ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Research Unit

PRINT VERSION

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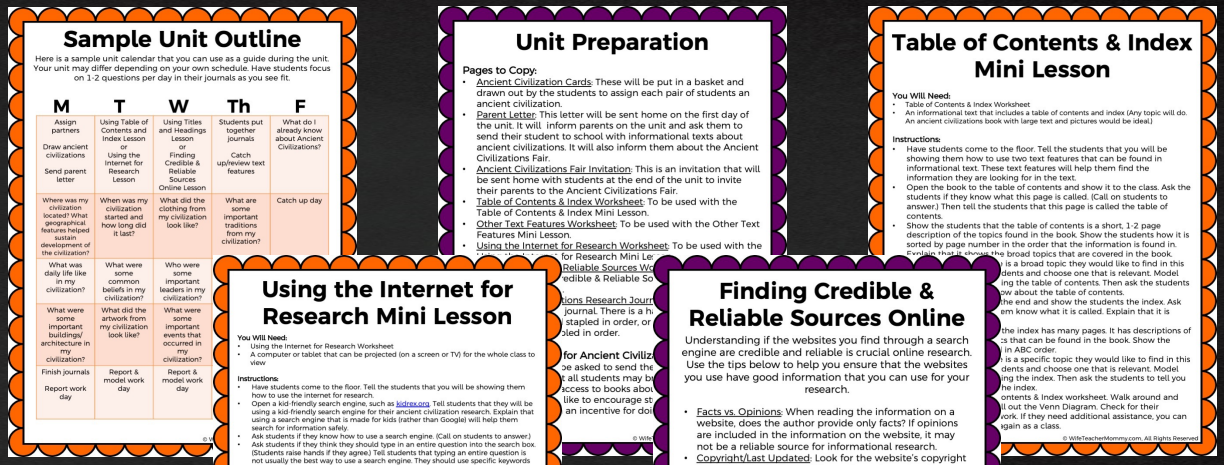
Unit Outline & Lesson Plans for Easy Planning



Sample Unit Outline

Here is a sample unit calendar that you can use as a guide during the unit. Your unit may differ depending on your own schedule. Have students focus on 1-2 questions per day in their journals as you see fit.

M	T	W	Th	F
Assign partners Draw ancient civilizations Send parent letter	Using Table of Contents and Index Lesson or Using the Internet for Research Lesson	Using Titles and Headings Lesson or Finding Credible & Reliable Sources Online Lesson	Students put together journals Catch up/review text features	What do I already know about Ancient Civilizations?
Where was my civilization located? What geographical features helped sustain development of the civilization?	When was my civilization started and how long did it last?	What did the clothing from my civilization look like?	What are some important traditions from my civilization?	Catch up day
What was daily life like in my civilization?	What were some common beliefs in my civilization?	Who were some important leaders in my civilization?		
What were some important buildings/ architecture in my civilization?	What did the artwork from my civilization look like?	What were some important events that occurred in my civilization?		
Finish journals Report work day	Report & model work day	Report & model work day		

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Unit Preparation

Pages to Copy:

- Ancient Civilization Cards: These will be put in a basket and drawn out by the students to assign each pair of students an ancient civilization.
- Parent Letter: This letter will be sent home on the first day of the unit. It will inform parents on the unit and ask them to send their student to school with informational texts about ancient civilizations. It will also inform them about the Ancient Civilizations Fair.
- Ancient Civilizations Fair Invitation: This is an invitation that will be sent home with students at the end of the unit to invite their parents to the Ancient Civilizations Fair.
- Table of Contents & Index Worksheet: To be used with the Table of Contents & Index Mini Lesson.
- Other Text Features Worksheet: To be used with the Other Text Features Mini Lesson.
- Using the Internet for Research Worksheet: To be used with the

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Table of Contents & Index Mini Lesson

You Will Need:

- Table of Contents & Index Worksheet
- An informational text that includes a table of contents and index (Any topic will do. An ancient civilizations book with large text and pictures would be ideal.)

