

The Ancient World: Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 5-8

Curriculum Focus: Geography

Lesson Duration: Two or three class periods

Program Description

Students investigate long-ago civilizations in India, the Mediterranean region, and parts of Africa. *The First Great Migration* – Follows the path of early humans who spread out from prehistoric Africa to populate the world. *Petra: Secrets of the Red City* – Visits a citadel located in present-day Jordan and portrays the people who carved it out of a canyon's red walls. *The Maurya Elephant Army* – Re-creates a battle between empires in ancient India, in which elephants played an important role. *Spartan Warriors* – Takes students to ancient Sparta to study the lifestyle of its soldiers and their crucial role in the city-state's rise.

- I. The First Great Migration (5 min.)
 - II. Petra: Secrets of the Red City (4 min.)
 - III. The Maurya Elephant Army (4 min.)
 - IV. Spartan Warriors (5 min.)
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Onscreen Questions

Segment I

- What primary factors might have influenced migrations of people long ago? How do they compare to reasons that people might migrate today?
- How did the climate influence early migration patterns? How does climate influence migration today?

Segment II

- How might the location of a city be important to its success?
- How do the services and cultural resources of Petra compare to a modern city today?

Segment III

- How would the elephant as a weapon of war be compared to the modern tank of today?
- What advantages and disadvantages did elephants give Asoka's army as it fought the war?

Segment IV

- What factors would be important in selecting warriors long ago that would be the same as selecting the modern soldier today? What factors would be different?
 - What were the steps to becoming a Spartan soldier? Would you have chosen to be one? Why or why not?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Identify reasons why people migrate.
- Describe the geography of the Fertile Crescent.
- Describe what life was like in the Fertile Crescent during ancient times.

Materials

- *The Ancient World* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player
- Paper and pencils
- Encyclopedias and other library resources
- Computer with Internet access (optional)

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by talking about migration. Ask students: What is migration? What are some reasons that humans migrate today? After discussing why people migrate in modern times, talk about migrations in ancient times. A good way to introduce this information is to view portions of *The Ancient World*.
2. After watching *The Ancient World*, discuss the geography and environment of the Fertile Crescent. Ask students: Where is the Fertile Crescent located? Why did people migrate there during ancient times; what did they hope to find? What was life like there? What jobs did people have? Why did they leave? Discuss what life might have been like for the hunter-gatherers as they migrated to the Fertile Crescent and established communities there. Have students speculate about how it must have felt to leave these communities and make another migration across the Bering Strait. What dangers did these people face? How did they live?
3. Tell students they are going to pretend that they live in ancient times and are part of an early migration to the Fertile Crescent or beyond. Some of their friends and family members have chosen to stay behind in North Africa. Their assignment is to write a letter to these people describing their experiences.



4. Each student must write one letter. Students can choose who they address their letters to; however, they must describe one of these three times:
 - Initial migration to the Fertile Crescent from North Africa
 - Life after arriving in the Fertile Crescent
 - Later migration from the Fertile Crescent, across the Bering Strait, to North America
5. Tell students that their letters must include the following:
 - Information about the geography they have encountered on their journey (or in the Fertile Crescent if they choose to write about life there).
 - At least two reasons why they chose to migrate to the Fertile Crescent (or chose to migrate to North America, if that's the letter they're writing).
 - At least two details about what life is like during the migration or while living in the Fertile Crescent – for example, how they are feeding, clothing, or housing themselves, and any discoveries or inventions made during this time.
6. Be sure to explain that there were several different civilizations in the Fertile Crescent, so not all students who choose to write about life there will have the same information. Allow students use of The Ancient World episode, library materials, or the Internet to research facts for their letters. The following Web sites have useful information on the Fertile Crescent, Bering Strait, and ancient migrations:
 - http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/chavez/hinojosa/chicano125/map_1.html
 - <http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/realeve/interactive/interactive.html>
 - <http://killeenroos.com/1/mesodata.htm>
 - <http://www.nps.gov/akso/beringia/comhist.htm>
7. Allow time for students to read their finished letters aloud. As a class, discuss what students discovered about life in the Fertile Crescent and during the early migrations. Talk about the different civilizations they researched, and discuss some of the things that defined each civilization. Display the letters in the classroom so that students may read them on their own at a later time.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students actively participated in class discussions; used research materials wisely and without teacher guidance; wrote informative, well-written, and creative letters that addressed the established criteria and used correct punctuation, spelling, and grammar.
- **2 points:** Students somewhat participated in class discussions; used research materials somewhat wisely and with little teacher guidance; wrote informative, somewhat well-written letters that addressed most of the established criteria and had very few spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.



