



Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan Toward Civilization

Subject

Ancient History

Grade level

9-12

Duration

One or two class periods

Objectives

Students will

- develop a definition of the term *civilization*;
- apply that definition to two different cultures; and
- report their findings to the class.

Materials

- Paper and pencils
- Newsprint and markers
- Computer with Internet access
- *Toward Civilization* video and VCR

Procedures

1. Ask students what they think a *civilization* is. Write down their responses on a sheet of newsprint. Help students arrive at the following conclusions:
 - A civilization is a group of people living and working together for the purpose of creating an organized society.
 - People living in civilizations have the ability to use tools, work together cooperatively, and communicate with each other.
 - People living in civilizations have the ability to advance culturally and technologically.
2. Divide the class into small groups of two or three students. Give each group the option of researching either the Neanderthal civilization or that of ancient Egypt. As students research their topics, have them address these questions:
 - What tools did members of the civilization use?
 - Were members of the civilization able to work together?
 - Did the civilization have a consistent form of communication—oral, written, or both?

- Was the civilization able to advance culturally and technologically?
 - How would you describe the civilization?
3. For those students researching early civilizations, suggest that they watch the *Before We Ruled the Earth* segment of the video. The following Web sites also have relevant information:
 - <http://members.aol.com/Donnclass/EarlyMan.html>
 - <http://www.italysoft.com/curios/neandertal.htm>
 - <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Atrium/1381/hominids2.html>
 4. For those students researching ancient Egypt, suggest that they watch *The Nile: Where Egypt Began* segment of the video. The following Web sites have additional information:
 - <http://www.eyelid.co.uk/>
 - http://www.kent.k12.wa.us/curriculum/soc_studies/Egypt/egypt.html
 - <http://www.ancient-egypt.org/>
 - <http://eawc.evansville.edu/egpage.htm>
 5. Give students time in class to complete their research and prepare their presentations. Then, have each group ask for volunteers to report its findings.
 6. After students have heard the reports, discuss their findings. What kinds of tools were used by both civilizations? What kinds of communication systems were in place? Were people from both cultures able to work together cooperatively?
 7. Conclude the lesson by creating a class Venn diagram that shows the similarities and differences between the two cultures. Based on this chart, what conclusions can students draw about what a civilization is?

Extensions

- Have students pick another culture to research and analyze, using the questions from Step 2 to assess the civilization. The culture can be anywhere in the world and be a past or present-day society.
- Have students research the fall of the Roman Empire. Did the factors discussed in this lesson play a role? Did other factors contribute to its decline? If so, ask students to identify what they are, and discuss how they led to the fall of what is considered one of the greatest civilizations of all time. These Web sites provide a good starting point for research:
 - <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/gibbon-fall.html>
 - http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/uc_dorrington1.htm
 - <http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa061599.htm>

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students actively participated in class discussions; completed their research carefully and thoroughly; made a thoughtful, accurate, and complete presentation to the class.

2 points: Students participated in class discussions; completed their research; made an accurate and complete presentation to the class.

1 point: Students did not participate in class discussions; had difficulty completing their research; made an incomplete presentation to the class.

Vocabulary

ancient Egypt

Definition: A civilization located in the Middle East that thrived for a period of more than 3,000 years

Context: Ancient Egypt is known for many achievements, including the construction of pyramids and temples and the development of one of the first systems of writing.

civilization

Definition: A high level of social development characterized by cultural and technological advances and an organized system of communication

Context: While the world of *Homo erectus* was primitive compared to ours, these early humans, nonetheless, did create a culture with many of the characteristics of a civilization.

Homo erectus

Definition: Early humans who lived from 1,600,000 B.C. to about 300,000 B.C. and were the first to stand upright and use tools and fire

Context: For *Homo erectus*, the ability to use fire was an amazing accomplishment; it enabled these early people to camp wherever they chose and to cook meat rather than eat it raw.

Neanderthal

Definition: Early humans who lived from 300,000 to 30,000 B.C. and were thought to be taller and stronger than previous species of humans

Context: Based on fossil evidence, scientists think that Neanderthals were excellent hunters and among the first to bury their dead with ceremony, suggesting that they may have had religious beliefs.

tools

Definition: An object or device that is used to accomplish a task

Context: The ability to transform rocks into stone tools marked the beginning of cultural development among our earliest ancestors.

Academic Standards

This lesson plan addresses the following curriculum standards created by the National Council for the Social Studies:

- Culture
- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environments

Credits

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