

Trade in the Ancient Mediterranean

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MAURICE BOWLING MIDDLE SCHOOL
OWENTON, KENTUCKY

Subject: Ancient History

Level: Middle School

Length of Unit: Five Steps (number of days varies)

Readings:

Bass, G. F. "Oldest Known Shipwreck" (see General Bibliography).

From the Bible: Selections from Ezekiel and Kings.

Casson, Lionel. *The Ancient Mariners* (see General Bibliography).

Frank, Harry Thomas, ed. *Atlas of the Bible Lands*. Revised Ed. Union, N.J.: Hammond, 2002.

"The Report of Wenamun." *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (see General Bibliography). Vol. 1, pp. 224–229.

"The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor." In *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (see General Bibliography). Vol. 1, 211–215.

Steffy, J. Richard. *Wooden Ship Building and the Interpretation of Shipwrecks* (see General Bibliography). Pp. 23–37, 39–72, 74, 77–78.

Other Materials: Uluburun Excavation Slides. Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA). College Station, Texas.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Maurice Bowling Middle School, located in north central Kentucky, is a rural school with an enrollment of approximately 450 students. The school serves an agrarian community that specializes in tobacco. Students who attend the school come from a wide range of socio-economic environments and are offered a general education with traditional course offerings. Although the students are required to complete additional social studies courses at the high school level, the middle school serves the role of introducing the study of ancient history, and this is the only exposure to ancient history many students will receive.

The following lessons were designed to introduce students to trade and shipping in the ancient Mediterranean from about 1600 B.C. to A.D. 200. Because of the vast expanse of history that teachers are expected to cover, the lessons which I have developed are designed to meet core content require-

ments in an efficient manner while still addressing as many learning styles as possible. Since students require different amounts of time to learn information or complete assignments, the following lessons are divided into Steps. Each Step addresses new information which is important to the understanding of trade and shipping in the ancient Mediterranean. High school and middle school teachers will find the activities easy to use or reorganize so as to meet the needs of their individual students. Discussions and homework assignments should provide transitions from one Step to the next. In the following paragraphs you will find a brief narrative of each Step and how it can connect to the next, concluding with a research project and assessment or test to be determined by the teacher.

PART TWO: LESSON NARRATIVE

Note: The narrative below gives a step-by-step overview of the unit. Details about specific classroom procedures for the Steps are found in Part Three.

Step One (Ships and Sailing):

The *Ancient Mariners* by Lionel Casson provides the reading and research needed for Step One. The information and illustrations in this readable book are excellent sources to familiarize students with the ancient Mediterranean. Upon completion of Step One, students should have an understanding of how shipbuilding began and progressed throughout ancient history. They should also recognize the importance of sails and how early man ventured out into the sea to trade. It is hoped that once students have read and discussed excerpts from Casson's book, such as "Down to the Sea in Ships," they will gain a greater appreciation for the vast array of contacts and trading networks that existed throughout the ancient Mediterranean.

Step Two (Shipbuilding):

The homework from Step One provides a transition into Step Two. The teacher can relate the sized of ancient ships (included in students' homework assignments) to present-day equivalents. This will help the student appreciate how large the ships must have been and how enormous the loads of cargo they could carry. Selections from *Wooden Shipbuilding*

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and the *Interpretation of Shipwrecks*, by J. Richard Steffy, will assist the teacher in explaining and showing the construction of these ships. The craft stick activity helps to introduce and reinforce the knowledge of how shipbuilding changed throughout time.

Step Three (Archaeology and the Uluburun Excavation):

This Step supports student inquiry into how historians know about ancient ships and trading. The Uluburun shipwreck in Turkey serves as an excellent example of how archaeology provides evidence for historical interpretation. Using slides (which can be purchased from the Institute of Nautical Archaeology) the teacher can show some of the objects that were found and the archaeological techniques that were used in their recovery.

Step Four (Cities and Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean Region):

Showing slides of recovered objects, as planned for Step Three, should lead to a discussion of the objects' origins. This leads into the unit research project, "Cities and Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean" (see material for this below).

Step Five:

Upon completion of Step Four the students should be ready to undertake Step Five, the assessment.

The above unit will provide students with a general study of the ancient Mediterranean world from about 1600 B.C. to A.D. 200. Teachers will find this unit easy to use or adapt to their current teaching plans. My hope is that students introduced to this material will gain in their understanding of, and appreciation for, ancient peoples and their accomplishments. Specific objectives and instructions are included below.

Objectives:

1. To familiarize student with cities and geographic locations in the ancient world.
2. To introduce students to the development of nautical technology in the ancient Mediterranean.
3. To promote archaeology and demonstrate to students through slides the various skills needed in order to work in the field.
4. To explain to students that ancient civilizations had contact with each other and conducted trade for a variety of products.
5. To encourage students to research an ancient Mediterranean city or civilization to better understand the social, economic, and historical aspects of that society.