Instructions:

- Have students come to the floor. Tell the students that you will be showing them how to use two text features that can be found in informational text. These text features will help them find the information they are looking for in the text.
- Open the book to the table of contents and show it to the class. Ask the students if they know what this page is called. (Call on students to answer.) Then tell the students that this page is called the table of contents.
- Show the students that the table of contents is a short, 1-2 page description of the topics found in the book. Show the students how it is sorted by page number in the order that the information is found in.
- Explain that the broad topics that are covered in the book.
is a broad topic they would like to find in this
dents and choose one that is relevant. Model
ing the table of contents. Then ask the students
ow about the table of contents.
the end and show the students the index. Ask
en know what it is called. Explain that it is
the index has many pages. It has descriptions of
cs that can be found in the book. Show the
in ABC order.
is a specific topic they would like to find in this
dents and choose one that is relevant. Model
ing the index. Then ask the students to tell you
he index.
contents & Index worksheet. Walk around and
ll out the Venn Diagram. Check for their
ork. If they need additional assistance, you can
gain as a class.

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Using the Internet for Research Mini Lesson

You Will Need:

- Using the Internet for Research Worksheet
- A computer or tablet that can be projected (on a screen or TV) for the whole class to view

Instructions:

- Have students come to the floor. Tell the students that you will be showing them how to use the internet for research.
- Open a kid-friendly search engine, such as kidrex.org. Tell students that they will be using a kid-friendly search engine for their ancient civilization research. Explain that using a search engine that is made for kids (rather than Google) will help them search for information safely.
- Ask students if they know how to use a search engine. (Call on students to answer.)
- Ask students if they think they should type in an entire question into the search box. (Students raise hands if they agree.) Tell students that typing an entire question is not usually the best way to use a search engine. They should use specific keywords when searching.
- Practice coming up with keywords for searching the following question:
  - Model in search: Who was Abraham Lincoln? (15,600,000 search results on KidRex)
    This is too broad of a question for internet research. Sample keywords could be: Abraham Lincoln biography (4,590,000 results), Abraham Lincoln presidency (4,500,000 results), Abraham Lincoln freed slaves (230,000 results), Abraham Lincoln birth date (916,000 results), etc.
- Tell students that when researching, they should always use more than one source to ensure the information is accurate. If they find conflicting information between sources, they should continue to research until a common fact is found and determined to be accurate. This takes patience, but is an important part of researching!
  - Model in search: China population
    The World Factbook states that China's population is 1,379,302,771 (as of July 2017). Worldometers states that China's population is 1,416,903,277 (and increasing, as this is a live counter). World Population Review states that China's population is 1,416,899,663 (as of October 31, 2018).
    In this case, students would be best off taking the live counter number and indicating that the number is as of the date found.
- Hand out the Using the Internet for Research worksheet. Walk around and assist students as answer the questions. Check for their understanding as they work. If they need additional assistance, you can review the information again as a class.

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Finding Credible & Reliable Sources Online

Understanding if the websites you find through a search engine are credible and reliable is crucial online research. Use the tips below to help you ensure that the websites you use have good information that you can use for your research.

- Facts vs. Opinions: When reading the information on a website, does the author provide only facts? If opinions are included in the information on the website, it may not be a reliable source for informational research.
- Copyright/Last Updated: Look for the website's copyright (usually at the bottom of the webpage) or when it was last updated. This will tell you how current the information is. While historical facts may not change, other information about a subject may update overtime.
- Spelling/Grammatical Errors: A professional website that is meant for informing the reader about a topic will be free of spelling and grammatical errors. If a website has a lot of errors, choose a new source.
- Community Created Content: Websites like Wikipedia are not necessarily credible sources. Anyone can edit the information on the website.
- Advertising: Does the website contain a lot of ads? Websites that contain a lot of ads on the sides of or within the content are typically commercial based websites. This means they are looking for reader to click the ads so they can make money. The information on their website may not be reliable.

