

# Exchange of Goods and Ideas in the Ancient Mediterranean

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LUBBOCK, TEXAS

**Subject:** World History (Classical Period)

**Level:** Grade 9

**Length of Unit:** Three sets of lessons designed for one or more class periods each

**Readings:** Specific readings are included with each lesson

## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Lubbock, Texas, is a city of approximately 200,000 that is considered a medical and educational center for West Texas. It is supported by a diverse agricultural market that includes cotton, grain, and cattle, as well as numerous small industries. Texas Tech University, the various medical facilities, and Lubbock Independent School district are the largest employers in the city. A variety of ethnic groups are represented in the population with the largest groups being Hispanic and black. People of many nationalities are drawn to Lubbock because of the educational opportunities offered through the four colleges and universities located here. The warmth and friendliness of the people are among the most frequently noted characteristics of the city, and the beautiful blue skies and open spaces the most notable natural features.

Evans Junior High is one of ten junior high schools in Lubbock, Texas. With a student body of 850 students in grades seven through nine, approximately thirty percent of the students participate in the honors program. Approximately 85% of the ninth graders take world history. About two-thirds of the student enrollment will pursue higher education after high school graduation. As a teacher of both regular and honors classes, I endeavor to prepare my students to face a variety of challenges.

The content of social studies in Texas public schools is guided by the list of essential knowledge and skills as defined by the Texas Education Agency. As part of an ongoing attempt to reorganize and align social studies curriculum from grades K-12, these essential knowledge and skills (TEKS) were implemented in the school year 1998–99.

Textbooks are selected by each school district from a list of books approved by the State Board of Education. In most circumstances, the approved list has no more than five choices

that meet all the criteria for conforming books and may have as few as two of three. Adoptions for a specific course such as world history occurs every six to ten years. Currently, world history books are in their eighth year of adoption, with renewal coming in 1999.

Every student in Texas must pass the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) sometime between the sophomore and senior years of high school in order to receive a high school diploma. Preparation is accompanied by regular testing in grades below the sophomore level each year with a benchmark test in the fall and the state test in the spring. Thus, skills included on the TAAS also provide a framework for content, although sometimes more for the method of teaching as opposed to the actual content. Student scores on the TAAS are also tied into individual teacher evaluations.

In general, the world history course is designed as a survey from prehistoric times through current events. Although the order of courses varies from district to district and sometimes from school to school within a district, the basic history sequence includes a year-long course in Texas history; American history (through the Civil War); world history; world geography; American history (from Reconstruction to the present); government (a one-semester course), and economics, (a one-semester course). Texas requires three units of social studies for graduation. There is a choice between world history and world geography with the second half of American history as well as government and economics being required. Usually, the Texas history course and the first half of American history are offered in the seventh and/or eighth grades. Many districts, especially the larger ones, require all four units of social studies for high school graduation. Frequently districts offer other social studies electives to augment the basic courses and to meet the individual needs of their school population.

## PART TWO: CLASS LESSONS

### FIRST SET OF LESSONS: CYPRIOT POTTERY

#### Objectives:

1. Students will pose and answer questions about geographic distribution and patterns of trade in the eastern Mediterranean.

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2. Students will be able to analyze examples of how the art of pottery reflects the history of the culture in which objects were produced.
3. Students will analyze information by categorizing items and drawing inferences.

Time Frame: 2–3 class periods of 50 minutes each.

Textbook Reference: Perry, Marvin, et al. *History of the World*. Boston: Houghton, 1990. Chapter 4: pp. 72-73.

**Suggested Readings:**

*Art of Ancient Cyprus*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1972.

Burenhult, Goran, ed. *Old World Civilizations- The rise of Cities and State*. McMahons Point, Australia: Weldon Owen Pty. Ltd., 1994.

Dothan, Trude, and Moshe Dothan. *People of the Sea*. New York: Macmillan, 1992.

Harden, Donald. *The Phoenicians*. New York: Penguin, 1980.

Piggott, Stuart, ed. *The Dawn of Civilization*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

**Focus:**

After having students read a chronology of Cyprus and examine the map of Cyprus, discuss with them their findings, especially with regard to the references to pottery. Review with the students some conclusions that might be drawn by archaeologists using the evidence that has been found not only in Cyprus, but also in other eastern Mediterranean areas such as the Levant and Egypt. This is an excellent opportunity to point out how copper found on the island of Cyprus as well as the geographic location of the island enhanced an exchange of other goods and ideas.

