








Hammurabi's Code

Overview:



Students will learn about the oldest known comprehensive system of law and punishment. They will learn that these laws were not all written by this Babylonian god-king, but rather were based on legal decisions made by judges before and during Hammurabi's reign. They will also analyze whether this legal system was fair and discuss why laws are necessary.

Objectives:





At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

-  **Explain** who Hammurabi was and why he decided to create a code of laws.
-  **Describe** and compare one or more of his laws and the punishment if the law were broken by (1) a nobleman or (2) a woman or another person of lower status.
-  **Analyze** whether punishments chosen were dependent on the accused person's socio-economic status and if they were fair.
-  **Create** a code of conduct in the garden patterned after Hammurabi's code.
-  **Identify** fruits used in the two role plays in the garden (grapes, figs, apples, pomegranates).







Preparation:

-  Prepare copies of handouts.
-  Gather props to be used in the two role plays.





Vocabulary:

-  Hammurabi
-  dispute
-  criminal laws
-  civil disagreements


Materials:




-  Map of Mesopotamia
-  Handout 1: "Hammurabi's Code"
-  Handout 2: "Script for Case 1"
-  Handout 3: "Script for Case 2"
-  Props for Case 1: a basket of grapes and figs
-  Props for Case 2: a basket of apples and pomegranates




On the Board:

-  A quote from Hammurabi's Code: "If a man destroys the eye of another man, his eye shall be destroyed. If he breaks the bone of another, his bone shall be broken."
-  Vocabulary
-  Student Reflection Questions
-  Leave space to create the students' own code of laws at the end of the lesson

Suggested Snack:

-  Students can snack on the fresh fruit from the role plays once the activity is over.

 unequal punishment
 “eye for an eye”
 accuser/accused

 guilty party
 code of conduct
 socio-economic status

Learning Activities:

1. Warm-Up: School Rules (5 min.)
 - A. Ask students to write down three school rules.
 - B. Then, tell them to write why they think each rule exists. For example, if the rule is “no running,” they might say that the rule is to ensure the safety of all the students.
 - C. Ask two or three students to share examples.
 - D. Ask students why they think we need laws?
2. Presentation: Hammurabi’s Code (15 min.)
 - A. Introduce the lesson by asking students what they know about King Hammurabi.
 - He was a king of Babylon, a city-state north of Sumeria in Mesopotamia, from 1792-1750 BCE.
 - Hammurabi was a skilled military leader and under his leadership Babylon conquered and united much of Mesopotamia.
 - He was also famous for his code of laws. Many say it was the first code of laws in the world. He had 282 laws engraved on stone (steles) and placed in locations for everyone in his empire to see.
 - B. Have students identify Babylon on the map of Mesopotamia.
 - C. Explain Hammurabi’s Code:
 - These laws included rules and punishments for breaking the rules.
fDefine the following vocabulary words:
 - *code of conduct*: set of rules outlining the social norms and rules and responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, party or organization
 - *dispute*: a disagreement
 - *guilty party*: the person or people responsible for an offense or misdeed
 - *accused*: a person or group of people who are charged with or on trial for a crime
 - *socio-economic status*: an individual's or family's social and economic position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation
 - If someone disobeyed any of these laws they received a punishment. If the person was of the same socioeconomic status as the person hurt, then the punishment was “an eye for an eye.” This was their law of

- retaliation, meaning that a person who has committed a crime against another person is to be penalized to a similar degree.
- Refer to the quote from Hammurabi's Code on the board.
 - If the person who committed the crime was of a lesser socio-economic status than the person wronged then their punishment was more severe than if they were both of the same socio-economic status.
- D. Distribute Handout 1: "Hammurabi's Code" and ask students to take turns reading the laws aloud.
3. Activity: Role Playing (10 min.)
- A. Tell students they are going to act out a story where one student is a nobleman who has stolen some crops from another nobleman. A third student will be the judge and will say what the punishment will be after the accuser and the accused have spoken.
- Distribute Handout 2: "Script for Case 1" and have three students act it out.
- B. Pick new students to do another role-play. One student will play a queen whose crops have been stolen by a second student, who will play a woman from the countryside. A third student will be the judge who decides the punishment in this case.
- Distribute Handout 3: "Script for Case 2."
- C. After the role play, ask students:
- Were these cases of equal/fair punishment? Why or why not?
 - What did you notice about the punishments given to people of different social classes.
 - Why is it important to have a fair code of conduct?
4. Application: Creating a Code of Conduct for the Garden (10 min.)
- A. On the board, have students brainstorm a set of laws that they will agree to abide by while working in the garden. Make sure they consider the following: tool safety, running in the garden, being respectful of the garden and each other, putting all tools away, and making a contribution when participating in a team activity.
- B. For each law, have students decide (within reason) what the repercussions/punishment should be if the law is broken. Hold students to this throughout the year.
- C. After class, turn these laws into a poster that students can refer back to throughout the year.
5. Snack: Students can eat the fruit (grapes, figs, apples, pomegranates) from the prop baskets. (5 min.)