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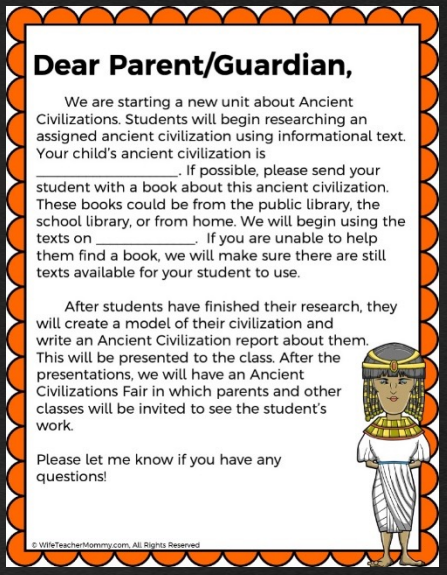
The unit sample outline gives you an idea of how you could implement the unit into your schedule. (However, feel free to implement the activities however you see fit!) We have included lesson plans to prep your students for their research projects.

Parent Letter and Invitation to Keep Parents Involved



Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are starting a new unit about Ancient Civilizations. Students will begin researching an assigned ancient civilization using informational text. Your child's ancient civilization is _____. If possible, please send your student with a book about this ancient civilization. These books could be from the public library, the school library, or from home. We will begin using the texts on _____. If you are unable to help them find a book, we will make sure there are still texts available for your student to use.

After students have finished their research, they will create a model of their civilization and write an Ancient Civilization report about them. This will be presented to the class. After the presentations, we will have an Ancient Civilizations Fair in which parents and other classes will be invited to see the student's work.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

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YOU'RE INVITED!

You are invited to our Ancient Civilizations Fair! Students will be showcasing their own models created using their research. Information is below!

Date:

Location:

Time:

Details:

We Hope to See You There!

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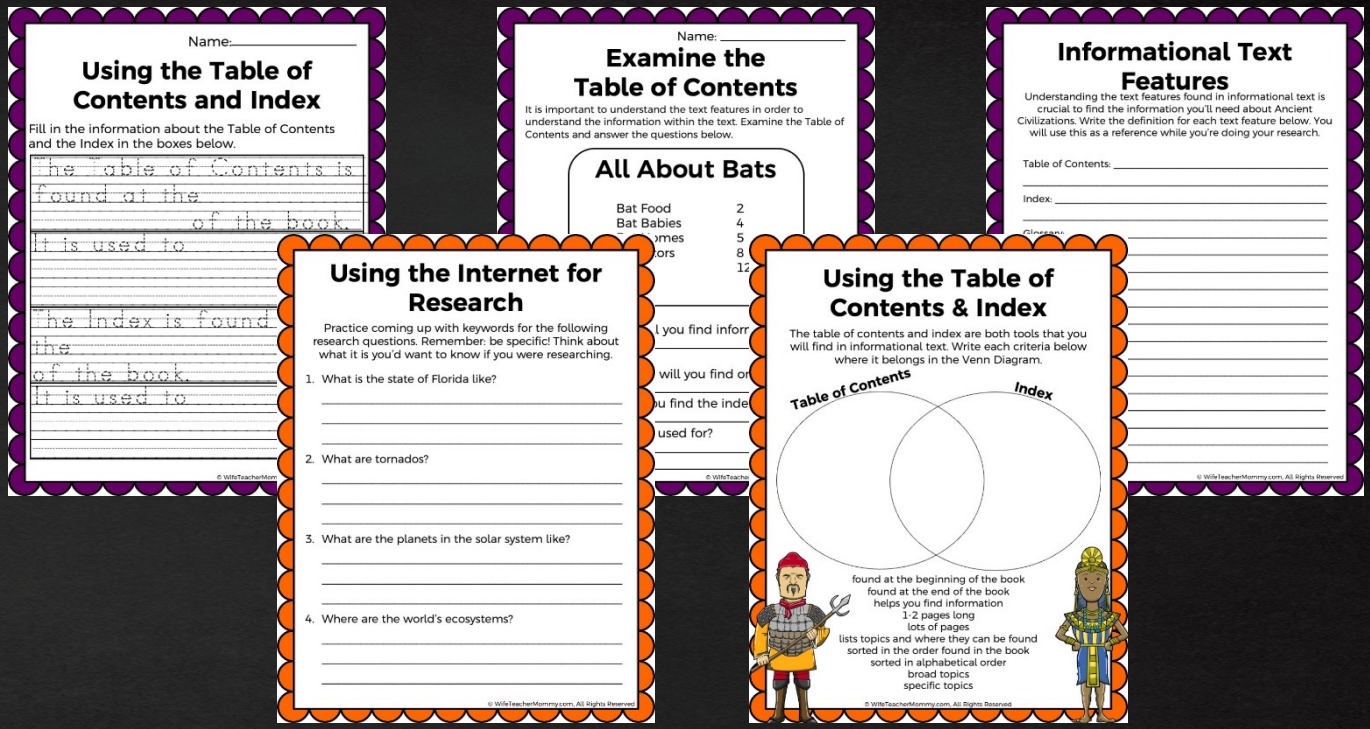
We have included a letter to parents and an Ancient Civilization Fair invitation to help keep your students' parents and guardians involved and informed. You can type the dates and your name right into the letter.