**Activity:**

Provide each pair of students with a set of cards showing examples of Cypriot pottery. Distribute a blank chart to each student. Explain that the students are to fill in the chart, using the illustrations on the cards for the information needed. After they fill in the chart, have students examine the cards carefully and postulate ways that the pottery might be divided into two major classifications. Record the possibilities on a transparency on the overhead or on the chalkboard. When students have exhausted their possibilities, guide them through discussion toward the concept of the two classifications being tableware and storage containers. Then have students divide their cards into these two classifications. Using only the group of cards in the classification of storage containers, have the students repeat the activity; this time lead them to the idea of open and closed storage containers.

**Conclusion:**

If the idea is not forth coming in the discussion, remind the students that one of the guiding principles of design is that

form follows function. Have students briefly recall the patterns of trade that might be found in the Cypriot pottery. Emphasize the interaction of traders and the resultant change, interchange and exchange of ideas and goods, such as pottery, that exposed people to new/different ideas.

**Extension:**

Write a simple fictional story explaining how and why Cypriot pottery was found elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean, indicating in the story whether the pottery found was a result of commerce, a gift, a payment of tribute or theft or black-market exchange.

Sketch an example of the form of a piece of Cypriot pottery and include in the design elements form a different but compatible area—for example, Egypt. The write a short museum card explaining the piece of pottery.

Create a cartoon strip showing a piece of Cypriot pottery and its use; be certain to show in some matter how the pottery illustrates an exchange of ideas and/or goods.

**Assessment:**

Student responses during the discussion or a pictorial quiz showing other examples of Cypriot pottery and having the students classify them would be possibilities. Any of the extension activities could also be used as assessment.

**SECOND SET OF LESSONS: EARLY GREEK COINS**

*Note: Lessons include using math skills to determine coins' value (Part A), and a role-playing activity involving coinage (Part B).*

**Objectives:**

1. Explain economic and geographic factors influencing the development of economies in the ancient Mediterranean area.
2. Create a chart representing the value of various early Greek coins (see supporting material included below, *The Value of Coins in Ancient Greece*).
3. Use artifacts to acquire information.
4. Utilize appropriate mathematical skills to interpret social studies information.

**Time Frame:** 1 or 2 class periods of 50 minutes each.

**Textbook Reference:**

Perry, Marvin, et al. *History of the World*. Boston: Houghton, 1990. Chapters 4 and 5.

**Suggested Readings:**

Clain-Stefanelli, Elvira, and Vladimir Clain-Stefanelli. *The Beauty and Lore of Coins*. Croton-on-the-Hudson, New York: Riverwood, 1974.

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Freeman, Charles. *Egypt, Greece, and Rome* (see General Bibliography).

Grant, Michael. *Ancient History Atlas*. (see General Bibliography).

*Greek Coins*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1964.

Jenkins, G. K. *Ancient Greek Coins*. London: Seaby, 1990.

Oleson, John. *Greek Numismatic Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

**Additional Background:** Teacher's Notes: Coins in Various Places, immediately below

**Teacher's Notes: Coins in Various Places**

1. First coinage ca. 600 B.C. "Electrum" from Lydia. Golden Fleece. "Nose-wart" is sun attribute so yellow lion is solar symbol. Mane= rays. Yellow coin=Lion=Sun.
2. King Croesus. Reigned in Lydia, 561–546 B.C. Bi-metallic currency, same design- sun and moon on both gold and silver coins. Exchange rate 80 silver for 3 gold. Later, light gold stater; exchange rate was 20 silver for 1 gold.
3. Aegina "turtle" stater weighed 12 grams. 510–485 B.C. First coinage in Europe. They were sea-traders, hence the sea-turtle. Pericles considered it the "eyesore of the Piraeus." In 457 B.C. Athens was conquered, and the coin symbol became a land-tortoise. Can be related to one of Aesop's fables.
4. Athens "owl" tetradrachm had a stater weight of 17 grams. 460–404 B.C. Was considered the pound-sterling of its day. One drachma is a drax (grasp, handful) of obolos (iron Spits). Classical period, but coins reflected archaic style. Set the pattern of classical coinage using the head of the patron deity with the reverse showing attribute which is the city-badge or ethnic characteristic.
5. Corinth "Pegasus" stater weight was 8.5 grams. Shows Athena in Corinthian helmet. According to legend, Athena helped Bellerophon tame Pegasus. Pegasus stamped his hoof on Akrocorinth and created a spring.
6. Corcyra "cow" stater weight was 11 grams. 420–400 B.C. Had a monetary policy to retain its coinage in its harbor of refuge to force everyone using the harbor to transact business using the "cow."

