Three Units for a Sixth-Grade Ancient History Course

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Subject: Social Studies
Level: Grade 6
Length of Unit: Varies

Readings for the Teacher:
Ballard, R. D., R. Archbold, and A. M. McCann. The Lost Wreck of the ISIS (see General Bibliography).
Bass, G. F. “Oldest Known Shipwreck” (see General Bibliography).
Casson, L. The Ancient Mariners (see General Bibliography).
Freeman, Charles. Egypt, Greece, and Rome (see General Bibliography).
Harden, D. B. The Phoenicians (see General Bibliography). Chapters 1, 2, and 3.
Haynes, Joyce L. Nubia. (see General Bibliography).
Sharer, Robert and Wendy Ashmore. Archaeology: Discovering Our Past (see General Bibliography).
Van Seters, J. “The Nature of Egyptian Trade in the East Mediterranean” (see General Bibliography).

Part One: Introduction
The Dwight-Englewood School is a private, pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade college preparatory school located in Bergen County, New Jersey, five miles west of the George Washington Bridge. This school provides quality education to help students prepare for college and university work, while fostering independent thinking, the ability to solve problems, and the skills, tolerance, and integrity it takes to thrive in our multifaceted world. The sixth grade comprises fifty-five students from Bergen and Rockland counties, and New York City.

Course Description:
The sixth-grade social studies program uses an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the development of human behavior and thought and the evolution of human culture from the dawn of early humans through three ancient civilizations. The civilizations studied are Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt and Nubia, Phoenicia (as a continuation of their study of the ancient Near East), and ancient Greece. In their study of the subject matter of the “Cargoes” Institute, students will examine how a society’s beliefs can be reflected in its material culture and how trade has played a significant role in the diffusion of ideas and culture. Students will also weave together a tapestry of universal themes and concepts prevalent throughout human history. Themes include defining what it means to be human, how humans adapt, invent, and survive in a complex and changing world, and the interconnectedness of humans through economic activity. Development of skills such as reading, writing, language, note-taking, and independent research methods, is emphasized. Issues of human behavior and morality in current events, as they apply to the content of the course, will be integrated into the curriculum. Connections will be made where appropriate.

Guiding Questions:
1. What methods do people use today to try to understand cultures of the past?
2. How did physical geography affect the growth of ancient civilizations?
3. How did civilizations develop governments and economic systems?
4. What role did trade play in the Mediterranean world?

Standards:
Students will:
1. View a variety of historical sources.
2. Differentiate between historical facts and interpretations.
3. Acknowledge that the above are related and that the facts a scholar reports are selected and reflect his or her judgment of what is most significant about the past.
4. Think chronologically and interpret data presented in time lines.
5. Create time lines.
7. Compare and contrast different sets of ideas (values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences).
8. Understand how the human species fully emerged out of biological evolution and cultural development.

**Instructional Methods:**
Lessons are structured so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning, and so they may work by themselves to accomplish learning goals unrelated to those of other students. When working in small groups, students will have assigned roles, work toward mutual goals, and share resources with the others in the class. Students' behavior and work will be monitored by the teacher to ensure they are completing the assignment and are working cooperatively. Lessons may also be teacher-directed where overt behavior is elicited, checked, interpreted, and then acted upon. A typical lesson plan will include an objective (what do I want by students to learn?), an explanation, active participation (with monitoring and adjusting), closure (opportunity for learners to process or summarize what they have learned), and then individual practice (either in class or as a homework assignment).

**Units**
I. Mesopotamia: What does it mean to be civilized?
   1. Trade and Expansion: Phoenicia and Israel
II. Ancient Egypt and Nubia:
   1. Invasion of the “Sea Peoples”
      a. Hittite
      b. Hyksos
      c. Greeks
III. Phoenicia
IV. Ancient Greece

**Projects**
- Phoenician Trade Mini-Fair
- Uluburun Living History Museum
- Legend of Odysseus
- Trireme Warfare Simulation

**Unit Two: Civilizations of the Nile Valley**
(Unit One, not included here, is on Mesopotamia)

Length of Unit: 8 weeks

Standard: How Egypt became a center for dense population, urbanization, and cultural innovation in the fourth and third millennia B.C.E.; how commercial and cultural interactions may have contributed to change in the Nile region.

