

CLUES FROM THE PAST: The First Cities

HELP WANTED! JOBS IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

Meets Illinois State Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
(Subject Areas: Language Arts, Social Studies, Decision Making)

Objectives

- Discover varied occupations of ancient Mesopotamia
- Recognize how and why occupations change or remain the same over time
- Use a variety of sources for research and writing.

Materials

Copies of Student Stuff hand-out: “Help Wanted!” for each student

Sample page from “Help Wanted” section of newspaper classified ads (either a photocopy of an actual page or selection of listings chosen by the teacher)

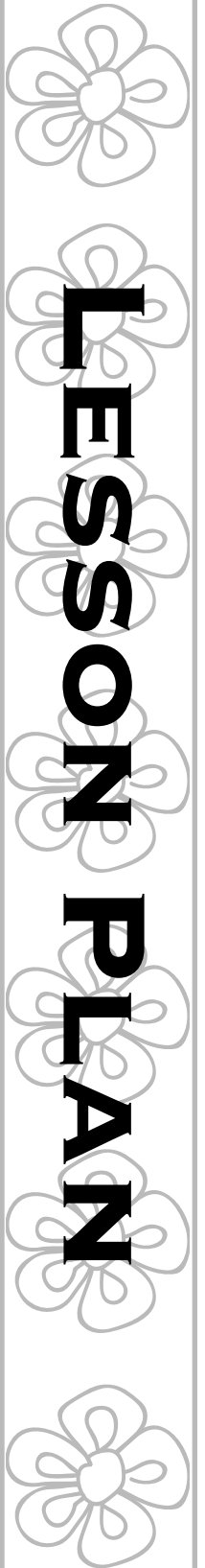
Pencils and paper

Suggested Time Needed

Two class periods

Suggested Procedure

1. Hand out copies of the “Help Wanted!” Student Stuff sheet.
2. Explain to students that Mesopotamian scribes made lists of many things in their world—e.g., the kinds of plants and animals they saw, the kinds of crops people planted, etc. Tell the class that the information on the sheet they have just received was taken from ancient clay tablets listing some of the kinds of jobs people did in Mesopotamia.
3. Have students look over the list to see if they can find and write down:
 - At least three jobs done in ancient Mesopotamia that are still being done today
 - At least one job they don’t recognize or have never heard of
4. Have class share their findings and create two chalk board lists—one list for jobs we still do, one list for jobs students have never heard of. List of jobs *we still do* will probably be the longest. Ask students why they think this is so. Answers may vary but should revolve around the fact that the *tasks* being done still need doing today—e.g., army commander, mayor, farmer.
5. Have students consider the ways the jobs we still do are *actually done* today. Would that be different from the way the jobs were done in Mesopotamia? Answers may vary, but technology will probably be discussed—e.g.: An army commander still leads troops but with different communication tools, and troops have different weapons, etc.
6. Have small groups of students select at least one of the jobs they have never heard of and use dictionaries, encyclopedias, computer resources, etc., to determine what that job was. Have students report back to the entire class their findings and whether we still do that job today.
7. *In the next class period*, hand out sample page from the “Help Wanted” section of the classified ads.
8. Discuss the various components of a “Help Wanted” ad (brief description of the job, usually making it sound attractive and worthwhile; the qualifications an applicant would need, etc.)
9. Have each student choose at least three jobs from their list of ancient Mesopotamian jobs. Ask them to imagine they are Mesopotamian bosses looking for people to fill those jobs. Using the modern ads as a model, have them write three “Help Wanted” ads, as if those ads were going to appear in an issue of the *Ancient Mesopotamia Tribune*.
10. Ask students to post their ancient-style ads on a bulletin board. Have the whole class look at the posted ads, chose one to apply for, and then write a letter of application describing why they would be the ancient Mesopotamian best suited for the job.



*The First
Cities*

HELP WANTED!

JOBS IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

Listed below are some of the jobs that people were doing in the cities of ancient Mesopotamia more than 2,000 years ago.

- Accountant
- Architect
- Army commander
- Astrologer
- Baker
- Female baker
- Barber
- Basket maker
- Boatman
- Bowman
- Brewer
- Brick maker
- Butcher
- Carpenter
- Cartwright
- Cavalryman
- Chanter
- Chariot driver
- Confectioner
- Cook
- Cup bearer
- Female cup bearer
- Diviner
- Exorcist
- Farmer
- Fisherman
- Gardener
- Goldsmith
- Governor
- Harpist
- Herald
- Female herald
- Horse trainer
- King
- Leather dealer
- Limestone peddler
- Mayor
- Merchant
- Mule stable attendant
- Musician
- Female musician
- Perfume maker
- Physician
- Plowman
- Potter
- Priest
- Prophet
- Queen
- Royal bodyguard
- Scholar
- Scribe
- Female scribe
- Shepherd
- Sheriff
- Singer
- Female singer
- Stonecarver
- Tailor
- Tanner
- Tavernkeeper
- Female tavernkeeper
- Tax collector
- Toll collector
- Veterinarian
- Vizier
- Weaver
- Female weaver



A few of the jobs are listed as being done at this time by women. No one knows if the other jobs were done by women, too. Do you think some of them might have been done by women?

- **Do you recognize any of these jobs?**
- **Are people still doing jobs like these today?**

STUDENT STUFF

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