



Grade 6

world history
and geography:
ancient
civilizations

Civic education content and skills in the California History-Social Science Standards include

- Historical development of the rule of law (Standards 6.2.4 and 6.3.1)
- Moral and ethical traditions (Standards 6.2.3, 6.3.2, 6.5.3, 6.5.4, 6.5.5, 6.5.6, 6.6.3, and 6.7.6)
- Forms of government in ancient Greece and Rome (Standards 6.4.2, 6.4.3, 6.4.6, and 6.7.2)

Overview drawn from the California History-Social Science Framework

Students in sixth grade study the importance of the rule of law in the development of ancient civilizations up to A.D. 500. They examine the structures of ancient governments and the fundamental principles embodied in early legal systems, such as Hammurabi's Code and Judaic law. The course of study explores the moral and ethical teachings of Confucianism and Taoism in China and the political and moral achievements of Emperor Asoka. (In the seventh grade students will have an opportunity to study Islam and the code of conduct in the Qur'an [Koran].) Students also examine the code of conduct prescribed by Christian teachings and explain the importance of the Judeo-Christian ethic. The development of democracy in ancient Greece, and particularly how democratic institutions flourished in Athens, and the republican principles embedded in the Roman Republic are central to the study of sixth-grade world history.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE RULE OF LAW

The earliest known written laws had their origin in the practices developed among tribal societies and first appear to have been codified in ancient civilizations of the Middle East. The Sumerian laws, inscribed on tables in cuneiform, became the basis for the more celebrated Babylonian Code of Hammurabi—laws that were said to have been given to Hammurabi on a mountaintop by the gods. The code consisted of 282 inscribed and unalterable laws governing all human situations. The Mosaic law, also believed to have been divinely inspired, was inscribed as the Ten Commandments and became the basis of Judaic and, later, Christian laws. Other ancient traditional codes of conduct in India and China embodied rules of human behavior helping to stabilize the social order. Students should examine how the rule of law was established in ancient civilizations and how the promulgation of laws became a stabilizing force in society.

CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS	NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	OTHER RELEVANT CALIFORNIA STANDARDS
<p>6.2 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Kush.</p> <p>4. Know the significance of Hammurabi’s Code.</p> <p>6.3 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the ancient Hebrews.</p> <p>1. Describe the origins and significance of Judaism as the first monotheistic religion based on the concept of one God who sets down moral laws for humanity.</p>	<p>I.A.2 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on why government is necessary and the purposes government should serve.</p> <p>I.B.2 Explain the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good.</p> <p>III.E.2 Explain and apply criteria useful in evaluating rules and laws.</p>	<p>READING ACTIVITIES AND APPLICATIONS</p> <p>English-Language Arts Standards</p> <p>Reading Comprehension</p> <p>2.2 Analyze text that uses compare-and-contrast organizational pattern.</p> <p>2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.</p> <p>2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.</p> <p>2.7 Make reasonable assertions about a text through accurate, supporting citations.</p> <p>2.8 Note instances of unsupported inferences, fallacious reasoning....</p> <p>History-Social Science Analysis Skill Standards</p> <p>Research, Evidence, and Point of View</p> <p>1. Frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research.</p> <p>3. Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, essential from incidental information, and verifiable from unverifiable information in historical narratives and stories.</p> <p>4. Assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources and draw sound conclusions from them.</p>

SAMPLE CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

Dramatize a court hearing in ancient Babylon of a person accused of breaking a law. Explain the importance of having a written code of laws.

Evaluate Hammurabi's Code of law. Use "Justice" from the middle school version of *Foundations of Democracy: Authority, Privacy, Responsibility, and Justice* as a basis for assessing justice in Hammurabi's code. Ask: Were the laws just by ancient standards? by contemporary standards? Students prepare a short written analysis of the concept of justice in ancient laws.

Identify the class structure reflected in Hammurabi's Code and analyze how punishments prescribed by the laws reflected the social class system.

Explain the basic concepts of Hebrew law as set forth in the *Torah*. What was the concept of justice established in Hebrew law?

Using a graphic organizer, students compare and contrast Hammurabi's Code and the Mosaic code of law.

Students work in groups to create a reader's theater illustrating why it is important for government to provide justice and order in a civilized society.

Devise a simulation or role-play activity illustrating how law in an ancient civilization managed disputes.

Identify a social or environmental problem of an ancient civilization that is analogous to a problem facing contemporary society. Examine how the problem was addressed in the past and explore solutions to the problem today. Conduct a class service-learning project addressing ways to resolve the contemporary problem. (Service-Learning Activity)

SAMPLE RESOURCES

Print¹

Croddy, Marshall, and Coral Suter. *Of Codes & Crowns: The Development of Law*. Constitutional Rights Foundation, 1992. Readings provide background for guided discussion and allow students to explore legal concepts such as the origin of rules. In Unit 2 students learn about the concept of *lex talionis*, the law of retribution. In the "Secrets in Stone" activity, students use inference to identify political, social, and cultural information from specific laws in Hammurabi's Code.

