Common Core Social Studies Learning Plan Template

**Lesson Title:** Hammurabi’s Code

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**Appropriate for Grade Level(s):** Middle & High School

**History Standard(s)/Applicable CCSS(s) (RI, W, S&L, L):**  *H1.[6-8].13* Identify and describe the technological innovations of early agrarian societies; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims

**Type of Lesson:** Close Reading

**Student Readings (list):** Selected Excerpts from Hammurabi’s Code

**Total Time Needed:** 2- 50 min. periods, 1 block period

**Lesson Outline:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time Frame**  **(e.g. 15 minutes)** | **What is the teacher doing?** | **What are students doing?** |
| |  | | --- | | 5-7 min. | | |  | | --- | | Distributing Hammurabi’s Code excerpts | | |  | | --- | | Reading the excepts silently to themselves | |
| 20min | Have students read document silently to themselves.  Read document out loud to students for fluency | Students reading and annotating their copy of the document as needed.  Students listening quietly as teacher reads out loud. |
| 30 minutes | Teacher reveals one question at a time giving small groups of students time to consult text and identify answers. Next teacher facilitates whole group share out of answers and builds a thorough understanding of the text through student participation. | Students work through text to discover answers.  Answering the text-dependent questions in small group and then by sharing out answers with the rest of class as directed by the teacher |
| |  | | --- | | 10-15 min. | | |  | | --- | | Assists grouping students into groups of 4 (min.) | | |  | | --- | | Students in small groups will discuss and generate responses to the historical & modern context questions. | |
| |  | | --- | | 5-10min. | | |  | | --- | | Organizing next groupings, facilitating students’ next task | | |  | | --- | | Each student will be assigned one of the historical & modern context questions and all of the question 1 students will be grouped together, all of the question 2 students will be grouped together, and so on for 3 & 4. In their groups, the students will compare responses to their questions and come to a consensus on their answer. | |
| |  | | --- | | 10-15 min. | | |  | | --- | | Facilitate consensus answers presentations | | |  | | --- | | Groups will present their answers to the class; other students will have the opportunity to question or challenge the responses. | |
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**Description of Lesson Assessment:** Review of written responses, participation and relevant discussion(s)

**How will students reflect on the process and their learning?** Through individual, small group, and whole class activities and discussions

Excerpts from **The Code Of Hammurabi**

witchcraft

reimbursement

dam

tie up

party goer

skewered

Babylon, Mesopotamia, 1700s B.C**.**E.

If a person accused another person and brought a charge of murder against him, but has not proved it, the accuser shall be put to death.

If a person is charged with sorcery and he shall throw himself into the river, and if the river has then overpowered him, his accuser shall take over his estate. If the river has shown the person to be innocent by coming forth safe, the one who brought the charge of sorcery against him shall be put to death, while the one who threw himself into the river shall take over the estate of his accuser.

If a person stole the property of the church or state, that person shall be put to death; also the one who received the stolen goods shall be put to death.

If a person stole either an ox or a sheep or an ass or a pig or a boat, if it belonged to the church or to the state, he shall make thirtyfold restitution; if it belonged to a private citizen, he shall make good tenfold. If the thief does not have sufficient means to make restitution, he shall be put to death.

If a person has helped either a male slave or a female slave of the state or of a private citizen to escape through the city gate, he shall be put to death.

If a person committed robbery and has been caught, that person shall be put to death. If the robber has not been caught, the robbed person shall state the particulars regarding his lost property in the presence of god, and the city and governor in the district where the robbery was committed, and they shall make good to the person his lost property.

If a person was too lazy to make the dike of his field strong and a break has

opened up in his dike and he has let the water ravage the farmland, the person in whose dike the break was opened shall make good the grain that he let get destroyed. If he is not able to make good the grain, they shall sell him and his goods, and the farmers whose grain the water carried off shall divide the proceeds.

If a man accused a nun or the wife of another man, but has proved nothing, they shall drag that man into the presence of the judges and also cut off half his hair.

If a man takes a wife and does not draw up a contract with her, that woman is not his wife.

If the wife of a man be taken in lying with another man, he shall bind them and throw them in the water. If the husband of the wife spares the life of his wife, the king shall spare the life of his subject (the offending man).

If a woman was not careful, but was a gadabout, thus neglecting her house and humiliating her husband, they shall throw that woman into the water.

If the finger has been pointed at the wife of a man because of another man, and she had not been taken in lying with another man, for her husband’s sake, she shall throw herself into the sacred river. [She shall submit to the ordeal by water.]

If the wife of a man brings about the death of her husband because of another man, they both shall be impaled.

If a son has struck his father, they shall cut off his hand.

If a man, after the death of his father, lies in the bosom of his mother, they shall burn both of them.

If a man has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye. If he has broken another man’s bone, they shall break his bone. If he has destroyed the eye of a commoner or broken the bone of a commoner, he shall pay one mina of silver. If he has destroyed the eye of another man’s slave or broken the bone of a man’s slave, he shall pay one-half of the slave’s value.

**Questions to Consider Based on the Text:**

1. What evidence from the text illustrates a caste-like system in ancient Babylon? Who was important and who was not? What evidence do you see that shows social inequality?
2. According to the text, which was worse: committing a crime against a private person or against the state? How do you know? Why do you think there was a difference?
3. What clues regarding the status of men vis-á-vis (in relation to) women can you infer from the text? Explain your reasoning:
4. In some ways, the government of Babylon might have been more generous to its citizens than is our government here in the United States. What evidence exists to support this claim?
5. Lines 30-35 relate to what economic activity? What does the inclusion of these laws in Hammurabi’s Code say about the importance of this economic activity in ancient Mesopotamian society?

**Questions to Consider Putting the Text in Historical and Modern Contexts:**

1. In describing the proper punishment for a crime, the Old Testament of the Bible says, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” Do you think there might be any connection between the Bible and Hammurabi’s Code? Why?
2. Some of the punishments in Hammurabi’s Code may seem harsh to us. What reasons would ancient Babylon have to justify such harsh penalties?
3. Before the Code of Hammurabi was written on a stone pillar for all to see, laws were held in peoples’ memories and transmitted orally. Why would a written legal code be an improvement over an oral set of laws?
4. Which laws from Hammurabi’s Code are still relevant/ necessary today? Which are not? Choose two laws that you believe are the most vital still in today’s society and two that you think are the most obsolete (out of date). Give justification(s) for your selections.