Differentiated Student Worksheets to Teach Each Element of the Research Project



Differentiated student worksheets are included for each mini lesson. We have created these worksheets to help your students of all ages learn each element of a research project in a simple easy to understand way.

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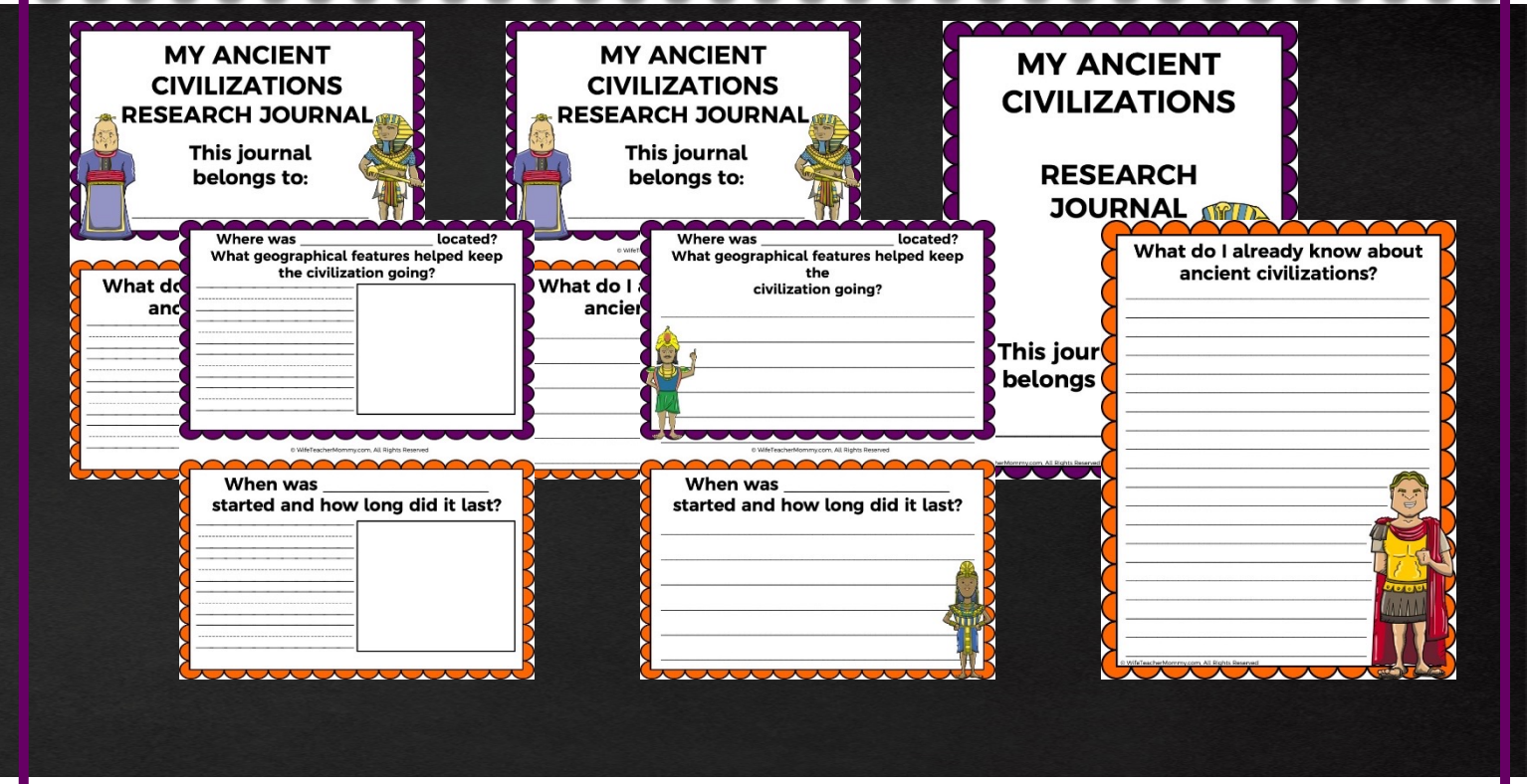
Ancient Civilization Cards to Randomly Assign a Civilization to Each Student