**EARLY GREEK COINS: PART A****Focus:**

A concise introduction as to the way early coins were minted and the relative value of such coins, as well as a brief history of coins beginning with the Lydians, should precede the worksheet activity (see Teacher's Notes, above).

**Activity:**

Present a social studies/math lesson centered on the value of early Greek coins and the use of such coins in various trading

activities. (see Values of Coins in Ancient Greece, below).

**Conclusion:**

A short discussion at the close of the activity might focus on the highlights of the lesson with application of these principles to today's world. The discussion might include such points as the value of the peso or the influence of the fluctuating value of the yen on the economy of the United States and the relative cost of goods imported from Japan.

**Extension:**

Students might create a graph or chart showing the relative value of various currencies today in relation to the U.S. dollar as a result of research from a daily paper.

Create a student role-play with students assuming the role of merchants from various areas attempting to exchange coins of differing values to facilitate the trade of a variety of products. Note: This activity is presented as Part B, below.

**HANDOUT FOR STUDENTS: THE VALUE OF COINS IN ANCIENT GREECE**

(Note: Answers to questions and arithmetic problems, included there for the convenience of the teacher, are not for students' handout.)

**Background**

In ancient Greece, silver coins, and occasionally gold ones, were used as a medium of exchange. The intrinsic value of the precious metals used in the coins determined the value of the coins. In contrast to those coins of precious metals were the obols or iron stated that were used for lesser purchases. The word "drachma" comes from the work drax meaning a grasp or handful. In today's currency, an obol is sometimes compared to a \$10 bill, and a drachma may be considered the day's wages of a skilled artisan.

**Equivalents Table**

Talent = 6000 drachmas

Tetradrachm = 4 drax

Drachma = 6 obols

Tri obol = 3 obols

Obol = \$10 in today's currency

Hemi-obol = ½ obol

Trihemitartemorion = ⅜ obol

Hemitartemorion = ¼ obol

**Activity for Students**

Using the information above, calculate the answers to the following problems. Show all your work.

1. In ancient times, the Greeks frequently placed 2 obols in the mouth of the deceased to pay passage on the ferry to the netherworld. What would this fare be worth in

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- today's money? (Answer: \$20) Can you think of any similar examples of this in the ancient world? If so, what? (Answer: Egyptian Tombs)
- When a Greek merchant returned home one evening he emptied the receipts of the day on the table. In the sack he had 8 trihemitarternion, 2 drachmas, 5 hemi-obols, 3 tri obols and 4 hemitarternion. What was the worth of the sack of coins in obols? (Answer:  $3 + 12 + 7.5 + 9 + .5 = 32$  obols)
  - At one time in the history of Athens, the richest man in the city was said to be worth 57 talents.  
How many drachmas would this be? (Answer 342,000)  
What would his worth have been in obols? (Answer: 2,052,000)  
In terms of today's money, what would his worth be? (Answer: \$20,520,000)  
Do you consider this wealthy in today's world? Why or why not?  
How do you explain the difference in perspective regarding wealth in the ancient world?
  - An Athenian merchant (an emporos- or one who imports goods) approached five of his friends to ask them to lend him 200 tetradrachmas each so that he could bring a shipment of grain back to Athens from the Crimea. What was the total investment of the lenders? (Answer: 1000 tetradrachmas)  
If the lenders received the traditional 33% interest on the short-term loan, what was the total interest paid to the lenders? (Answer: 330 tetradrachmas)  
How much did each lender receive when the merchant repaid his loan? (Answer: 266 tetradrachmas)  
If the merchant wanted to make a profit of 50 tetradrachmas from his trip, what is the total profit that he would have to realize from selling the grain? (Answer:  $1330 + 50 = 1380$  tetradrachmas)  
If the merchant (emporos) were also the naukleros or ship owner, would he have a greater or lesser chance to make a larger profit for himself? Why is this so? Would his risks be greater or lesser?

