

Audio
App



READING WORLD HISTORY

The Ancient Period: c. 3000 BCE – c. 500 CE

Andrea Iverson



Reading World History 1

The Ancient Period: c. 3000 BCE – c. 500 CE

Andrea Iverson

© 2025 Seed Learning, Inc.
7212 Canary Lane,
Sachse, TX, USA

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Acquisitions Editor: Anne Taylor
Content Editor: Casey Malarcher
Copy Editor: Jenna Myers
Design: Highline Studio

The authors would like to acknowledge Tracey Blash and Dave Charlton for contributing material to this series.

<http://www.seed-learning.com>

ISBN: 979-8-88668-083-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024947074

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
28 27 26 25

Photo Credits

All photos are © Shutterstock, Inc. or via Wikimedia Commons

READING
WORLD
HISTORY





Contents

Introduction 6

	UNIT 01	Ancient Civilizations Reading 1: The First Civilizations Reading 2: Ancient Writing	9
	UNIT 02	Ancient Egypt Reading 1: The Ancient Egyptian Civilization Reading 2: King Tut	17
	UNIT 03	Ancient Chinese Dynasties Reading 1: The Journey of Ancient Chinese Dynasties: Xia to Zhou Reading 2: The Mandate of Heaven	25
	UNIT 04	Minoan and Mycenaean Civilizations Reading 1: Pioneers of Ancient Europe Reading 2: The Real Trojan War	33
	UNIT 05	The Neo-Assyrian Empire Reading 1: The Rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire Reading 2: The Epic of Gilgamesh	41
	UNIT 06	The Babylonian Empire Reading 1: The Rise and Fall of the Babylonian Empire Reading 2: The Code of Hammurabi: A Set of Ancient Laws	49





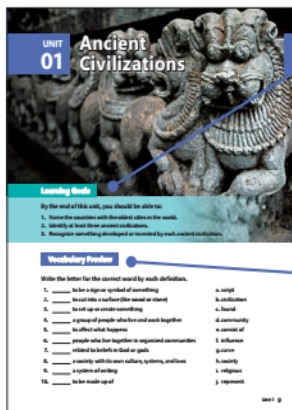
	<p>UNIT 07</p>	<p>The Persian Empire Reading 1: The Persian Empire: A Kingdom of Power and Tolerance Reading 2: The Battle of Marathon</p>	<p>57</p>
	<p>UNIT 08</p>	<p>Greek Civilization and the Macedonian Empire Reading 1: Two Great Cultures of the Ancient World Reading 2: The Diadochi Kingdoms: The Divided Empire of Alexander the Great</p>	<p>65</p>
	<p>UNIT 09</p>	<p>The Maurya and Gupta Empires Reading 1: The Maurya and Gupta Empires Reading 2: Ashoka and the Ashoka Chakra</p>	<p>73</p>
	<p>UNIT 10</p>	<p>The Qin and Han Dynasties Reading 1: Two Great Empires of Ancient China Reading 2: Qin Shi Huang: The First Emperor of China</p>	<p>81</p>
	<p>UNIT 11</p>	<p>The Roman Republic and the Roman Empire Reading 1: A Great Transition: From the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire Reading 2: Emperor Augustus</p>	<p>89</p>
	<p>UNIT 12</p>	<p>The Parthian and Sasanian Empires Reading 1: The Parthian Empire and the Sasanian Empire Reading 2: The Silk Road</p>	<p>97</p>





Introduction

Reading World History is a reading skills series that takes the readers from the birth of ancient civilizations all the way to the modern world. Each book in this four-book series covers a distinct era of world history. The series aims to improve students' reading comprehension skills and expand their knowledge of vocabulary, while exposing them to interesting information about world history. Each of the two reading passages per unit is carefully controlled for vocabulary and is followed by reading comprehension questions. A feature of each unit is the critical thinking questions that follow the second reading passage. Students are encouraged to apply their own understanding and knowledge of the world to what they have read.