6. Have students answer the Reflection Questions in their garden journals. (5 min.)

Student Reflection Questions:

1. Was Hammurabi's Code different from our system in the United States? Why or why not?
2. What are some of the benefits of having a code of law?
3. Are laws and punishments applied fairly and/or uniformly in today's society? Why or why not?

Assessment Questions:

1. Who was Hammurabi?
 - A. An Egyptian Priest who conquered many tribes
 - B. A Babylonian king who wrote the world's first set of laws**
 - C. A Sumerian farmer who designed the first irrigation system
2. Explain what "an eye for an eye" means. **(The punishment should match the crime.)**

Standards:

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

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Hammurabi's Code Photo of a Stele from: "Code of Hammurabi." Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_of_Hammurabi



Hammurabi's Code

If a man destroys the eye of another man, his eye shall be destroyed. If he breaks the bone of another, his bone shall be broken.

1. If a person accuses another person of a crime, the accused shall go to the river and jump in. If he drowns, the person who accused him may have the accused person's house. If the accused doesn't drown, then the River-God has decided that he is innocent. The person who made the accusation is to be put to death, and the accused shall take his house.
2. If a physician kills a patient or cuts out a patient's eye while trying to remove a tumor, the physician's hands will be cut off.
3. If a son hits his father, his hands shall be cut off.
4. If a fire breaks out in a house and a person who helps to put out the fire steals something from the house, that person shall be thrown into the fire.
5. If a man's wife becomes sick, the husband may take a second wife, but must continue to care for the sick wife as long as she lives.
6. If a man knocks out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out and if he is from a lower class, he is fined.





Hammurabi's Laws in Action

Actor's Script for Case #1: A Nobleman Steals from a Nobleman

Cast:

Lim: a nobleman whose crops have just been stolen by Zimbri

Zimbri: a nobleman who stole Lim's crops

Judge: a judge who will decide the thief's punishments

Setting: A courtroom

Props: A basket of grapes and figs that was discovered outside of Zimbri's home

Judge

The trial will now come to order. Will the accuser, Lim, please say what evidence you have that Zimbri stole your crops?

Lim

One of my staff saw him running away with a cart filled with my grapes and figs.

Judge

How can you be sure it was Zimbri?

Lim

He was wearing the coat and sandals he always wears and my staff person saw his face. They found this basket outside his home. (*Lim points to the basket of grapes and figs.*)

Judge

What do you have to say, Zimbri?

Zimbri

I did not do it. I was at my friend's home when that happened.

Judge

I rule in favor of Lim. For punishment you must return the same kind and number of grapes and figs to Zimbri that you stole.



Hammurabi's Laws in Action

Actor's Script for Case #2: A Woman Steals from the Queen

Cast:

Queen Mara: The Queen of Babylon

Lanu: a woman from the countryside

Judge: who will preside over the trial

2 Guards: who will stand next to the judge

Setting: A courtroom

Props: A basket of apples and pomegranates

Judge:

The trial will now come to order. Will the accuser, Queen Mara, tell us why you think it is this woman, Lanu, who stole your crops?

Queen Mara:

I was strolling through the garden with my staff when I saw this woman emerge from behind a tree carrying a large basket of apples and pomegranates..... clearly from my own fields.

Judge:

Lanu, explain yourself.

Lanu:

I couldn't have done it because I was home all day that day. You can ask my husband.

Judge:

I rule in favor of Queen Mara. Lanu, you are sentenced to replace the food you took and to spend 2 weeks in jail for this crime. Guards, please seize her and imprison her.

(Guards seize Lanu and take her to jail.)



