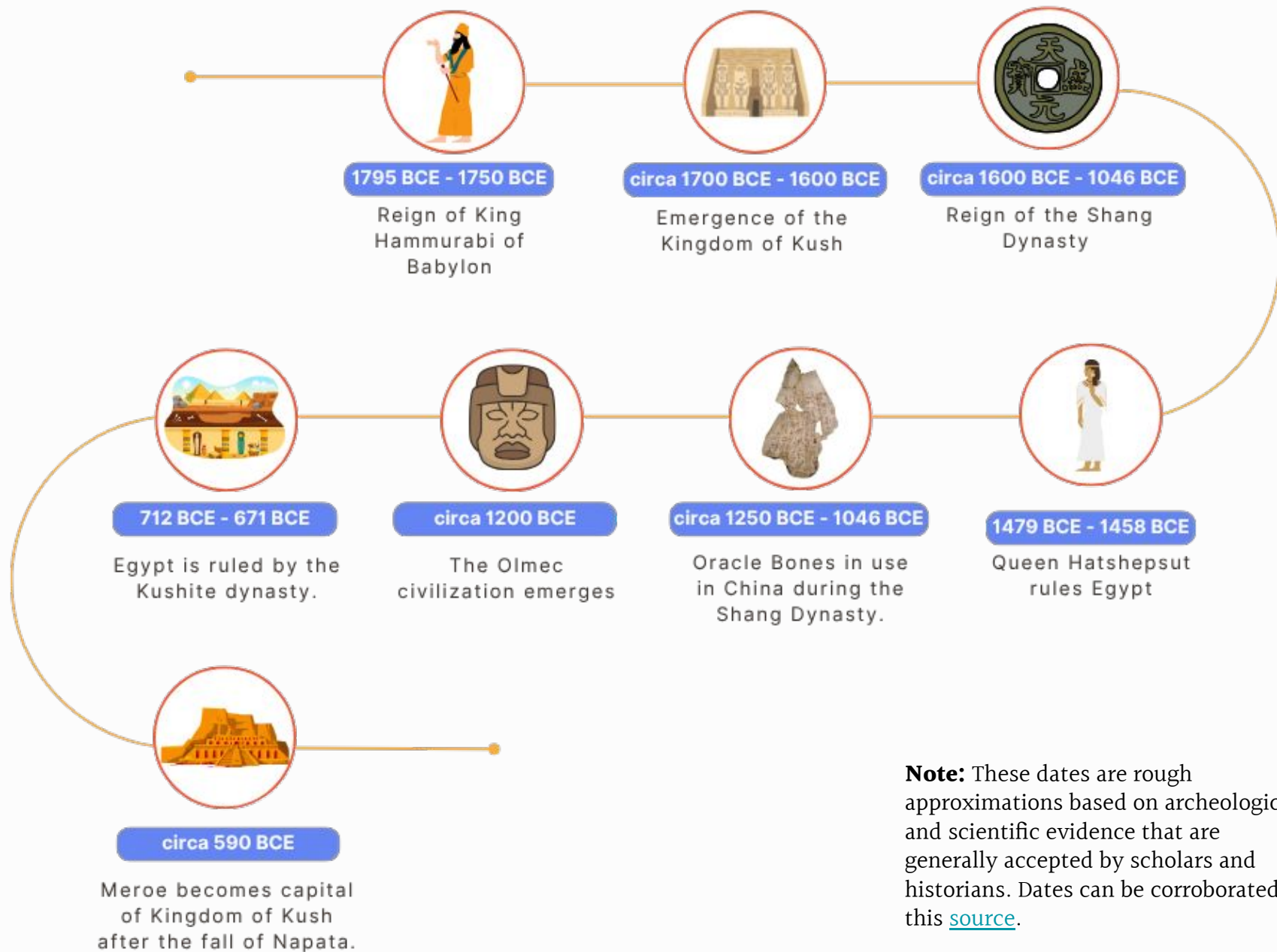
Cultivation of corn in Mesoamerica



circa 2560-2500 BCE

Great Pyramid of Giza and Great Sphinx of Giza built

Unit 3: Seeds of Civilization Timeline



Note: These dates are rough approximations based on archeological and scientific evidence that are generally accepted by scholars and historians. Dates can be corroborated by this [source](#).