Foundations of Democracy: Authority, Privacy, Responsibility, and Justice, Middle School. Center for Civic Education, 1993. This curriculum, developed for middle school and above, includes 15 short lessons on justice together with a means for evaluating rules and laws.

Woodard, Jo Ann A. *The Code of Hammurabi: Law of Mesopotamia*. National Center for History in the Schools, 1999. This teaching unit consists of three lessons on law and justice in Sumer and Babylon, the Code of Hammurabi and other ancient codes of law, and a comparison of court cases in ancient Babylon and in the United States today.

Internet

Dowling, Mike. *Mr. Dowling's Electronic Passport*.
<http://www.mrdowling.com>

Readings on Hammurabi and the Han Dynasty are found under icons symbolizing Mesopotamia and Chinese history.

Sources for Jewish Philosophy and Law. *Mesora*.

http://www.mesora.org/_private/mesora.html

Mesora is an extensive website on Torah study topics, including questions and short answers about Jewish philosophy and law.

¹ Refer to *Pages of the Past: Literature Aligned to California History-Social Science Standards, Grades K-6* (County Office of Education History-Social Science Coordinators, 2001) for additional grade-appropriate books.

CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS	NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	OTHER RELEVANT CALIFORNIA STANDARDS
		<p>WRITING ACTIVITIES AND APPLICATIONS</p> <p>English-Language Arts Standards</p> <p>Writing Strategies</p> <p>1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions.</p> <p>1.3 Use a variety of effective and coherent organizational patterns, including comparison and contrast....</p> <p>Writing Applications</p> <p>2.3 Write research reports.</p> <p>Speaking Applications</p> <p>2.2 Deliver informative presentations.</p> <p>History-Social Science Analysis Skill Standards</p> <p>Historical Interpretation</p> <p>2. Understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events....</p>

SAMPLE CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

SAMPLE RESOURCES

MORAL AND ETHICAL TRADITIONS

Ideas about morality and ethics in ancient civilizations are reflected in their written laws. The study of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and India illustrates the importance of moral and ethical traditions in the establishment of laws and political institutions. The Hebrews fused ethics and religion making ethics, justice, and the rule of law central to Judaic beliefs. Christianity, originating in the Judaic Messianic prophecies and based on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, made moral and ethical standards fundamental to Christian religious beliefs. Students should recognize the importance of religious traditions in ancient societies and analyze the ways in which ethical and moral philosophy, influenced by religion, affected the codification of laws.

CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS	NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	OTHER RELEVANT CALIFORNIA STANDARDS
<p>6.2 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Kush.</p> <p>3. Understand the relationship between religion and the social and political order in Mesopotamia and Egypt.</p> <p>6.3 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the ancient Hebrews.</p> <p>2. Identify the sources of the ethical teachings and central beliefs of Judaism (the Hebrew Bible, the Commentaries): belief in God, observance of law, practice of the concepts of righteousness and justice, and importance of study; and describe how the ideas of the Hebrew traditions are reflected in the moral and ethical traditions of Western civilization.</p>	<p>II.D.2 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues in which fundamental values and principles are in conflict.</p> <p>V.C.2 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of civic responsibilities to the individual and society.</p> <p>V.D.1 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of certain dispositions or traits of character to themselves and American constitutional democracy.</p>	<p>READING ACTIVITIES AND APPLICATIONS</p> <p>English-Language Arts Standards</p> <p>Reading Comprehension</p> <p>2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.</p> <p>2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.</p> <p>2.7 Make reasonable assertions about a text through accurate, supporting citations.</p> <p>2.8 Note instances of unsupported inferences, fallacious reasoning....</p> <p>History-Social Science Analysis Skill Standards</p> <p>Research, Evidence, and Point of View</p> <p>1. Frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research.</p> <p>2. Distinguish fact from opinion....</p> <p>3. Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, essential from incidental information, and verifiable from unverifiable information in historical narratives and stories.</p>

SAMPLE CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

Explain how the ideas of the Hebrew traditions are reflected in the moral and ethical traditions of Western civilization.

Students create charts that portray the central beliefs of Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity, emphasizing their concepts of justice. Students make group presentations comparing and contrasting the beliefs portrayed.

Each student writes an essay describing the beliefs of Emperor Asoka.

Use the WebQuest lesson to have students assume the role of a person from ancient India (3000 years ago) and examine the status in a specific caste. Students create journal entries and share them with the class.

Use the Mr. Donn's Lesson Plans website *The Three Doctrines and Legalism* on Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Legalism. Ask students to answer questions from each point of view.

