

**Activity 1****Part III: Document-Based Activity****Ancient World—Civilizations and Religion****Part A: Using Source Materials**

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT** Thousands of years ago the introduction of farming brought dramatic changes to peoples in many parts of the world. The development of agriculture led to the establishment of permanent settlements, which grew into towns and cities. In certain regions of the world, these towns and cities eventually blossomed into complex civilizations, like those in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. Each of these civilizations developed advanced technology to improve life for the people who lived there.

**TASK** Using information from the documents and your knowledge of world history, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay.

**DIRECTIONS** Examine the following documents and answer the questions that follow each document.

**DOCUMENT 1**

To the King my lord, thy servant Arad-Nana . . .

To reduce the general inflammation of his [the patient's] forehead I tied a bandage upon it. His face is swollen. Yesterday as formerly I opened the wound which had been received in the midst of it. As for the bandage which was over the swelling, matter was upon the bandage the size of the tip of the little finger. Thy gods, if they can restore unto him the whole flesh of his body, cause thou to invoke, and his mouth will cry; "Peace forever! May the heart of the king my lord be good!" He will live seven or eight days.

—letter from an Assyrian physician, c. 600s BC

1. What type of technology is discussed in this letter?

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2. How might this technology have affected life in Assyria?

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### DOCUMENT 2

Detail from the Egyptian Book of the Dead  
painting on papyrus, c. 1069–945 BC



Detail from the Book of the Dead of the priest Aha-Mer depicting a barque and a farming scene, Third Intermediate Period (papyrus), Egyptian, 21st Dynasty (c. 1069-945 BC / Egyptian Museum, Turin, Italy, Alinari / The Bridgeman Art Library

3. What elements of Egyptian technology are depicted in the painting above?

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4. How might those elements of technology have affected daily life in Egypt?

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**DOCUMENT 3**

**Before You Read** The following words in the document below may be new to you: *ramparts*, *bitumen*, *dikes*, *scarp*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, the father that begat me, had made but had not finished the work of [building the great ramparts of Babylon]. The moat he had dug, and the two strong walls with bitumen and burnt brick had constructed along its bank: the dikes . . . he had made and a fence of burnt brick on the other side of the Euphrates: but he had not finished the rest . . . As for me, his eldest son, the beloved of his heart, I finished these great ramparts of Babylon. Beside the scarp of its moat the two strong walls with bitumen and burnt brick I built, and with the wall which my father had constructed I joined them, and the city, for cover, I carried them round . . .

—inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, c. 604–561 BC

5. What construction projects were completed in Babylon during Nebuchadnezzar’s reign?

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6. What types of technology would have been necessary to complete these construction projects?

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**DOCUMENT 4**

After this, they [the embalmers] fill the corpse’s belly with crushed myrrh and cassia and other perfumed spices (but not with frankincense) and sew it back up. The next phase is to pack the corpse in natron [a type of salt] and leave it to mummify for seventy days—but they are not supposed to leave it for longer. Once the seventy days are over, they wash the corpse and then wrap the whole of its body in bandages made out of fine linen cloth cut into strips. The bandages have gum (which is usually used in Egypt instead of glue) smeared on their underside. Then the relatives come and collect the corpse. They make a hollow casket in the shape of a man and enclose the corpse inside it. Once the corpse has been shut away inside the casket, they store it upright against the wall in a burial chamber.

—Herodotus, *The Histories*, c. 440 BC

From *The Histories*, Book II, by Herodotus, translated by Robin Waterfield, with an introduction and notes by Carolyn Dewald. Translation copyright © 1998 by Robin Waterfield, editorial matter © 1998 by Carolyn Dewald. Reproduced by permission of **Oxford University Press**.

7. What practice does the document above describe? What types of knowledge would have likely been necessary in order to develop this practice?

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8. What role did the practice described above play in Egyptian life?

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**DOCUMENT 5**

**Before You Read** The following words in the document below may be new to you: *attain*, *dichotomy*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

There can no longer be any doubt that it was in China that the art of bronze was born. It only took the ancient Chinese a few centuries to attain the highest degree of mastery in the art, as proved by the pieces found at Anyang; this suggests that the beginnings of the Bronze Age may perhaps have coincided with those of the Shang dynasty . . . Bronze-casting brought with it on the one hand a number of highly important technical innovations such as horse-drawn chariots, writing, calendars, and new architectural forms, and, on the other, a social dichotomy that was to be of vital importance for Chinese history, by which society was divided into townsfolk (warrior noblemen and hunters) and the peasantry.

