

**Name:** Lindsay Smith

**River Civilization:** Ancient China – Huang Ho River Civilization

**Unit Summary and Rationale:**

This unit revolves around the ancient civilization of China. The unit consists of ten days that include a variety of learning activities and experiences. Students learn about the fundamentals of ancient China through research, writing, direct instruction, readings, and videos. Students then apply their knowledge of the ancient Chinese in a culminating collaborative project. Some of the main learning activities in this unit include a geocaching introduction where students' interest is sparked through finding artifacts, an exploration of various maps of ancient and current day China, a creation of an interactive timeline, point of view writing activities, and research. Students will be engaged in a culminating project that involves group work. Students will be grouped heterogeneously and expected to write a script for a theatre performance that extends from the prompt of "If I were a kid in ancient China". Students will apply their learning of the different aspects of the ancient Chinese civilization to write a script where students take on various roles. Students must represent different aspects of the certain dynasty they are assigned. There must be examples of the government, social structure, at least one of the geographical themes, technology, religion, and technologies.

This unit is very engaging and provides students an opportunity to interact with the five themes of geography while integrating content and learning activities. This unit also includes learning activities that meet a wide variety of multiple intelligences and learning modalities. Differentiated instruction can be implemented to meet the needs of all students. Also, the culminating expectation is that students apply their knowledge through a project-based learning experience. Students are engaged in a unique way to demonstrate their learning through the activity of a performance. Authentic activities are included that help students gain skills necessary for life such as the geocaching activity using location as well as the various research activities. Best practices of instruction are apparent throughout the unit and include activities and instruction that is challenging, integrative, collaborative, and experiential. This unit was designed using backwards design where learning outcomes and goals were identified first and then activities and learning experiences were designed to help students successfully achieve the learning goals stated in the objective. Project based learning is utilized in order to help students apply their learning in a meaningful way.

**Essential Question(s):**

- How did the ancient civilizations shape our current society today?
- How does ancient technologies affect your life today?
- How does trade affect a civilization?
- How do class systems affect a person's life?
- How do religions develop over time?

**State Standard(s)/Common Core:**

**Theme:** Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere

**Strand:** History

**Topic:** Early Civilizations

**Content Statement:** 2. Early civilizations (India, Egypt, China and Mesopotamia) with unique governments, economic systems, social structures, religions, technologies and agricultural practices and products flourished as a result of favorable geographic characteristics. The cultural practices and products of these early civilizations can be used to help understand the Eastern Hemisphere today.

**Theme:** Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere

**Strand:** Geography

**Topic:** Spatial Thinking and Skills

**Content Statement:** 3. Globes and other geographic tools can be used to gather, process and report information about people, places and environments. Cartographers decide which information to include and how it is displayed.

**Theme:** Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere

**Strand:** Geography

**Topic:** Spatial Thinking and Skills

**Content Statement:** 4. Latitude and longitude can be used to identify absolute location.

**Theme:** Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere

**Strand:** Geography

**Topic:** Human Systems

**Content Statement:** 8. Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion, including the impact of major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism).

**Theme:** Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere

**Strand:** Economics

**Topic:** Scarcity

**Content Statement:** 14. When regions and/or countries specialize, global trade occurs.

**Reading Informational Text** – 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.6.7 – Integrate information presented in different media or formats as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

**Writing** – 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Text Types and Purposes

W.6.3 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

**Writing** – 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Production and Distribution of Writing

W.6.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Speaking and Listening** – 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.6.4 - Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

**Unit goal(s)**

**Unit Goal(s)**

The main goals of this unit are:

- understand the location and place of China and the boundaries that ancient Chinese civilization ruled
- identify major events and important emperors of the different dynasties
- understand the concept of global trade and the Silk Road
- identify and explore the three major religions in ancient China
- identify technologies developed by the ancient Chinese and apply this to understand how it changed current day society
- understand the five themes of geography through learning about the ancient Chinese civilization
- integrate the information learned and present knowledge in a theatre box presentation

## Description of Teaching Methodology

### Teaching Methodology

Jigsaw: I chose to incorporate a jigsaw activity while learning about the three major religions because this method helps students to become experts on one of the religions and then actively share and teach their peers about that religion. According to Elliot Aronson, the researcher who popularized the jigsaw approach, “the jigsaw process encourages listening, engagement, and empathy by giving each member of the group an essential part to play in the academic activity”.  
(<https://www.jigsaw.org/#overview>)

Independent Research: Students are engaged in independent research for a variety of reasons. First, I believe that students need to know how to research. There are a couple small research activities in this unit, and it is to help students get more comfortable with conducting their own research using a variety of materials. It is an important skill to have that the students will increasingly use. It also helps students gain practice in expository writing skills.

Project Based Learning: One of the best practices we all agreed on was collaboration. Students must work together to apply knowledge in order to create a representation of their learning. I chose to integrate collaboration with a project-based culminating demonstration of learning. According to the readings we had for class, project based learning is highly collaborative and places an emphasis on students’ own artifact construction. In this case, students are creating a script and performance.

Hands-On Learning: Another best practice is when students are active in their creation of knowledge. Through activities such as geocaching for artifacts, map exploration, and technologies “walk”, students are experiencing knowledge at the tips of their fingertips. Hands-on learning allows students to be engaged while learning and helps to create their own understanding. This is especially beneficial in keeping students active and for kinesthetic learners.