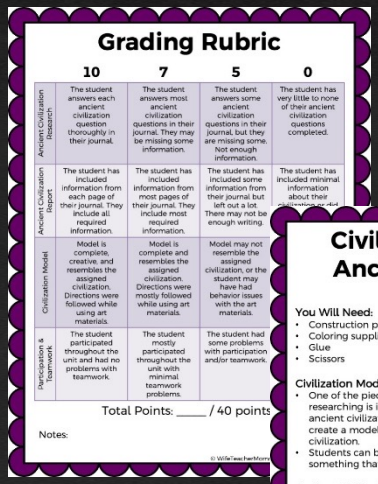
We have selected 8 ancient civilizations and have included cards spotlighting each of them for you to print, cut, and mix in a basket. Students will randomly choose which civilization they will research.

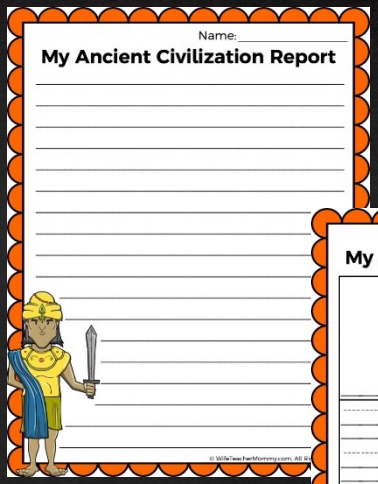
Multiple ½ Page and Full Sheet Student Research Journal Pages to Reach all Levels of Learners

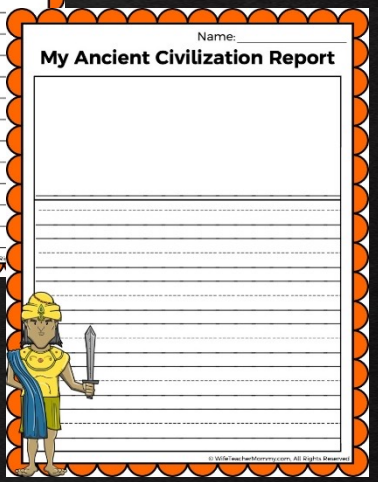


The student research journal pages include differentiated pages of research prompts for students covering ancient civilizations. We have also included blank pages to create your own prompts.

Final Project With Grading Rubric for Easy Assessment of Student Understanding







Students will complete their final project by writing a report about their assigned civilization and then create a model. We have included an easy-to-follow grading rubric to make assessments quick and easy.