Session 1: Evaluating the Location of Ancient River Valley Civilizations

Materials

- Attachment A: Early River Valley Civilizations Outline Map
- Attachment B: Early River Valley Civilizations Map in Color
- Attachment C: Early River Valley Civilizations Map Key with Rivers Labeled
- Attachment D: Mesopotamian Civilization: Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys (Southwest Asia)
- Attachment E: Egyptian Civilization: Nile River Valley and Nile Delta (Africa)
- Attachment F: Indian Civilization: Indus River Valley (South Asia)
- Attachment G: Chinese Civilization: Huang He Valley (East Asia)
- Attachment H: Physical Environment of Early River Valley Civilizations Map Analysis
- Attachment I: Cradles of Civilization*
- Attachment J: Cradles of Civilization Key*


- Attachment K: Huang He River Valley Dry Areas
- Attachment L: Indus River Valley Dry Areas
- Attachment M: Nile River Valley Dry Areas
- Attachment N: Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys Dry Areas
- Attachment O: Using Layered Portable Document Files (pdfs)

Instructional Activities

1. Introduction to lesson:
   In this lesson students examine the physical environment of the early river valley civilizations. In addition to identifying the locations of the ancient civilizations, students complete a feature analysis to assist them in comparing the physical environments and determining how it afforded protection to the civilizations. Throughout the lesson focus student attention on the following questions:
   - Why was a river valley a good place for a settlement?
   - What was the significance of these river valley civilizations?

2. Have students locate and label the bodies of water important to the ancient river valley civilizations on Attachment A: Early River Valley Civilizations Outline Map. Project Attachment C: Map Key for student reference in labeling the following bodies of water:
   - Tigris and Euphrates rivers flow into the Persian Gulf
   - Nile River (Blue Nile and White Nile) flow into the Mediterranean Sea
   - Indus River flow into the Arabian Sea
   - Huang He River flow into the Yellow Sea

3. Have students use a textbook to locate and shade in the following civilizations: Mesopotamian (Southwest Asia), Egyptian (Africa), Indian (South Asia) and Chinese (East Asia). Attachment I: Cradles of Civilization map may also serve as a source for this information.

4. Have teams of students examine Attachments D through G and complete Attachment H: Physical Environment of Early River Valley Civilizations Map Analysis. This segment of the learning activity provides students with the opportunity to examine maps of the area and determine the type of barriers presented by the physical environment that protected the early river civilizations. Students also analyze the shapes of the modern-day river mouths for evidence of siltation and a clear delta shape.

   Teachers may choose to facilitate the completion of the exercise by projecting the large format Dry Areas maps in the order listed on the left-hand column of Attachment H. Complete the analysis as a whole-class activity.
5. In the discussion that follows the completion of the exercise, pose the following questions:

- What climate characteristics were shared by all of the early river valley civilizations? (For the most part, desert and semi-arid areas with limited rainfall were characteristic of the early river valley civilizations.)
- What do all of the rivers have in common? (The rivers are located in the eastern hemisphere between 15 and 45 degrees North. The civilizations border the rivers. All of the rivers have a source in the mountains. Each has built a delta at their mouths.)
- Why would early people have settled in those areas? (Early people settled here because of the protection from invasion provided by mountains and deserts. Fertile and renewable soils were enriched by sedimentation. In addition, the rivers provided water for irrigation in these dry climatic areas.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment J: Cradles of Civilization Key</th>
<th>Attachment K: Huang He Dry Areas</th>
<th>Attachment L: Indus Dry Areas</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Attachment J" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Attachment K" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Attachment L" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attachment M: Nile Dry Areas</td>
<td>Attachment N: Tigris &amp; Euphrates Dry Areas</td>
<td>Attachment O: Using Layered PDFs</td>
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<td><img src="image4" alt="Attachment M" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Attachment N" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Attachment O" /></td>
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Click on the links above to access a full-page layered pdf of each of the maps. Maps may be customized by turning specific layers on or off before display. [Link](#) to explanation of layered pdfs.