**Students Resources:**
2. Issues of *Calliope*
3. Videos
   b. *Pyramid*. David Macaulay. Listed in *Archaeology on Film*.

**Skills:** Independent research; report writing.

**Vocabulary:** pyramid; pharaoh; cataract; hieroglyph; Meroe; scribe; obelisk.

**INDIVIDUAL LESSONS**
**Lesson 1:** Locate the Nile Valley on the map. Why did this civilization develop along the Nile?
**Lesson 2:** Locate on a map of northeastern Africa the cataracts of the Nile River, zones of agricultural settlement, the regions of Nubia and Kush, and the wind patterns in
this part of Africa. From this information show how the geography and climate of the region affected trade in the Nile valley. What items were traded? What evidence is there for cultural as well as commercial exchanges? Reading: Y. Markowitz, "Trade in the Ancient Nubia." Calliope.

Lesson 3: Role-play a meeting of a king of Nubia with an Egyptian official detailing plans for trade. What goods and tools will they trade? What will the methods of transport be? With whom did they come in contact through their trade network?

Lesson 4: Compare Egyptian trade to Mesopotamian trade. (Compare artifacts which reveal such activities—slides.) Reading: J. Haynes, "King Piye," Calliope.

Lesson 5: Write entries for the "Who's Who" of Egyptian history describing the political and cultural achievements of selected Egyptian and Nubian pharaohs.

Lesson 6: Group project- develop a chart that graphically shows Egyptian expansion during the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. (Time lines, transparencies, and other techniques.)

Lesson 7: Write epitaphs for the queens of Egypt, outlining their achievements. Display achievements on an obelisk (Hatshepsut, Nefertiti, Nefertari, Meroitic queens, Cleopatra).


UNIT THREE: THE PHOENICIANS
(An extension of Unit One, the ancient Middle East)

Length of Unit: 4 weeks

Student Resources:
1. Bikai, Patricia M. The Phoenicians (see General Bibliography)

Unit Outline:
a. Contributions of the Phoenicians
   1. Alphabet
   2. Ships
b. The Phoenicians and trade
   1. Resources
   2. Purple dye of Tyre and Sidon
   3. Trade routes

Vocabulary: ingot; amphorae; cargo; artifact; trade; merchant; lapis lazuli; strait; murex; dye; ivory; cedar timber; papyrus; linen.

Unit assessment:
1) Creative writing project - students must demonstrate their understanding of Phoenician trade and apply lessons in grammar, vocabulary, and math.
2) Phoenician content quiz

The following lesson overview is for Phoenician Trade

INDIVIDUAL LESSONS
Lesson 1: Geography of Phoenicia and its major colonies and trading ports
Objective: Students will locate and highlight the following on their maps of the ancient Mediterranean world: Phoenicia; Byblos; Carthage; Cyprus; Tyre; Sidon; Europe; Africa; Asia Minor; Greece; Strait of Gibraltar; Gades; Britain, India, and Egypt. (The will plot any location not already printed on the map once students find them in a world or historical atlas. If the physical location of any city or country does not fit on the map provided, they will draw it off to the corner with an arrow pointed on the direction where it’s located.)

Skills: Using an atlas as reference; identifying locations on a map.

Critical thinking questions: What do you notice about all the cities plotted? If the Phoenicians were skilled at sailing the Mediterranean Sea, do you think they could have sailed through the Strait of Gibraltar and northward to the British Isles? What evidence might there be to support the possibility of Phoenician expeditions as far as the British Isles?