Seeds of Civilization Unit 3 Overview: World History I, 9th Grade

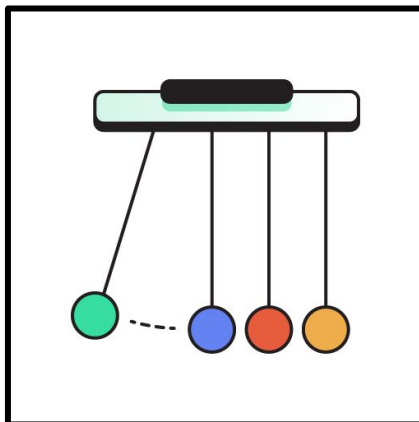
Priority Standards	
1.13	Analyze the geographical and environmental factors that encouraged human communities to organize into complex states and adopt approaches to procure resources, including pastoral nomadism and other non-agricultural approaches.
1.14	Locate and explain the significance of specific landforms and bodies of water to early complex societies in different regions between 10,000 BCE and 500 BCE.
1.15	Analyze the role of agricultural, technological and cultural innovations in the emergence and maintenance of early complex societies between 10,000 BCE and 500 BCE.
1.16	Explain how the development of cities in Africa, Asia, and the Americas between 10,000 BCE and 500 BCE led to common characteristics of early complex societies including social hierarchies, governments and laws, specialization and writing.
1.17	Analyze how early religions and belief systems shaped the political, legal, economic and social structure of states in Africa, Asia and the Americas between 10,000 BCE and 500 BCE.
1.18	Compare the role of women in different societies, including ways in which women exercised power between 10,000 BCE and 500 BCE.
1.20	Compare and contrast the reasons for the decline of complex agrarian societies in Asia, Africa and the Americas between 10,000 BCE and 500 BCE.

Additional Standards	
1.19	Analyze archeological and primary source materials to make a claim about daily life for different individuals within Africa, Asia, and the Americas between 10,000 BCE and 500 BCE.
1.53	Using evidence, construct a claim about a compelling question regarding a UNESCO World Heritage Site or the ownership of artifacts from antiquity.



Seeds of Civilization Unit 3 Overview: World History I, 9th Grade

Unit Preview		
<i>Subtopic(s)</i>	<i>Compelling Question</i>	<i>Standard(s)</i>
Nile River Valley Civilizations	In what ways were early African civilizations shaped by their environment, and how did build complex societies?	1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19
Early Civilizations in Asia	How do written and archaeological records of early Asian civilizations reveal both shared patterns and unique developments in human history?	1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19
Mesoamerican Civilizations	What do archaeological discoveries reveal about the rise, achievements, and decline of early Mesoamerican civilizations?	1.14, 1.15, 1.17, 1.19, 1.20, 1.53
Assessment: Development of Agriculture (CRP)		All Unit Standards



Causation: Unit Focus Skill

Thinking historically means considering why certain things happened and what effects occurred because of an event, development, or process. It also means recognizing that there are multiple causes of and multiple effects from any event, development, or process.

Nile River Valley Civilizations: Topic 1 Overview

	<u>LESSON 1 (90 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 2 (120 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 3 (90 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	What inferences can be drawn about the values and lifestyles of early civilizations by analyzing their artifacts?	How did the Nile River impact the development of Ancient Egypt?	In what ways did pharaohs shape religion, government, and social life in Ancient Egypt?
STANDARD(S)	1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17	1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17	1.16, 1.17, 1.18
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Causation Contextualization	Causation Contextualization Historical Significance	Contextualization & Sourcing Historical Significance
DO FIRST	Frayer: River Valley Prediction	Frayer: Irrigation Notice, Wonder, Think	Frayer: Pharaoh Give One, Get One
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	Inquiry Journal Topic 1: Supporting Questions	Ancient Egypt Video Introduction	"What is the Context?" - Queen Hatshepsut Reading
ACTIVITY 2 - PRACTICE	"What is the Context?" - Establishment of Civilizations Reading	Historical Thinking Skills: Causation Video and Guide	Primary and Visual Source Close Reading
ACTIVITY 3 - EXHIBIT	Gallery Walk - Artifacts of Early Civilizations	Introduction to Historical Methods of Research & Activity	+ "Ships of the Egyptian Squadron" + THINKS
CONCLUSION	Exit Ticket: Quickwrite	Causation Graphic Organizer	Exit Ticket: Triangle, Square, Circle