Learning Goals

Each unit opens with a list of goals to direct readers in their learning. Students can brainstorm or discuss the answers based on their current knowledge and then check again after completing the unit.

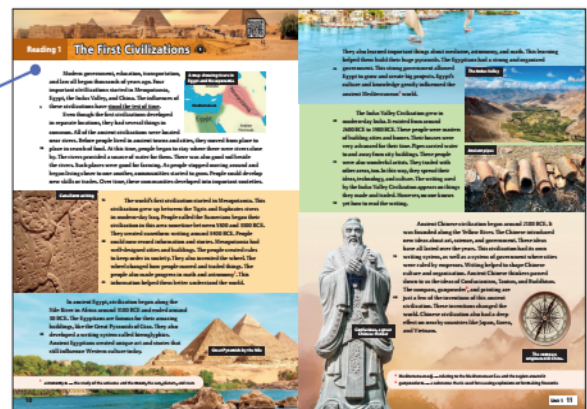
Vocabulary Preview

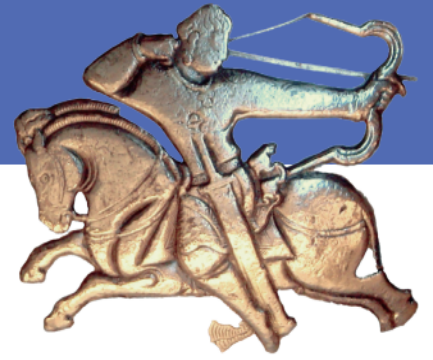
Students are exposed to words that are featured in the unit. Students can match the definitions to the words alone or with a partner, then check with the whole class.

Reading 1

A double-page spread gives an overview of the unit's historical era or important events.

Students can read individually, read along to an audio recording, or take turns reading sections with a partner.





Reading Comprehension 1

Eight multiple choice questions check students' understanding of the reading passage. Question types are labeled so students know what kind of information to look for or think about.

Five true or false questions further confirm students' comprehension of the passage.

Students can answer these individually or in small groups before checking with the whole class. For additional practice, students can create their own additional T/F statements, and then test each other.

Reading Comprehension 1

Read and discuss the first passage.

1. **Multiple Choice** Which is the main idea of paragraph 1?
 a. What changes a pictograph to a collection
 b. How ancient collections developed in another way
 c. When the first collection developed
 d. Why ancient collections were used

2. **Multiple Choice** As used in line 5, "the first of them" is closest in meaning to
 a. did not get through over time
 b. remained useful as a long period
 c. happened after being broken many times
 d. stood up during difficult times

3. **Multiple Choice** What can be inferred about how ancient people stored their writing?
 a. They were dangerous.
 b. Some were expensive.
 c. Some were valuable.
 d. Some were reusable.

4. **Multiple Choice** What was one important effect of the invention of the wheel in Mesopotamia?
 a. It made it easier to design new buildings.
 b. It helped with the development of cuneiform writing.
 c. It helped in the development of cuneiform writing.
 d. It became a symbol of Mesopotamian culture.

5. **Multiple Choice** How would people have a certain object made by the Indus Valley Civilization?
 a. A computer or a printed out the object.
 b. Storage writing on the object.
 c. The object is made of special wood.
 d. The object is used with paper.

6. **Multiple Choice** Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
 a. Lines 1-12 ("The first...")
 b. Lines 12-15 ("The first...")
 c. Lines 15-17 ("They also...")
 d. Lines 18-21 ("The...")

7. **True/False** According to the passage, in what way were cuneiforms and the writing of the Indus Valley Civilization different?
 a. Cuneiform only pictures, but the other used only symbols or marks.
 b. Cuneiform used for writing, but cuneiform was not written in general.
 c. Cuneiform was made in metal, but the other was written on clay or stone tablets.
 d. Researchers today can read one but not the other.