Materials needed: Maps of ancient Mediterranean, atlases, highlighters.
Lesson 2: Natural resources needed for the manufacture of Phoenician trade items
Objective: Students will view a series of slides which show Cypriot and Carthaginian artifacts displayed at the Harvard Semitic Museum. They will identify and list many of the resources used in the manufacture of these artifacts and write them in the space provided at the bottom of their maps. Using reference and non-reference books provided by the teacher, students will research where these resources were found throughout the ancient Mediterranean world and plot them on the respective locations on their maps. (Note: Michael Grant, Ancient History Atlas, listed in the General Bibliography, is especially helpful for this lesson.)

Skills: Creating a key world list and a distribution map; researching materials using reference and non-reference books; and using an index.

Focusing question: What natural resources were needed to make the items found at Phoenician sites on Cyprus and in Carthage? Where were these commodities found or mined?

Critical thinking question: By what means could the Phoenicians have become a dominant trading force in the ancient Mediterranean world?

Materials needed: Picture slides from the Harvard Semitic Museum, relevant research books, students' maps.

Lesson 3: Phoenician “royal” purple dye
Objective: Teacher will pass around murex shells for students to observe. Next, students will brainstorm a list of possible explanations as to how these shellfish could have enabled Phoenicians to gain economic prosperity.

Skills: Applying reading strategies—identifying main idea and supporting details.

Focusing question: How did the Phoenicians extract the purple dye? How many murex snails were needed to dye one garment? How might the people of Tyre have discovered the purple dye from murex snails? Why was this dye referred to as the “royal” purple?

Materials needed: murex shells (or any similar shells to simulate); J. Adil article, in Calliope.

Lesson 4: Phoenician trade routes
Objective: Students will plot possible trade routes the Phoenicians may have traveled on a typical trade expedition (keeping in mind that most often, the Phoenicians preferred to sail relatively close to land). Students will then compare their predicted routes to those determined by archaeologists.

Creative Writing Project: Students will then write a journal describing a trade expedition they “have taken” as Phoenician merchants from Tyre to Gades. They will use the information learned from this unit, such as what their cargo includes, where they stop, what they trade, and how close to the coast Phoenician ships must travel. They are encouraged to embellish and exaggerate their experiences while out to sea.

Focusing question: If a Phoenician trading vessel would only travel during daylight hours and at a rate of six knots per hour, how long might a journey have taken from Tyre to Gades? Where might the ship have moored and what might have been traded along the way?

Skills: Creative writing.

UNIT FOUR: ANCIENT GREECE
Unit: Innovation and Change
Length of Unit: 8 weeks (this period of time applies to the entire unit on Ancient Greece; for the lessons pertaining to the “Cargoes” Institute, less time is needed; only those lessons are included here).

Standard: State-building, trade, and migrations that led to increasingly complex interrelations among people of the Mediterranean and Southwest Asia.

Skills: Oral presentation.

Students Resources:

INDIVIDUAL LESSONS
Lesson 1: Create a timeline showing the time span of Minoan civilization, the start and expansion of Mycenaean civilization, and the relationship of these to Egyptian and Hittite history. What part did migrations and technological innovations play in the events shown on the timeline?

Lesson 2: As the excavator of a Mycenaean site, what evidence would you cite to document your claim that your site shows Egyptian, Southwest Asian, and Minoan influences? What actual evidence exists that would support this claim?
Lesson 3: Activity—role-play Late Bronze Age passengers aboard the Uluburun ship; convert classroom into a ship. Who are the characters on board this ship? How did they get to be there and why? How might they have influenced each other?

Lesson 4: Draw upon selections from the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and pictures of jars and red-figure portraits to retell the story of the siege of Troy.

Lesson 5: View a transparency depicting a battle scene of the Peloponnesian War and make a list of the man-made objects shown. What materials are used to manufacture these items? Look at a map which reflects locations of natural resources. Research how the Athenians and Spartans obtained such items. Does this reveal specific information about trade routes?