PART THREE: CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Note: Steps are not synonymous with class periods. The teacher will determine length of time to devote to each Step.

Step One (Ships and Sailing):

Classroom Activities:

Students will read "Down to the Sea in Ships" pp. 3–5, from *The Ancient Mariners*. The teacher will then lead a discussion based on the reading. Pictures from the book, especially Plates 1 and 2 will be exhibited with the overhead projector.

Homework:

Have students use an atlas or map to measure the approximate size (north to south and east to west) of the Mediterranean Sea. Also have the students read "The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor" and be ready to discuss sailing techniques, ship size, and precious objects.

Extra Credit Research:

Assign interested students the task of researching the biblical books of Ezekiel 27 and 1 Kings 9–11 to find examples of commerce and communication among ancient peoples.

Step Two (Sailing and Shipbuilding in the Ancient Mediterranean):

Classroom Activity:

Students will be led in a discussion of their homework findings and readings. This discussion should lend itself to the hazards of sailing, shipbuilding and ship construction. Students will be given a number of craft sticks and asked to perform two tasks: 1) glue the craft sticks together to form a four-sided figure, and 2) make a square frame, and glue the craft sticks to it. Which was easier? Why? Explain to the students that in antiquity, people built boats "shell first," and only in late antiquity/early medieval times began to use frames to guide their ship construction. Show examples of shipbuilding from *Wooden Ship Building and the Interpretation of Shipwrecks*.

Homework:

Read the article by George F. Bass, "Oldest Known Shipwreck," and "The Report of Wenamun" from *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Have students present evidence from the reading which proves the presence of trade in the ancient Mediterranean.

Step Three (Archaeology and the Uluburun Excavation):

Classroom Activity:

Begin class with a brief review of the previous lesson and a discussion of homework. An inquiry question might be: How do we know about ancient shipbuilding? The teacher will introduce the Uluburun wreck and marine archaeology using INA slides and the *National Geographic* article "Oldest Known Shipwreck." The teacher should narrate how the wreck was discovered and what archaeologists are learning from excavation. The students should then identify the goods that were on the ship and locate the origins of these goods. Discuss how these goods give evidence that supports the idea that trade occurred over a vast network in the ancient Mediterranean, and why goods were produced in certain regions.

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Step Four (“Ancient Mediterranean Cities and Civilizations”):

Note: This Step is designed for several class periods. Materials for classroom activities are appended below.

Classroom Activities:

Begin class with a brief review of Step Three and introduce students to research project “Cities and Civilizations in the Ancient Mediterranean.” (See detailed description of activities, below.)

Step Five (Assessment):

Testing on content according to teacher’s preferences.

ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN CITIES AND CIVILIZATIONS

Note: The material here is intended for several class periods, as indicated in Step Four above.

Objectives:

Students will gain a better understanding of the ancient Mediterranean world and how its peoples were in contact and traded with one another. The lessons will require the student to use geographical, economic, and historical interpretation skills to complete the given research assignment.

Description:

Student groups will use various sources and texts to research ancient cities and civilizations around the Mediterranean Sea. Their findings will be presented to the class using geo-pyramid boxes.

Time Required: Four to five class periods.

Day one—assignment overview and research.

Day two—research, assigned city or civilization.

Day three—creation of geo-pyramid box.

Day four—presentation of geo-pyramid boxes and discussion of findings.

Materials (for each student):

One copy of research questions handout.

One sheet of thick construction paper.

Research resources

Classroom supplies

Procedure:

1. Show students a map of the Mediterranean region on the overhead projector. Highlight various ancient cities and civilizations (see list of cities and civilizations below).
2. Students will be placed in groups of three and given copies of research questions handout (included below).
3. Each group will then be given a city or civilization to research. Handout will help to guide their research.

Group members should select from handout one of the areas to research, and write information on the handout in the final draft form.

4. As students complete their research, have them begin to cut (from construction paper) the geo-pyramid from the pattern (at end of document). Students should take turns writing their research findings on each side of their geo-pyramid before taping it together.
5. Encourage the students to decorate their pyramids with symbols, shapes and colors that represent their cities and civilizations.
6. Have students present their findings to the other class members. Give students blank desk maps of the Mediterranean region to plot each city or civilization while it is being presented.
7. After each presentation reiterate why a city or civilization produced certain goods and why they had the need for trade with other peoples. Also look at the geographic location of the city or civilization and discuss possible trade routes and barriers to trade.