**EARLY GREEK COINS: PART B (ROLE PLAY)**

*Note: This activity draws on the background material in Part A. As in Part A, the answers supplied below are for the use of the teacher.*

**Setting:**

The port of Corcyra off the western coast of Greece was often used as a harbor of refuge for the ships from far-flung areas. By law, all fees and taxes had to be paid in local currency. The Corcyrian currency was called a "cow" and the stater (standard weight) was established as 11 grams. Fortunately for the sea captains, money changers were available to trade

coins. Traditionally, the money changer charged about 3% for his services.

**Characters in the Role Play:****Character #1: THE MONEY CHANGER**

As the money changer, you sit at the table with your sacks of various coins from different Greek city-states as well as other areas in the eastern Mediterranean. You also have at hand a chart indicating the weight of the silver in each coin.

**Character #2: ATHENIAN SEA CAPTAIN**

An Athenian sea captain, you have landed in Corcyra on your way to Syracuse to trade olive oil. You must pay harbor fees and cargo taxes. One of the types of coins of Athens that you carry is a silver "owl" tetradrachm whose stater weight is established at 17 grams. Would you trade 2 of your owls for 3 of the money changer's "cows"? (Answer: Yes, thirty-four grams of Athenian silver for 33 grams of Corcyrian silver gives about 3% of the exchange for the money changer.

**Character #3: CORINTHIAN SEA CAPTAIN**

You are a Corinthian sea captain and you bring your ship into Corcyra in the midst of a storm. Before you can secure your ship at the dock, you must convert your coins called "Pegasi" into the local currency, "cows." Your "Pegasus" coins contain 8.5 grams of silver while the local Corcyrian "cow" has 11 grams of silver. Would you trade 8 of your "Pegasi" coins for 6 "cows"? (Answer: Yes, 68 grams of Corinthian silver traded for 66 grams of Corcyrian silver leaves 2 grams of silver for the money changer- a profit of approximately 3 %.)

**Character #4: AEGINETAN SEA CAPTAIN**

As an Aeginetan sea captain, you, too, land at the harbor of Corcyra. As you prepare to pay your harbor fees and taxes, you visit the money changer. He offers you one "cow" for one of your "turtles." This offer is tempting. After all, his "cow" contains 11 grams of silver and your "turtle" has 12 grams. What a simple trade. Should you make the exchange and be on your way quickly? (Answer: Probably not- that leaves 1 gram out of 12 for the money changer, a profit of nearly 9% or three times the usual fee.)

Alternative: What would you make as a counteroffer?

**Thought Questions (after Role Play):**

- After listening to the role play and examining pictures of the real coins, sketch a set of equivalents for each of the sea captains' exchanges. Since there is no example of the Corcyrian "cow," you will have to use your knowledge and create something that you think the Corcyrians might have used. Be certain to label your equations.

Athenian sea captain

Corinthian sea captain

Aeginan sea captain

Money changer

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- If you were the money changer, how much profit, in terms of silver, would have been realized in these transactions? If you converted this profit into Athenian money, approximately what would it have been worth?

**THIRD SET OF LESSONS: MUREX****Objectives:**

- Discover patterns in trade as well as patterns in geographic locations of the trade centers in the ancient world.
- Analyze written information utilizing basic reading skills.

**Time Frame:** 1 class period of 50 minutes

**Textbook Reference:** Perry, Marvin, et al. *History of the World*. Boston: Houghton, 1990. Chapter 2.

**Suggested Readings:**

- Edey, Maitland A. *The Sea Traders*. New York: Time-Life, 1974. Chapter, "The Royal Purple and How It Was Manufactured."
- Harden, Donald. *The Phoenicians*. New York: Penguin, 1980.
- McGovern, Patrick E. "A Dye for Gods and Kings." *Archaeology*. March/April 1990. Pp. 33, 76.
- Piggott, Stuart, ed. *The Dawn of Civilization*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

**Focus:**

One of the contributions of the Phoenicians was the purple dye that was extracted from several varieties of the mollusk, murex. Highly prized throughout the Mediterranean area, purple fabric, both wool and silk, was used as a medium for exchange.