Create a school project to promote tolerance and respect for diverse cultures. (Service-Learning Activity)

SAMPLE RESOURCES

Print

California Department of Education. *Ancient Civilizations. Course Models for History-Social Science Framework—Grade 6*. California Department of Education, 1993. Units 2 and 4 include an extensive bibliography and lesson ideas aligned with sixth-grade state-adopted textbooks. The appendix to Unit 3 (pages 113–117) includes a lesson on patriotism and citizenship in Ancient Greece.

Facts on File. *World Religions Series*. This is a series of books written for the middle grade levels on the major religions of the world.

Johnson, Jean Eliot, and Donald Johnson. *Emperor Ashoka of India: What Makes a Ruler Legitimate?* National Center for History in the Schools, 1999. In an era of autocratic monarchies, Asoka [Ashoka] attempted to use moral persuasion rather than force to command his subjects. The five lessons in this teaching unit examine what make a political leader legitimate and what gives a leader the right to govern.

Meredith, Susan. *The Usborne Book of World Religions*. EDC Publications, 2000. This illustrated book of religions is written for middle school students.

Moewe, Michael. *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China*. Dorset Press, 1988. This book details life during the Han Dynasty.

Internet

The British Museum. *Ancient Civilizations: Mesopotamia*.

<http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/staff/main.html>

The site is divided into ten “chapters” addressing themes or topics relevant to the civilizations of Mesopotamia: Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian. The ten chapters are presented on a menu page. The user chooses a chapter by clicking on the word or icon relating to that chapter.

Constitutional Rights Foundation, Bill of Rights in Action. “The Hebrews and the Foundations of Western Law” (Fall 2000).

http://www.crf-usa.org/bria/bria16_4.htm#hebrews

Dowling, Mike. *Mr. Dowling's Electronic Passport, Judaism*.

<http://www.mrdowling.com/605-judaism.html>

This site features readings on the basic tenets of Judaism.

CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS	NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	OTHER RELEVANT CALIFORNIA STANDARDS
<p>6.5 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of India.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Explain the major beliefs and practices of Brahmanism in India and how they evolved into early Hinduism. 4. Outline the social structure of the caste system. 5. Know the life and moral teachings of Buddha and how Buddhism spread in India, Ceylon, and Central Asia. 6. Describe the growth of the Maurya empire and the political and moral achievements of the emperor Asoka. <p>6.6 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of China.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Know about the life of Confucius and the fundamental teaching of Confucianism and Taoism. <p>6.7 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the development of Rome.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Note the origins of Christianity in the Jewish Messianic prophecies, and the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as described in the New Testament of the Bible, and the contribution of St. Paul the Apostle to the definition and spread of Christian beliefs (e.g., belief in the Trinity, resurrection, salvation). 		<p>WRITING ACTIVITIES AND APPLICATIONS</p> <p>English-Language Arts Standards Writing Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions. 1.3 Use a variety of effective and coherent organizational patterns, including comparison and contrast.... <p>Writing Applications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Write narratives. 2.2 Write expository compositions.... 2.3 Write research reports. <p>History-Social Science Analysis Skill Standards Research, Evidence, and Point of View</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research. <p>DEBATE/ORAL PRESENTATIONS AND APPLICATIONS</p> <p>English-Language Arts Standards Listening and Speaking Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.6 Support opinion with detailed evidence and with visual or media displays.... <p>Speaking Applications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.5 Deliver presentations on problems and solutions. <p>History-Social Science Analysis Skill Standards Research, Evidence, and Point of View</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made.

SAMPLE CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

SAMPLE RESOURCES

Lyall, Graeme. The Buddhist Council of New South Wales website.

<http://www.zip.com.au/~lyallg/Asoka.htm>

This website provides a short introduction to Asoka.

Mr. Donn's Lesson Plans. *Three Doctrines and Legalism*.

<http://members.aol.com/DonnAnCiv/Behavior.html>

These lesson plans examine the differences in Chinese thought, focusing on Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Legalism.

WebQuest. *Experiencing India's Caste System*.

<http://teachers.eusd.k12.ca.us/mguerena/castewebquest/index.htm>

This is a well-written lesson exploring the caste system in India.

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME

The development of some of the fundamental ideas of democracy in classical Greece and the institutions of representative government established during the Roman Republic had a profound impact on Western political thought. Direct democracy, the hallmark of ancient Athens, evolved over centuries of political struggles. In Rome, the early monarchy succumbed to foreign domination and was replaced for a period of time by a republic dominated by oligarchs. The threat of popular uprising ultimately led to the establishment of written laws and a broader participation in the government. Students should be able to explain the evolution of democracy in ancient Athens and compare and contrast the government structure of Greek city-states, particularly Athens and Sparta. They should examine the development of political institutions during the Roman Republic and explain how the Roman concepts of citizenship and representative government have influenced the American political system.

CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS	NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	OTHER RELEVANT CALIFORNIA STANDARDS
<p>6.4 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Ancient Greece.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Trace the transition from tyranny and oligarchy to early democratic forms of government and back to dictatorship in Ancient Greece. State the key differences between Athenian, or direct, democracy and representative democracy. Compare and contrast life in Athens and Sparta, with emphasis on their roles in the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars. 	<p>I.A.1 Explain the meaning of the terms civic life, politics, and government.</p> <p>I.A.2 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on why government is necessary and the purposes government should serve.</p> <p>I.B.1 Describe the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government.</p> <p>I.B.2 Explain the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good.</p> <p>II.D.2 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues in which fundamental values and principles are in conflict.</p>	<p>READING ACTIVITIES AND APPLICATIONS</p> <p>English-Language Arts Standards</p> <p>Reading Comprehension</p> <p>2.2 Analyze text that uses a compare-and-contrast organizational pattern.</p> <p>2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.</p> <p>2.8 Note instances of unsupported inferences, fallacious reasoning....</p> <p>History-Social Science Analysis Skill Standards</p> <p>Research, Evidence, and Point of View</p> <p>3. Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, essential from incidental information, and verifiable from unverifiable information in historical narratives and stories.</p> <p>5. Detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made.</p>
<p>6.7 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the development of Rome.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the government of the Roman Republic and its significance (e.g., written constitution and tripartite government, checks and balances, civic duty). 	<p>V.C.2 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of civic responsibilities to the individual and society.</p>	

SAMPLE CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

Read Unit 3 of *Of Codes and Crowns* (Constitutional Rights Foundation) for information on the development of law in ancient Greece. Explain the function of the Greek jury system.

Use the Discovery School lesson from the Lesson Plan Library on Sparta and Athens. The lesson compares the governments of Athens and Sparta using short quotations.

Students research the Roman general Cincinnatus and explain how he demonstrated civic virtue. Each student writes a letter of recommendation for a person he or she would like to nominate to receive the “Cincinnatus Civic Virtue Award.”

Explain how authority was limited in the governments of ancient Athens and the Roman Republic.

After studying citizenship in Athens, Sparta, and Rome, stage a “Meeting of the Minds” activity with representatives from Athens, Sparta, and Rome to present their definitions of citizenship.

Describe how the concept of American citizenship is similar to or different from that of ancient Greece or Rome.

In an oral presentation, students explain how the rule of law in the United States limits the actions of private citizens and government officials alike in order to protect the rights of citizens and promote the common good. Ask: To what extent was this true of ancient laws? Explain.

Use *Of Codes and Crowns* to explore the Greek tribunal system. Convene a tribunal to settle a school dispute or address a contemporary local issue or problem.

SAMPLE RESOURCES

Print

City Youth: Ancient History. Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2003. Students visit ancient Greece and Rome. Service-learning opportunities are included.

Croddy, Marshall, and Coral Suter. *Of Codes and Crowns: The Development of Law*. Constitutional Rights Foundation, 1992. Readings provide background for guided discussion and allow students to explore legal concepts such as the development of the jury system and limits of authority. Unit 3 traces the development of law in ancient Greece.

We the People, Level 2. Center for Civic Education, Reprint 2003. The student text provides grade-level appropriate readings and activities relating to the study of government and political institutions. Lesson 2 includes the story of the Roman Cincinnatus as a model of civic virtue.

Internet

Adams, Peter. Discovery School, Lesson Plan Library. *Comparing Sparta and Athens*.

<http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/spartans/index.html>

The lesson focuses on the differences between totalitarianism and democracy and the historical roots of the democratic tradition in ancient Greece.

Dalton School. Rome Project Site.

<http://www.dalton.org/groups/rome/>

This website includes numerous resources on Rome. The Twelve Tables, Roman republican government, and Roman government in both the early and late republic are among the resources accessible under “Political Resources.”

Dowling, Mike. Mr. Dowling’s Electronic Passport.

The Cradle of Western Civilization.

<http://www.colonize.com/p/a.php?a=n001001182>

This site provides a general introductory lesson on Greek civic life with links to other topics, including “Athens,” where students explore the development of Athenian democracy.

Halsall, Paul. *The Ancient History Sourcebook: The Twelve Tables, c. 450 B.C.E.*

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/12tables.html>

The Twelve Tables of the Roman law were written so that persons would know their rights and obligations. Writing and posting the laws on tablets for public review was a victory for the plebeians in their struggle to gain rights.

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SAMPLE CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

SAMPLE RESOURCES

The History Guide Lecture Site. *Early Roman Civilization*.

<http://www.historyguide.org/ancient/lecture10b.html>

This website includes the story of Cincinnatus, the Roman who was given command of the army by the Senate and, after defeating the enemy, relinquished power.