8. **True/False** The authors refer to the computer, penmanship, and printing from 19-21 to
 a. give examples of Chinese inventions that still have an impact on the world.
 b. include that ancient Chinese inventions were not creative in general.
 c. show how a technological ancient Chinese writing.
 d. suggest that ancient Chinese developed more new ideas than other civilizations.

9. **Circle T for True and F for False.**

1. Writing systems were used by all the ancient civilizations.	T	F
2. All of the ancient civilizations, except the Indus Valley Civilization, made their own writing systems.	T	F
3. All was important for the ancient Egyptians, the ancient Chinese, and the Indus Valley Civilization.	T	F
4. The first civilizations that we know about began in Africa.	T	F
5. There helped ancient civilizations find themselves.	T	F

Reading 2 Ancient Writing

Seven ancient civilizations shared their form of written language with other civilizations. Chinese had their own unique writing system. Cuneiform was the earliest writing system of all. Pictographs, that used small pictures to represent objects, were used in ancient Egypt. The earliest writing system was made by the Indus Valley. The Indus Valley was the first to use a writing system to keep records of their business. The Indus Valley was the first to use a writing system to keep records of their business. The Indus Valley was the first to use a writing system to keep records of their business.

Reading Comprehension 2

Read and discuss the first passage.

1. **Multiple Choice** What is the main idea of the passage?
 a. How the first writing system was made
 b. Why ancient writing systems were not longer used
 c. How ancient writing systems were developed
 d. How ancient civilizations used their writing

2. **Multiple Choice** According to the passage, why was the first writing system used?
 a. It was used for records.
 b. It was used for religious purposes.
 c. It was used for business.
 d. It was used for religious purposes.

3. **Multiple Choice** The authors suggest that hieroglyphs were used to
 a. represent religious objects.
 b. represent religious objects.
 c. represent religious objects.
 d. represent religious objects.

4. **Multiple Choice** Which was one example of the Indus Valley writing system?
 a. Clay tablets
 b. Clay tablets
 c. Clay tablets
 d. Clay tablets

5. **Multiple Choice** As used in line 21, "to be used" is closest in meaning to
 a. a challenging or a problem.
 b. a group of people.
 c. a group of people.
 d. a group of people.

Critical Thinking

Choose one and discuss it with your classmates.

1. What kind of information can we learn about ancient civilizations from their writing?
 2. What might help us learn about the Indus Valley writing?

Reading 2

A second, shorter reading passage focuses on a specific aspect of history related to the main passage. Topics in this section may include information about historical persons, wars or battles, inventions, or other events.

Students can read individually, read along to an audio recording, or take turns reading sections in small groups.

Critical Thinking

These two questions are designed to encourage students to apply their own knowledge and experiences as they think beyond the content of the unit.

Reading Comprehension 2

The second reading passage is followed by 5 multiple choice reading comprehension questions to check students' understanding.



Reading Extension

Each unit ends with an activity designed to extend or consolidate the content of the unit. Examples of activities include reading passages, summary completion, matching information, and ordering information in chronological order.

Students can answer these individually or with a partner checking with the whole class.



Reading Extension

Read more about two men who helped the world understand ancient Egyptian writing.

Pierre-François Bouchard and Jean-François Champollion

They may not have heard of either of these men, but thanks to their research, about 300 million people can read and understand hieroglyphs today. In 1799, Pierre-François Bouchard was a soldier in the French army working in Egypt. He discovered a large piece of stone covered in writing. Bouchard couldn't read his own country's language. The writing he found was written in an ancient language. Researchers, including Jean-François Champollion, set out to understand the writing. Using Champollion's knowledge, he was able to read the writing. He used his knowledge of Greek to work out how to read the Egyptian script. The stone helped researchers to read and understand hieroglyphs. This stone became known as the Rosetta Stone. Today, the Rosetta Stone is in a museum.

Read and number the sentences in the correct order.

- _____ Today people can use the Rosetta Stone in a museum.
- _____ The stone had a message about a king.
- _____ A French soldier found a large piece of stone in Egypt.
- _____ The message was written in three different languages.
- _____ A researcher used ancient Greek to work out the Egyptian writing on the stone.

