NOTE: This lesson, developed by the Virginia Geographic Alliance, focuses on the development of geographic understandings, knowledge, and skills. It incorporates selected portions of the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education, History and Social Science Enhanced Scope and Sequence, World History and Geography to 1500 A.D. (C.E.), Copyright 2010.

ORGANIZING TOPIC

Ancient River Valley Civilizations

Standard(s) of Learning

WHI.3 The student will demonstrate knowledge of ancient river valley civilizations, including those of Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus River Valley, and China and the civilizations of the Hebrews, Phoenicians, and Nubians, by
a) locating these civilizations in time and place;

Essential Understandings, Knowledge, and Skills

Skills (to be incorporated into instruction throughout the academic year)

Use maps, globes, artifacts, and pictures to analyze the physical and cultural landscapes of the world and interpret the past to 1500 A.D. (C.E.).

Identify major geographic features important to the study of world history to 1500 A.D. (C.E.).

Content

Explain that during the New Stone Age, permanent settlements appeared in river valleys and around the Fertile Crescent.

Explain that river valleys provided water and rich soil for crops as well as protection from invasion.

Identify the location of the earliest river valley civilizations (about 3500 to 500 B.C. [B.C.E.]), using the following information as a guide:
• Mesopotamian civilization: Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys (Southwest Asia)
• Egyptian civilization: Nile River Valley and Nile Delta (Africa)
• Indian civilization: Indus River Valley (South Asia)
• Chinese civilization: Huang He Valley (East Asia)

Explain that these river valleys offered rich soil and irrigation water for agriculture, and they tended to be in locations easily protected from invasion by nomadic peoples.

Identify other early civilizations (about 2000 to 500 B.C. [B.C.E.]), using the following information as a guide:
• Hebrews settled between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River Valley (part of Fertile Crescent in Southwest Asia).
• Phoenicians settled along the Mediterranean coast (part of Fertile Crescent in Southwest Asia).
• Nubia was located on the upper (southern) Nile River (Africa).

Sample Resources

Below is an annotated list of Internet resources for this organizing topic. Copyright restrictions may exist for the material on some Web sites. Please note and abide by any such restrictions.


Ancient Mesopotamia. Penn State, College of Education. http://www.ed.psu.edu/k-12/edpgs/su96/meso/mesopotamia.html. This site contains a lesson plan for teaching Ancient Mesopotamia.
“Indus Valley Civilization.” MANAS: India and Its Neighbors. Social Sciences at UCLA.
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/Ancient/Indus2.html. This site provides information on the Indus Valley Civilization.


http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/blueprints/history_socialscience_blueprints/2008/blueprints_worldhistory_g eo_to1500.pdf. This site provides assessment information for World History and Geography to 1500 A.D. (C.E.).