LIST OF ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN CITIES AND CIVILIZATIONS:

Levant: Ugarit; Sidon and/or Tyre; Byblos

Asia Minor: Troy or Miletus

Egypt: Thebes

Nubia: Meroë

Eastern Mediterranean: Cyprus; Crete

Greece: Athens

Central Mediterranean: Sicily

RESEARCH QUESTIONS HANDOUT (FOR ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN CITIES AND CIVILIZATIONS)

Names of Group Members:

Name of City or Civilization:

Research Areas:

1. Regional geographic description and natural resources.

Name of Researcher:

2. Brief ancient historical summary of the people, their customs and government, and their technologies.

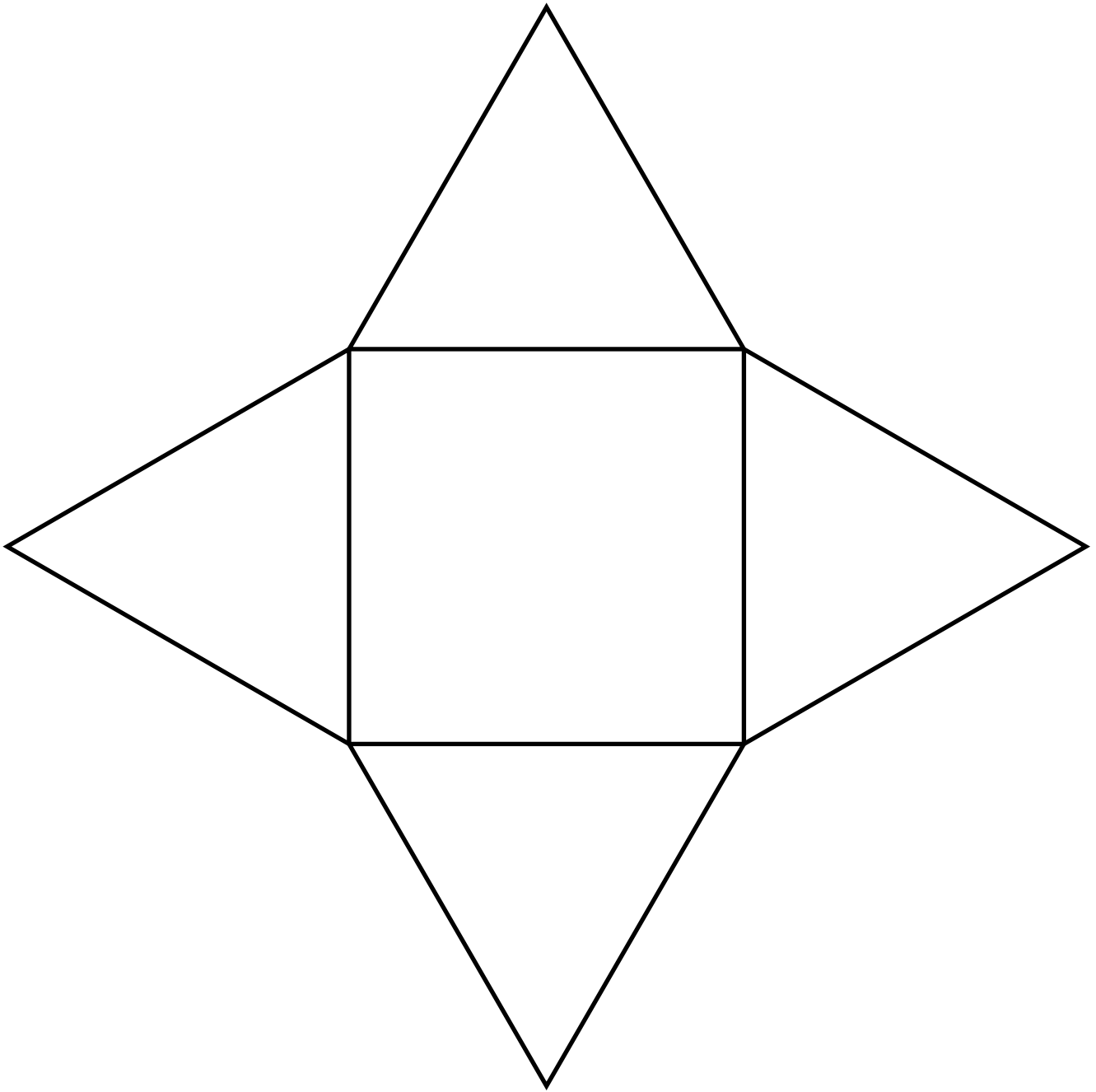
Name of Researcher:

3. Products produced by this ancient city or civilization.

Name of Researcher:

4. With what other cities and civilizations have they traded? (Give evidence from the research.) What were other possible trade routes they would have used?

Name of researcher:



Pattern for Geo-Pyramid Box