Integrative Writing: In my opinion, writing should be taking place in every content area because it is a life skill that we use daily. The point of view writing, writing responses, and the “If I were a kid in ancient China” project, all help to integrate writing into the social studies curriculum. As a class, we identified integrative learning as a best practice, so I thought it was important to incorporate writing into the unit.

Timelines: According to our readings for class, timelines are especially useful when helping students to organize the chronology of events.

<b>Context for Teaching</b>	<p>Students are actively creating the events that are going to be displayed on the timeline. For example, after learning about the Han dynasty, students are going to pick three events they think are important about that dynasty, write an explanation, and create a picture to display on the timeline. According to Elisa Fillpot, “timelines provide a visual aid for identifying cause and effect relationships between events, and a visual prompt to activate student prior knowledge”. She also mentions that timelines “allow students to recognize how historic events and topics overlap in time”. Students will be able to compare the different events that occurred in the other dynasties and how this had an effect on the events that occurred later on in the history of ancient China. (<a href="http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/24347">http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/24347</a>)</p> <p>Assessments: In order to guide instruction and meet students’ learning needs, a variety of assessments will be used. A pre-assessment, multiple formative assessments, and a summative assessment will be used to help understand students’ learning. It is important to know if students are on track for success so formative assessments will be used to monitor their learning. Finally, a summative rubric will be used to asses students’ projects and their overall understanding of the ancient Chinese civilization.</p>
-----------------------------	--

**Context for Teaching**

<b>Context for Teaching</b>	<p>The context for this unit would be a 6<sup>th</sup> grade social studies classroom. There would be 25 – 28 students in the classroom. Students would be mixed ability. The school is a rural, predominately Christian, Caucasian school. The socioeconomic status of the students is low to middle. The teacher has a variety of resources such as a computer lab, computer cart, and multiple tablets for classroom use. The teacher could easily integrate instruction and activities with the language arts teacher to make the learning more cohesive. The teaching period consists of 60 minutes.</p>
-----------------------------	---

*Step Two: Assessment Measures*

Pre-	Formative	Summative
A KWL chart will be used to gather information on what students already know and set a purpose for	Formative assessments will be conducted through checks for understanding. In the classroom, checks for	Students’ final project will be assessed in a summative manner using a rubric.

<p>learning. Students will distinguish what they want to know as well as the teacher setting learning expectations.</p>	<p>understanding include the following: questioning, exit slips, homework, writing responses, observations, and students' interactions and discussions with others.</p>	
---	---	--

I chose a KWL chart as a pre-assessment because it will help me gain an understanding of what (if anything) students know about ancient China. It will also help me as the teacher gain an understanding of specific topics students are interested in learning when they fill out the "want to know" section. It helps me set a purpose for students' learning that can be easily communicated with them. It will help us to summarize our learning when we reach the end of the unit in the "learned" category. I chose a variety of formative assessments to help me guide my instruction. For example, if I see that students need more time understanding the social structure or economic principles of ancient China, I can always take more time to give students more examples or another activity to foster their learning and understanding. I chose to incorporate exit slips to help students apply their learning and reflect on the daily activities. Finally, I chose a rubric in order to clearly address the students' learning goals. It also helps students to see what is being assessed while creating their final project. It acts as a guide as they begin to develop their projects with their groups. It clearly states what constitutes each level of performance and understanding. See the rubric for more information and explanation.

*Incorporation of Best Practices:*

<p>Experiential</p>	<p>Students are learning by doing through a hands-on approach. Students are engaged in a variety of hands-on learning activities. For example, students use geocaching to help foster an understanding of latitude and longitude. Students physically get to feel and interact with ancient Chinese technologies that are used in present day society. Students are engaged in creating props for their final project. Students are applying their skills to create a higher level of thinking and a deeper level of understanding.</p>
<p>Collaborative</p>	<p>Students are given multiple opportunities to interact with their peers and develop social relationships within the classroom. These relationships help to promote learning. Students work in small groups during the geocaching activity, map investigation activity, religion jigsaw activity, and the final project. Students are also involved in on-going class and small group discussions. Students provide each other with feedback, especially during the</p>

	last project presentation.
Multi-Disciplinary	Multiple activities in the unit are multi-disciplinary. For example, students use writing skills as well as speaking and listening skills in their final projects. Students are also using science concepts when discussing and researching the ancient Chinese's technologies. It is important to try to make learning as integrative as possible so students see that everything is somehow related and studying one "content" is not exclusive. You use skills from all the contents every day!
Authentic	Authentic activities are student centered. The majority of the activities in the unit are student centered, allowing students to take charge of their own learning. For example, students choose the technology they want to research. Students are also in charge of gathering information about their assigned religion and teaching it to a classmate. Project-based learning is incorporated into the ending of the unit, which allows students to create authentic representation of their knowledge. Students use speaking and listening skills in this project and are applying these skills, which are skills they will apply throughout their lifetime repeatedly.
Challenging	There are many activities that are challenging throughout the unit. Students take ownership and responsibility of their learning, especially through the map investigation. They are applying their knowledge of maps in order to draw conclusions from the information presented. I also think any time that students complete research in a group or individually is challenging because students are using resources to create their own understanding and knowledge. Students are allowed to choose their own technology to research, which fosters student choice. Also, students are responsible for their culminating project ("If I were a kid in ancient China"). Students must use higher level thinking skills to determine how they want to create a representation of their "life" as an ancient citizen of China. Students must think outside of the box, which can be very challenging for students in the sixth grade.