**Questions to consider while doing reading assignment:**

How was the dye discovered? How was the dye itself created? What method was used to dye the fabric? Why was the color so valued? What groups of people were the most proficient at the dyeing process? Why do we not use this source for dye today? What there only one color of purple? Are the sources of information concerning the dye considered primary or secondary sources? Is there archaeological evidence to support these writing?

**Activity (Reading Assignment with Work Sheets):**

*Note: Work sheets, ready for classroom use, are included at the end of this lesson.*

Students will read photocopies of either one of the selections on murex (Edey and McGovern), or read them both to gain a broader perspective on the topic. As they read, ask them to

annotate the selection(s) by making notes and quick drawings in the margins. A highlighter may also be used effectively to note the main ideas of the passage. Allow the students to refer to the reading material as they answer the questions that accompany them (see work sheets). Two selections have been included to accommodate various reading levels and to provide a deeper investigation into the subject.

**Conclusion:**

Discuss with the students the questions posed in the Focus section of the lesson plan. Have the students support their answers with direct quotes from the reading, if that is possible. Include thoughtful questions on how/why evidence of purple fabric is found throughout the ancient Mediterranean, and the relevance of such findings.

**Extension:**

Students may choose to research the actual murex and draw a sketch of the mollusk to include with their questions.

Small groups of students may choose to sketch possible trade routes in the Mediterranean, indicating where archaeological evidence has been found that shows the existence of either the origin of the dye or dye factories.

Small groups of students may choose to create a time line showing evidence of the use of the famous dye throughout history.

**Assessment:**

Objective scoring of the questions from the reading selection may be used alone or in conjunction with an essay-type question. Another option would be to include an extension activity in the grading process.

Act out a simple role play explaining the legend behind the discovery of the purple dye.

**WORK SHEETS: LESSON ON MUREX****"A Dye for Gods and Kings" (McGovern article)**

- According to the passage, dye factories were set up by the Phoenicians
  - on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean.
  - on the mainland.
  - in widely scattered Phoenician colonies.
  - on the island of Crete.
- As the legend goes, purple dye was discovered by
  - a dog.
  - the nymph, Tyros.
  - Robert Browning.
  - King Melqart.

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3. The word “pre-eminent” in this passage means
- leading.
  - ancient.
  - biblical.
  - emerging.
4. The earliest evidence of large-scale production of the purple dye was found in
- Tyre.
  - Sarepta.
  - Sicily.
  - Tunisia.
5. The dying process is best described by
- the Amarna letters
  - Linear B tablets.
  - the Minoans.
  - Pliny the Elder.
6. From the passage, one can tell that the word “substantiate” means
- large.
  - support.
  - purple.
  - develop.
7. Scarlet dye replaced royal purple dye for use in church vestments because
- the Pope preferred red.
  - it was less expensive.
  - the mollusks all died.
  - there was a plague of insects.
- “The Royal Purple and How It Was Manufactured”**  
**(Edey chapter)**
1. The dye was processed in pans made of lead or time because,
- that was all that was available.
  - brass and iron had negative effects on the dye.
  - pottery broke too easily.
  - they were the least expensive.
2. The word “colorfast” means
- easily dyed.
  - quickly dyed.
  - did not fade.
  - Tyrian purple.
3. In ancient Rome
- anyone could wear purple.
  - purple indicated the power and prestige of the wearer.
  - purple was used to color the sails of their ships.
  - many dye woks were found within the city.
4. The most skilled dyers were from
- Tyre.
  - Malta.
  - Motya.
  - Rome.
5. According to the passage, the use of murex to create purple dye lasted approximately how long?
- 800 years
  - 1000 years
  - 1800 years
  - 60,000 years
6. In the Tyrian legend, purple dye from the murex was discovered by
- Melqart.
  - Tyrus.
  - Antony.
  - Cleopatra.
7. The work “emanated” in this passage means
- discovered.
  - colored.
  - smelled.
  - originated.