16

World History Timeline

A timeline highlighting key people and events from each book puts the information in the series into context. This timeline assists students in developing their knowledge of the global historical events that are important to know.



UNIT 01

Ancient Civilizations

Learning Goals

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Name the countries with the oldest cities in the world.
2. Identify at least three ancient civilizations.
3. Recognize something developed or invented by each ancient civilization.

Vocabulary Preview

Write the letter for the correct word by each definition.



- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. _____ to be a sign or symbol of something | a. script |
| 2. _____ to cut into a surface (like wood or stone) | b. civilization |
| 3. _____ to set up or create something | c. found |
| 4. _____ a group of people who live and work together | d. community |
| 5. _____ to affect what happens | e. consist of |
| 6. _____ people who live together in organized communities | f. influence |
| 7. _____ related to beliefs in God or gods | g. carve |
| 8. _____ a society with its own culture, systems, and laws | h. society |
| 9. _____ a system of writing | i. religious |
| 10. _____ to be made up of | j. represent |



Modern government, education, transportation, and law all began thousands of years ago. Four important **civilizations** started in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and China. The influences of these civilizations have stood the test of time.

Even though the first civilizations developed in separate locations, they had several things in common. All of the ancient civilizations were located near rivers. Before people lived in ancient towns and cities, they moved from place to place in search of food. At this time, people began to stay where there were rivers close by. The rivers provided a source of water for them. There was also good soil beside the rivers. Such places were good for farming. As people stopped moving around and began living closer to one another, **communities** started to grow. People could develop new skills or trades. Over time, these communities developed into important **societies**.



Cuneiform writing



The world's first civilization started in Mesopotamia. This civilization grew up between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern-day Iraq. People called the Sumerians began their civilization in this area sometime between 5500 and 3300 BCE. They created cuneiform writing around 3400 BCE. People could now record information and stories. Mesopotamia had well-designed cities and buildings. The people created rules to keep order in society. They also invented the wheel. The wheel changed how people moved and traded things. The people also made progress in math and astronomy¹. This information helped them better understand the world.

In ancient Egypt, civilization began along the Nile River in Africa around 3100 BCE and ended around 30 BCE. The Egyptians are famous for their amazing buildings, like the Great Pyramids of Giza. They also developed a writing system called hieroglyphics. Ancient Egyptians created unique art and stories that still **influence** Western culture today.

Great Pyramids by the Nile



¹ astronomy *n.* — the study of the universe and the moon, the sun, planets, and stars



They also learned important things about medicine, astronomy, and math. This learning helped them build their huge pyramids. The Egyptians had a strong and organized government. This strong government allowed Egypt to grow and create big projects. Egypt's culture and knowledge greatly influenced the ancient Mediterranean² world.

35

40

45

50

The Indus Valley Civilization grew in modern-day India. It existed from around 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE. These people were masters of building cities and homes. Their houses were very advanced for their time. Pipes carried water to and away from city buildings. These people were also wonderful artists. They traded with other areas, too. In this way, they spread their ideas, technology, and culture. The writing used by the Indus Valley Civilization appears on things they made and traded. However, no one knows yet how to read the writing.

The Indus Valley



Ancient pipes



Confucius, a great Chinese thinker

Ancient Chinese civilization began around 2100 BCE. It was **founded** along the Yellow River. The Chinese introduced new ideas about art, science, and government. These ideas have all lasted over the years. This civilization had its own writing system, as well as a system of government where cities were ruled by emperors. Writing helped to shape Chinese culture and organization. Ancient Chinese thinkers passed down to us the ideas of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. The compass, gunpowder³, and printing are just a few of the inventions of this ancient civilization. These inventions changed the world. Chinese civilization also had a deep effect on nearby countries like Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

55

60



The compass originated in China.

² Mediterranean *adj.* — relating to the Mediterranean Sea and the region around it
³ gunpowder *n.* — a substance that is used for causing explosions or for making fireworks