- **1 point:** Students somewhat participated in class discussions; were unable to use research materials without teacher guidance; wrote disorganized letters that addressed only one or two of the established criteria and had numerous spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.

Vocabulary

artifact

Definition: An object remaining from a particular period, especially something created by humans and used for a specific purpose

Context: We conclude this from studying the artifacts and human remains found in East Africa.

Bering Strait

Definition: The narrow channel between Asia and North America

Context: According to one theory, hunter-gatherers pursuing woolly mammoths into Siberia eventually came upon the Bering Strait.

civilization

Definition: A society in an advanced state of social development

Context: The first steps had been taken toward the great civilizations that would invent writing, develop warfare, and build empires.

Fertile Crescent

Definition: A semicircle of fertile land stretching from the southeast coast of the Mediterranean around the Syrian desert north of Arabia to the Persian Gulf

Context: Humans followed the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers from the Persian Gulf to the Middle Eastern lands along the Mediterranean Sea, tracing an arc that would become known as the Fertile Crescent.

hunter-gatherer

Definition: A member of a society in which people obtain food by hunting, fishing, and foraging rather than by agriculture or animal husbandry

Context: These people were hunter-gatherers.

migration

Definition: To move from one country, place, or locality to another

Context: This was the last great journey to populate the world, and like all other migrations, it was dictated by climate.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit link:

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>



This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Geography – Human Systems: Understands the nature, distribution and migration of human populations on Earth's surface, Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes
- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media; Writing: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process, Gathers and uses information for research purposes

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
 - People, Places, and Environments
 - Global Connections
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How To Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into four parts (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press



Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. The First Great Migration (5 min.)

Human populations spread throughout the world many ages ago, thanks to changing climate and geography. See how early humans lived as they migrated from Africa into Asia and the Americas.

II. Petra: Secrets of the Red City (4 min.)

Built into the red desert cliffs of Jordan, Petra has been referred to as the “rose red city half as old as time.” Explore the ancient ruins of Petra.

III. The Maurya Elephant Army (4 min.)

Elephants may look like gentle giants, but they were often used as instruments of war in early India. Learn about Emperor Asoka and his army of elephants.

IV. Spartan Warriors (5 min.)

Chosen to begin training at a young age, Spartan soldiers were fierce and aggressive fighters. Learn about the ancient civilization of Sparta and the lives of its fearless warriors.

Curriculum Units

1. The First Migration

Pre-viewing question

Q: What would it take for you to move to another country or part of the world??

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What can archaeologists tell us about the early migratory humans?

A: Archaeologists can tell us several things including that early migratory humans designed tools with care, understood the seasons, and knew when game animals would return from their seasonal migrations.



2. Populating the World

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you think life was like for early migrating populations?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How were people able to migrate to North and South America?

A: During the second ice age, ocean levels fell, opening up a land bridge across the Bering Strait between Asia and North America. The land bridge allowed groups of people to migrate into North and South America.

3. An Early Metropolis

Pre-viewing question

Q: What are some important factors in establishing a thriving city?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How is Petra similar to other ancient cities?

A: Answers will vary.

4. Beasts of Burden

Pre-viewing question

Q: What animals are revered in your family or culture?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Why were elephants valuable animals in battle?

A: Elephants have thick skin, enormous strength, and a calm nature, all valuable in battle. They could each carry four men on their backs, allowing troops to fire weapons in different directions at once. With their massive size, elephants were used to trample and terrorize the enemy.

5. An Elite Army

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why are wars fought?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Could you have lived the life of a Spartan soldier?

A: Answers will vary.

6. A Warring Nation

Pre-viewing question

Q: What does the term "Spartan" mean to you?

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question

Q: What strategies were employed by the Spartan armies?

A: Spartan warriors fought in small mobile platoons of fewer than a dozen men. They used a fighting strategy called a phalanx. The phalanx was a massive formation of soldiers protected with shields. The shield of the man on his left protected the right side of each man.