

WILLIAM & MARY

THE CENTER FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

A horizontal band of an ancient Egyptian wall painting. On the left, a cow and a camel are depicted. In the center, a dense cluster of papyrus plants grows from the water. On the right, several fish are shown swimming in the Nile.

Ancient Egypt

Gift of the Nile

A large central panel of an ancient Egyptian wall painting. On the left, four male figures in green and gold tunics walk in a row. In the center, a black dog lies on a pedestal. On the right, a large figure of Anubis, with a jackal head and a blue and gold kilt, stands holding a staff. Below these, three female figures in red and white dresses are seated, each holding a lotus flower. To the left of the seated women is a black cat and an ankh symbol. Hieroglyphs are scattered throughout the background.

TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES

2-3

Introduction to Civilizations

Lesson Length: Approximately 1½ hours

Curriculum Alignment Code		GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5
		X		X		X
Instructional Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and demonstrate an understanding of civilizations 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate an understanding of the hierarchy of needs of individuals and groups of people as it affects the development of civilizations 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create questions that will serve as a basis for studying civilizations 					

Assignment Overview

- Introduce the concept of civilizations.
- Explore civilizations through the Shipwrecked Scenario.
- Discuss civilizations and their needs.
- Generate additional questions about civilizations.

Materials

- Student Activity Page 3A**
- Chart paper
- Copy of novel for each student: either *Mara, Daughter of the Nile* by Elois Jarvis McGaw OR *Adara* by Beatrice Gormley

1. Introduce the Concept of Civilizations

- Begin the lesson by reviewing and discussing the following vocabulary terms:
 - *civilization*—a large community of people who live and work in a place, have a government to make laws for the group and organizations for education and other social purposes. A civilization usually also has a system of writing and advanced arts and sciences.
 - *settlement*—a permanent place of living for a group of people
 - *surplus*—more than what is needed of something
 - *division of labor*—a separation of different jobs among different people in a group
- Ask one or two students to share their journal responses from the last class. Remind them that understanding when and where events occurred is important because it helps them make more sense of why these events may have taken place and what might come next.
- Ask students if they have ever heard the word *civilization* and what they think it might mean. Give students the following definition of a civilization to be used as a focus throughout the unit: A civilization is a large community of people who live and work in a place and have a government to make laws for the group and organizations for education and other social purposes. A civilization usually also has a system of writing and advanced arts and sciences. Discuss the definition and have them give evidence to show whether they live in a civilization or not.

2. Explore Civilizations Through the Shipwrecked Scenario

- Ask students to read the Shipwrecked! Scenario (**Student Activity Page 3A**) and work through the questions that are attached. Then invite the groups to share their

responses with the class. Discuss the scenario with questions such as the following:

- *What were the most important problems to solve first? Why were these problems the most important?*
 - *Would rules and laws have been important on the island? Why or why not?*
 - *Suppose one of the people in the group was a really wonderful artist. When do you think that person would have had opportunities to really use her talents—near the beginning, or later? Why?*
- Explain to students that when people develop settlements, or specific locations in which they are going to live, the first thing they have to do is to make sure that people's basic needs are being met. It is important for everyone to have enough food and water, as well as shelter and clothing to protect them from the weather and other dangers. As groups of people in a certain place get bigger, they need to have more and more food to meet the needs of all the people. However, if they find a good system for getting food, either by hunting, farming, or both, eventually they have enough people to assign some people to get the food, while other people are freed up to do other kinds of jobs. Ask students the following questions:
 - *What kinds of things can happen when not everyone in a group has to work on meeting people's basic needs? What other kinds of jobs do you think people may start to have?*

3. Discuss Civilizations and Their Needs

- Explain to students that when we say we are studying a *civilization*, we are generally studying a group of people who have settled in a specific area long enough that they have established some of the organizations and systems that were mentioned in the definition discussed at the beginning of the lesson. Also, *civilizations* have what is called a *division of labor*, which means that different people in the community do different kinds of jobs, instead of everybody just working to find

food and shelter. In a community that we can call a *civilization*, there are some people who work as farmers, hunters, or fishermen, and other people who work in other jobs and buy their food from the farmers, hunters, and fishermen.