Nile River Valley Civilizations: Topic 1 Overview

	<u>LESSON 4 (60 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 5 (120 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	In what ways was Queen Hatshepsut's reign as Pharaoh of Egypt historically significant?	What does the rise of the Kingdom of Kush reveal about how geography shapes culture, economy, and belief systems?
STANDARD(S)	1.18	1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Evaluating Arguments Historical Significance	Contextualization Evaluating Evidence Evaluating Arguments
DO FIRST	Frayer: Historical Memory Quote Analysis	Frayer: Cataract A-Z Guide
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	Historical Thinking Skills: Evaluating Arguments Video and Guide	The Kingdom of Kush Video Introduction
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	†Document Analysis - "Lost Legacy" - ARG	Stations - Exploring Kush and Meroë through Artifacts and Texts
ACTIVITY 3- EXHIBIT	N/A	Building a Thesis Workshop
CONCLUSION	†Form Assessment - Queen Hatshepsut - ARG	Unit 3 Inquiry Journal Topic 1: Compelling Question

Early Civilizations in Asia: Topic 2 Overview

	<u>LESSON 6 (60 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 7 (60 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 8 (90 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	What do Mesopotamian writing and architecture reveal about the complexity of its society?	How did religion shape society in Mesopotamia compared to Ancient Egypt?	How did laws in Mesopotamia reflect the values, religion, and social structure of the civilization?
STANDARD(S)	1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16	1.17	1.16, 1.17
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Contextualization Causation	Comparison Causation Historical Significance	Evaluating Evidence Evaluating Arguments
DO FIRST	Frayer: Cuneiform Notice, Wonder, Think	Frayer: Polytheism Video Reflection	Frayer: Justice Quickwrite
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	Inquiry Journal Topic 2: Supporting Questions	Historical Thinking Skills: Comparison Video and Guide	Document Analysis: "Hammurabi's Code"
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	"What is the Context?" - Mesopotamia Reading	Document Analysis: "Epic of Gilgamesh" + Reduce It Strategy	Evaluating Evidence Graphic Organizer
ACTIVITY 3- EXHIBIT	Jigsaw and Peer Teaching Activity	Document Analysis: "The Book of the Dead" + Annotation Activity	Form Assessment - Hammurabi's Code - EVI
CONCLUSION	Exit Ticket: Say it in Six	Comparison Graphic Organizer	Exit Ticket: Build a Thesis

Early Civilizations in Asia: Topic 2 Overview

	<u>LESSON 9 (60 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 10 (60 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	In what ways do archaeological and written sources help reconstruct the history of the Shang Dynasty?	In what ways does archaeological evidence from the Indus River Valley challenge or confirm what is known about other early civilizations?
STANDARD(S)	1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19	1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.19
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Contextualization Evaluating Evidence Historical Significance	Evaluating Evidence Contextualization Comparison
DO FIRST	Frayer: Oracle Bones Anticipatory Guide	Frayer: Floodplain Notice, Wonder, Think
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	"What is the Context?" - Shang Dynasty Reading	Making Predictions + Image Analysis: Examining Indus River Valley Archaeology
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	Webquest Activity: Shang Dynasty	Indus River Valley Video Introduction
ACTIVITY 3- EXHIBIT	Review Anticipatory Guide (Optional)	CER Planning Template (Optional)
CONCLUSION	Exit Ticket: 3, 2, 1 Prompts	Unit 3 Inquiry Journal Topic 2: Compelling Question

Mesoamerican Civilizations: Topic 3 Overview

	<u>LESSON 11 (60 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 12 (120 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	How do competing theories about the disappearance of the Olmecs reveal the strengths and limits of historical evidence?	To what extent does Caral meet the common criteria historians use to define a civilization?
STANDARD(S)	1.15, 1.17, 1.19, 1.20	1.14, 1.15, 1.17, 1.19
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Causation Evaluating Evidence Evaluating Arguments	Contextualization Evaluating Evidence Evaluating Arguments
DO FIRST	Frayer: Theory Evaluate the Claim	Frayer: Quipu Video Reflection
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	Inquiry Journal Topic 3: Supporting Questions	The Caral Civilization Gallery Walk + "Seven Traits of a Civilization"
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	Historian Investigation Group Activity	UNESCO Heritage Site Webquest
ACTIVITY 3- EXHIBIT	Four Corners Discussion	Building A Thesis
CONCLUSION	Evaluating Arguments Graphic Organizer	Unit 3 Inquiry Journal Topic 3: Compelling Question