—Jacques Gernet, *Ancient China: From Beginnings to the Empire*, 1964

From “The Archaic Period” from *Ancient China: From the Beginnings to the Empire* by Jacques Gernet, translated from the French by Raymond Rudorff. Copyright © 1964 by Presses Universitaires de France, this translation copyright © 1968 by **Faber and Faber Ltd.** Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

9. How did bronze-casting affect life in ancient China?

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10. How might bronze-casting have made life easier for the ancient Chinese?

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**DOCUMENT 6**

The most wonderful aspect of the Indus civilization was the excellent town-planning. The Indus civilization was an urban civilization and Mohenjo-daro was the oldest planned city of the world. Both the cities were populous and materially prosperous. The excellent town-planning is in itself a puzzling novelty. The buildings were of baked bricks, some two-storied and some even three-storied. The houses were in one line and the roads and lanes covered the space between the houses. Each house had a yard and was encircled with walls . . . The roads were wide and straight and there was a proper drainage system. The streets were from the north to the south so that the air could work as a sort of suction pump, thereby clearing the atmosphere automatically . . .

The excellent drainage system is most attractive. The drains led from individual houses to the back streets and from the back streets by cross drains to the main roads along which many deep drains ran out of the city.

—Arun Bhattacharjee, *History of Ancient India*, 1979

From “City Planning” from *History of Ancient India* by Arun Bhattacharjee. Copyright © 1979 by Arun Bhattacharjee. Reproduced by permission of **Sterling Publishers PVT. LTD.**

11. According to the document, what advanced technologies did the people of ancient India practice?

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12. How might these technologies have influenced life in the Indus civilization?

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**DOCUMENT 7**

**Before You Read** The following words in the document below may be new to you: *sericulture*, *rearing*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

Sericulture was already highly developed as early as the 14th century BC, so that the Chinese must have begun rearing silkworms long before that time. On many bronze articles of the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th–11th century BC) are impressions of silk fabrics or fragments of spun silk. Silk-weaving technique was obviously already quite advanced at that time. A host of facts show that silk articles were becoming increasingly important in the social and economic life of the time, and that they had become media for the exchange of goods. The ensuing demand for silk fabrics led necessarily to the development of silkworm-raising in order to provide more and more raw material . . .

In the Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century–221 BC) cultivation of mulberry trees and rearing of silkworms flourished widely in both north and south China. Silk was the main material used in clothing the ruling class. Silk production from worm to fabric was women’s chief productive activity.

—Wang Zichun, from *Ancient China’s Technology and Science*, 1983

From “Sericulture” by Wang Zichun from *China Knowledge Series: Ancient China’s Technology and Science*, compiled by the Institute of the History of Natural Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences. Copyright © 1983 by Wang Zichun. Reproduced by permission of **Foreign Languages Press**.

13. According to the author, when did sericulture in China begin?

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14. For what was silk used in ancient China?

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**Activity 1****Part III: Document-Based Activity****Ancient World—Civilizations and Religion****Part B: Writing a Document-Based Essay**

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT** Thousands of years ago the introduction of farming brought dramatic changes to peoples in many parts of the world. The development of agriculture led to the establishment of permanent settlements, which grew into towns and cities. In certain regions of the world, these towns and cities eventually blossomed into complex civilizations, like those in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. Each of these civilizations developed advanced technology to improve life for the people who lived there.

**TASK** Using information from the documents and your knowledge of world history, write an essay in which you:

- Examine the accomplishments of the early river valley civilizations.
- Discuss how those accomplishments affected life in each civilization.

**DIRECTIONS** Using the information from the documents provided and your knowledge of world history, write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, a body of several paragraphs, and a conclusion. In the body of the essay, use examples from at least *five* documents. Support your response with relevant facts, examples, and details. Include additional outside information.

**GUIDELINES**

**In your essay, be sure to:**

- Address all aspects of the **Task** by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least *five* documents.
- Incorporate information from the documents in the body of the essay.
- Incorporate relevant outside information.
- Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details.
- Use a logical and clear plan of organization.
- Introduce the theme by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple statement of the **Task** or **Historical Context**.
- Conclude the essay with a summation of the theme.