

Ancient Journeys, 2019-2020
Session 1, Fridays, 9:00-10:45
Lori Peters, Instructor

Course Objective:

Open to 6th-8th graders, this course provides a broad overview of many social studies topics normally taught in 6th grade, with opportunities for more extended research. Starting with a journey to Mesopotamia and ending in ancient Rome (before the fall of the Empire), students will “visit” important early civilizations: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, India, China, Greece and Rome– finding commonalities, differences and connections. Each class will include a brief but detailed reading segment on one ancient civilization, with a directed lesson of key points, to include video, discussion and (time permitting) an activity, such as a map or debate. Ancient world religions (polytheistic and monotheistic) will also be explored as related to the civilizations. Students will be encouraged to follow up each class with some research of their own or a creative interpretation to share the next week. The course will culminate with each student presenting their research on one ancient civilization of his or her choice (selected from a topic list). ***Independent work is required. Short reading activities/questions each week, and a culminating project.***

Course Expectations:

- Read proficiently at a 6th grade level or above
- Arrive on time and prepared to learn. Note taking is expected.
- This class will move quickly! Extra review may be required for some students to grasp concepts.
- Be open to ideas, discussion, and collaboration.
- Materials needed: Spiral notebook, folder for handouts, assignment notebook, highlighter, and pencil/pen. Optional: current atlas for personal use.

Important: There is a lot to cover in each class, and there will be little “down time”; many concepts will need further review and independent research to understand fully.

8/30: Timelines, and early man. Review Paleolithic period to Agricultural Revolution, and the importance thereof. Understand needs of man in developing from hunter-gatherer to settled life, including the rise of Mesopotamia- the “Cradle of Civilization”, Babylon and Hammurabi’s code.

- HW (reading/questions) on Mesopotamia

9/6: Ancient Egypt, to include Egyptian art, architecture, ruling structure, and the significance of the Nile River and surrounding valley. Learn about a few key rulers.

- HW (reading/questions) on ancient Egypt

9/13: Ancient Hebrews and the rise of monotheistic Judaism (from polytheism), including key biblical stories, social structures, and norms. Connect to Judaism today.

- HW (reading/questions) on ancient Israel

9/20: Early India’s caste system and social norms, and the rise of Hinduism and Buddhism. Students will map the country and its river systems, understanding how geography and weather impacted its development. Students will select topic for independent project; project guide provided. Students select from a list of ancient civilization topics to study in-depth and present on 10/11.

- HW (reading/questions) on ancient India
- Select topic for independent project, email request and begin outline.

9/27: Early China: its contributions to modern day, the concept of dynastic rule, and the teachings of Confucius. Connect religious structures of Asia. Activity in class.

- Preview of Greeks and Romans with required reading assigned. Due to brevity of the course, the reading/activity will be integral to the 10/4 class.
- Independent project: presentation ideas and completed outline by 10/4

10/4: The Greeks and the Romans! Compare and contrast these incredible civilizations. Ancient Greece and its contributions of democracy, architecture, mythology, commerce, and the significance of “citizenship” will be reviewed, as well as the rise of Rome, its republic and leaders, including key figures such as Caesar and Augustus, and its contributions to western development.

- Prepare for independent project presentation in 10/11. Practice with cue cards and visual.

10/11: Share Ancient Civilization study projects. Parents are encouraged to attend.