Assessment Overview

	LESSON 13 (60 MINS)	+ LESSON 14 (210 MINS)	LESSON 15 (60 MINS)
ESSENTIAL QUESTION	<i>Place-Based Lesson Extension</i> <i>See page 13 for lesson options and view Best Practice Repository for additional information about implementation</i>	How did the development of agriculture shape early civilizations?	In what ways does reflection and revision support growth as a historical thinker and communicator?
STANDARD(S)		All unit standards	All unit standards
FOCUS SKILL(S)		Contextualization Causation	Evaluating Arguments Evaluating Evidence
DO FIRST		Development of Agriculture CRP Introduction	Frayer: Revision Give One, Get One
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH		Contextualization and Relevance of the Development of Agriculture	Classwide Data Review
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE		Document Analysis & Essay Outline	Essay Reflection Graphic Organizer
ACTIVITY 3- EXHIBIT		Essay Creation	Essay Revision and Resubmission
CONCLUSION		CRP Self-Assessment and Essay Submission	Exit Ticket: Quickwrite

Place Based Lesson Extension

	LESSON 13 (60 MINS)
ESSENTIAL QUESTION	
STANDARD(S)	
FOCUS SKILL(S)	
DO FIRST	
OPTION 1 - PODCAST	
OPTION 2 - SYNCHRONOUS PRESENTATION	
OPTION 3 - FIELD TRIP	Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History: Eternal Life in Ancient Egypt
CONCLUSION	Unit 3 Inquiry Journal Essential Question

Seeds of Civilization Unit 3 Overview: World History I, 9th Grade

Unit Commentary:

Unit 3 provides students with a focused exploration of key developments in early human history, emphasizing how geography, environment, and cultural shifts influenced the rise of complex societies. Throughout the unit, students will continue to practice the skill of causation by analyzing both causes and effects and evaluating their relative significance. Students will continue examining archaeological evidence to infer about the way of life in each of the first civilizations.

In Topic 1, students will investigate how the geography and annual flooding of the Nile River shaped the development of Ancient Egyptian civilization and the Kingdom of Kush. They will explore how the environment supported agriculture, settlement, and complex social and religious structures, setting the stage for one of the world's earliest and most enduring civilizations.

Topic 2 focuses on early Asian civilizations including Mesopotamia, the Shang Dynasty, and the Indus Valley Civilization. Students will examine archaeological and written evidence to understand how these societies organized their governments, developed writing systems, and adapted to their environments. They will analyze similarities and differences in how geography influenced their growth, culture, and innovations in governance and technology.

In Topic 3, students will study early civilizations in the Americas such as the Olmec and Caral Supe, investigating how they built complex, belief-driven societies through agriculture, monumental architecture, and religious practices. Archaeological evidence will be used to uncover their cultural achievements and the legacy they left for later societies.

The unit concludes with a curated research paper (CRP), where students will write an argumentative essay demonstrating the impact of the development of agriculture on the emergence of civilizations during this time period. They will synthesize knowledge from all three topics, craft evidence-based claims, analyze artifacts and texts, and support their reasoning to explain how geography, environment, and cultural innovations contributed to the rise of early complex societies.

Scaffolding: Writing Focus

Students will continue to develop their skills in writing evidence-based arguments by constructing CER (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) paragraphs in their Inquiry Journals at the end of each topic. This structure gives students three opportunities to practice making clear claims supported by specific evidence and logical reasoning, helping them build confidence and improve their analytical writing over time. Students will also engage in a thesis-writing workshop to prepare them for the CRP. It is highly suggested that students type all CER paragraphs.

Seeds of Civilization Unit 3 Overview: World History I, 9th Grade

Helpful Resources:

For information on:

- [Ancient Egypt](#)
- [Kingdom of Kush](#)
- [Mesopotamia](#)
- [Art & Archaeology of Ancient China](#)
- [Mohenjo-Daro](#)
- [Harappan Civilization](#)
- [The Olmecs](#)
- [Norte Chico](#)
- [Key Components of Civilization](#)
- [Maps of the First Civilizations](#)

Suggested Primary Sources:

- [First-hand accounts of the Kingdom of Kush](#)
- [Excerpts from the Egyptian Book of the Dead](#)
- [Full text of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*](#)
- [The Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon, about 2250 B.C.](#)
- [Oracle Bone Inscriptions from the Shang Dynasty](#)

Suggested Readings (Secondary Sources):

- Diamond, Jared. "The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race." *Discover Magazine*, May 1987.
- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1997
- de Bary, W. T., and I. Bloom. *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Time to 1600*. Vol 1, p. 17. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999..
- Eno, R. "Deities and Ancestors in Early Oracle Inscriptions." In *Religions of China in Practice*, 41–51. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- HISTORY.com Editors. *Ancient Egypt*. History, A&E Television Networks, 14 Oct. 2009, <https://www.history.com/articles/ancient-egypt>.
- [Civilizations of Mesoamerica - Textbook](#)

Museum Component:

- Optional Field Trip: Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
 - Exhibit → External Life in Ancient Egypt