

Cargoes from Three Continents

Ancient Mediterranean Trade

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HARDING ACADEMY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Subject: World History (Ancient–Medieval))

Level: Grade 6

Length of Unit: Uluburun ship (one week, fall quarter);
Roman Trade (one week, winter quarter)

Readings: Readings are listed in Bibliography (see end of teaching plan)

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Harding Academy is a K-8 independent suburban school in Nashville, Tennessee. There are approximately 140 students in our middle school. Harding's curriculum includes a two-year sequential course of Western civilization of which I teach the first-year course—covering ancient history through the Middle Ages—to sixth graders. Small classes of sixteen to eighteen students allow for project-oriented activities which enhance the traditional classroom setting. Research skills are strongly emphasized in preparation for the college preparatory high schools which our graduates will attend.

The AIA/NEH Institute presented an overview of current archaeological activity along with reading of primary and secondary sources and viewing of museum artifacts. Lectures and museum visits highlighted the periods of history which are a part of my curriculum. In addition, Internet availability at the Institute helped me in my search for background and insights into ancient history.

Sixth-grade history class has traditionally included projects on archaeology in prehistoric and early civilizations. The Institute provided knowledge of underwater and land archaeological sites which reinforced the study of the spread of civilization via trade in the Mediterranean world.

My goal for this teaching plan was to use a research/project format to present to my students information gained from the Institute. An important feature of this format is providing students with research materials from the school library and Internet sources, as well as the readings from the Institute.

I chose two topics from the Institute subject matter:

1. The site of the Uluburun shipwreck which demonstrates the modern archaeological techniques and provides a

- study of trade in the eastern Mediterranean
2. Pompeii and its trade which led to all parts of the Mediterranean and as far as India during the Roman period.

PART TWO: THE LESSONS

Objectives (for both units):

1. To teach research skills using a variety of sources (books, magazines, videos, filmstrips, CDs, Internet).
2. To acquaint students with shipbuilding techniques from ancient times.
3. To foster understanding of trade between civilizations.
4. To develop geographical skills in studying the Mediterranean world.
5. To encourage appreciation of artistic developments in ceramics.
6. To foster understanding of how ideas are spread through trade.
7. To develop an appreciation for archaeology as a means for furthering our understanding of ancient trade, both on land and under water.
8. To allow for student interest and individual talents in projects using art, computer, map-making, and other techniques.
9. To encourage project work for individuals as well as groups.

UNIT ONE: THE ULUBURUN SHIPWRECK

We begin work on this project after the classes had completed their study of Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Canaanites, Hebrews, Minoans, and Mycenaeans. A week was set aside for the research project using history class as well as study/tutorial time.

Note: Readings are included in the bibliography at the end of this teaching plan. In addition, the video *Ancient Treasures from the Deep* (Nova) was shown at the beginning of the unit. Materials for hands-on projects are listed below.

Day One

The video *Ancient Treasures from the Deep* was shown. This was followed by a discussion of underwater archaeology, using

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maps and charts of the shipwreck. Each class was assigned a topic to research and to use as the basis for a model, as well as a backboard to demonstrate their information. The students also prepared a daily journal which would include questions that arose about their research and the project.

Listed here are the projects which were assigned, one per class, to the three sixth-grade classes:

1. Archaeology/evidence found on the Uluburun site; model of an amphora, the trading container of the ancient world.
2. Shipbuilding/trade routes; model of a ship which demonstrates the vehicle for spreading ideas and materials around the Mediterranean region.
3. Geography/civilizations/raw materials; map model which shows the civilizations involved and the location of raw materials.

Days Two and Three

Books articles, Internet, and videos were available for students for research. Readings focused on underwater archaeology, trade between Late Bronze Age civilizations, ancient shipbuilding, and cultural similarities and differences among those civilizations which might have been influenced by trade. Bibliographical cards of information were compiled.

Days Four, Five, and Six

Students prepared the models and backboards in each class. Drawings were made of amphora, ship, and map before beginning to make models of these. Three-sided backboards were designed to display pictures, drawings, and maps which would complement the models. Materials used included the following:

1. Foam backboards; construction paper; pictures or drawings; labels (to be typed).
2. Amphora and ship: chicken wire for shaping these; tape and string; cloth for sails; paper-mâché; paint.
3. Map: large piece of cardboard; salt dough; paint; toothpicks and construction paper for labeling civilizations and raw materials.

UNIT TWO: POMPEII AND TRADE

The Pompeii project began after the classes had completed their study of the early Roman Empire. A week was allowed for research and writing which would culminate in a historical diary prepared by each student. The diary would contain entries made by the student in the role of a Roman trader traveling from Pompeii to India, with intermediate stops in Athens, Crete, and Egypt. The objectives of developing skills in and knowledge of geography, shipbuilding, trade, and spread of ideas were again emphasized, as were research skills. In addition, students could demonstrate creative writing abilities through their diaries.

Days One and Two

A video of Pompeii was shown. This was followed by a discussion of trade routes, items traded, archaeological evidence in the Mediterranean as well as India. Books, articles, maps, atlases, Internet, and other resources were made available for reading, taking notes, and preparing a bibliography. Each student chose a Roman name, developed a map for his/her journey, and prepared to write the diary.

Days Three and Four

Each student prepared his/her diary, which included a description of the ship, the items traded from Pompeii, the crew, the sailing conditions, accounts of experiences in Athens, Crete, overland in Egypt, India, and on the return trip. Only major events were entered rather than a day-by-day account. Each diary included a carefully prepared map and a bibliography.

Day Five

Students shared their diaries with classmates. The skills involved in this project, including map-drawing, writing, historical research, preparation of bibliographies, and Internet use, are among those which are important in our sixth-grade curriculum. Students also enjoyed the opportunity to be creative and imaginative in their diaries.

END-OF-YEAR EXHIBIT

Both of these projects were presented at the annual Sixth and Seventh Grades History Fair held in May at our school. Harding classmates as well as parents are invited to this exhibit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The list below includes readings from the Institute as well as books found in our school library. My students also used many excellent Internet sites for these projects.

Readings from the Institute (see General Bibliography)

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 Bass, G. F. "Oldest Known Shipwreck."
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