- Tell students that when we talk about studying a civilization, we want to learn many different things about how the people lived and what kinds of jobs they were able to do, and what discoveries they were able to make. Tell students that, as a class, they will be developing a list of civilization questions in several different categories that will help them as they study ancient Egypt. Work with students to develop one set of questions as a model. Remind students that even as a civilization develops, food continues to be an important need and part of the civilization, so it is important for us to find out some details about what and how the civilization fed people. Ask students to suggest some questions they might ask about a civilization's food. Sample questions are listed below:
 - *What kinds of food did people eat? How did they get their food—mostly by growing it or by hunting or gathering it?*
 - *What were their farms like? Were they big or small? What did they grow? Who worked on the farms?*
 - *How did they get their water for drinking and for watering their crops?*
 - *How did they prepare food for meals?*

4. Generate Additional Questions About Civilizations

- Tell students that they are going to work in groups to list some other civilization questions. Divide students into six groups and give each group one of the following topics: Shelter, Jobs, Laws and Government, Myths and Legends, Language and Education, and Science and Tools. Ask each group to write at least two to three questions to ask about their topic in

studying a civilization. Sample questions are listed below:

- **Shelter:** *Where was the civilization settled? Why did they choose that place? What did their buildings look like? What kinds of materials did they use to make their buildings? What different kinds of buildings did they have, and what were the purposes of those buildings?*
- **Jobs:** *What kinds of jobs could people have? What kinds of jobs needed a lot of training? What kinds of jobs paid a lot and what jobs did not?*
- **Laws and Government:** *What was the leader's title? What kinds of laws did they have? What happened to people if they broke the law? Who were some important leaders in the civilization?*
- **Myths and Legends:** *What were the important stories the people told? What were some stories they had that are like some of our stories? Did the people tell stories about gods as well as about people? What was their religion like? Who were their heroes?*
- **Language and Education:** *What language did the people speak? What did their writing look like? What words do we have that were like their words? Did everyone go to school? What did people learn in school?*
- **Science and Tools:** *What kinds of tools did people use in their jobs or in their homes? What were the tools made of? What important discoveries did the people make about the world? Are their discoveries important to our world today?*
- Have groups of students share their civilization questions. Make a chart of civilization questions to post throughout the unit, and list student suggestions on the chart. Invite students to add further questions they might have, beyond what was listed in the group work. Add questions from the list above that students did not list as relevant.
- Invite students to choose two of the questions from the class list, copy them into their *Civilizations* journals, and answer them based on their knowledge of their own civilization.



Notes to Teacher

- The process of determining civilization information questions may be difficult for some students; you may choose to generate questions in some categories as a whole class and in other categories in small groups. Easier topics for small groups might be Shelter, Jobs, and Language and Education.
- If necessary, this lesson may be split over two class periods, breaking before the activity of developing civilization questions. However, please note that the purpose of the **Shipwrecked Scenario** is only to help students recognize the importance of meeting basic needs first in a settlement and *then* developing laws and other features of a civilization. Excessive time should not be devoted to this activity.
- Keep the definition of a civilization posted throughout the unit and call students' attention to it when relevant to the discussions.
- Several of the early lessons of the unit, including this one, focus more on general ideas in the study of history and civilizations than on Egypt specifically. In these lessons, it is recommended that you spend a brief portion of the class period reading aloud an Egyptian legend or short picture book about Egypt, to help maintain focus and give students more background for the in-depth Egypt lessons. Many picture books about ancient Egypt are available in book stores and children's libraries. In addition, several popular series of children's chapter books have included characters who time-travel to ancient Egypt. Although obviously based in fantasy, these books share some details about life in ancient Egypt, and students may find them interesting to read and compare to what they learn in their nonfiction reading. See the resources list at the end of the unit for some titles.



Homework

The following assignments may be given to students for homework:

- Have students read the first chapter of *Mara, Daughter of the Nile* by Elois Jarvis McGaw OR *Adara* by Beatrice Gormley.
- While reading either text, have students write reflections in their journal that relate to the first three lessons. Questions that you provide the students to prompt reflections can include:
 - What kind of language does the author use to demonstrate where Mara/Adara lives?
 - What kind of language or writing does it seem that Mara/Adara use to communicate with the individuals in their community? Does she attend school? Is there any evidence of this?
 - What kind of tools have you seen Mara/Adara use in her daily life?
 - What do the buildings look like where Mara/Adara live?
 - What is the leader's title in Mara's/Adara's community?
 - What kind of food does Mara/Adara eat?
- Have students create a timeline of the events in Mara's/Adara's life so far.



Extensions

The following options may be given to students as extension activities:

- Encourage students to create a flipbook about the characteristics of their civilization.
- Have students create their own scenario that someone would have to solve. They need to create the situation, various problems, and questions for someone else to answer.