

UNIT 2

Directions

The task below is based on documents 1 through 6. This task is designed to test your ability to work with the information provided by various types of documents. Look at each document and answer the question or questions after each document. Use your answers to the questions to help you write your essay.

Background

Since early times, people have been asking important questions to try to make sense of life and how to live. People have answered these questions in different ways. Early civilizations in Mesopotamia, including the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, and Hebrews, asked and answered these questions. Some of their answers influenced how people believe and behave today.

Task

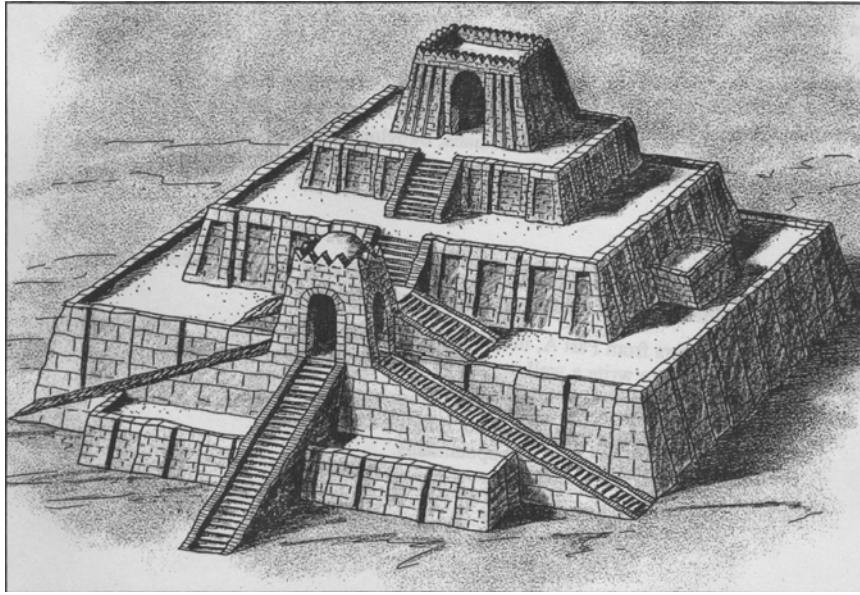
For Part A, read each document carefully and answer the question or questions after each document. Then read the directions for Part B and write your essay

For Part B, use your answers from Part A, information from the documents, and your knowledge of social studies to write a well-organized essay. In the essay you should:

Discuss the ideas about religion and morals of the ancient Mesopotamians.

DOCUMENT #1

Sumerians and Akkadians practiced polytheism, the worship of many gods. They believed that keeping the gods happy was key to their own happiness and prosperity. On the other hand, if the gods were angry, they might bring suffering and disaster. Sumerians built huge temples called ziggurats. They believed these temples linked Earth with the heavens and linked people with the gods.



1. Look at the illustration. Notice the number of stairs. What does the size of the temple tell you about the value the Sumerians placed on their gods?

2. From the reading passage, what did the Sumerians and Akkadians look to their gods for?

Document #2

The Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the oldest pieces of literature, is made up of ancient folklore, tales, and myths. It was written in Mesopotamia about a strong and powerful king named Gilgamesh, who was believed to be part god, part man. The story describes his desire, to live forever. Gilgamesh goes on a long journey to find the secret to immortality but in the end, he realizes that he must die like other humans.

When the gods created Gilgamesh they gave him a perfect body. Shamash the glorious sun endowed him with beauty, Adad the god of the storm endowed him with courage, the great gods made his beauty perfect, surpassing all others, terrifying like a great wild bull. Two thirds they made him god and one third man.

Source: The Epic of Gilgamesh, translated by N.K. Sandars

1. Looking at the passage from the Epic of Gilgamesh, name at least two gifts the gods gave Gilgamesh.

2. Despite these gifts, what does Gilgamesh learn about himself at the end of the story?

DOCUMENT #3

Hammurabi, a ruler of ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia, came up with a set of laws for his people to live by. The collection of these laws is called the Code of Hammurabi. The laws were written on a stele, or stone slab. The Babylonians believed Hammurabi received these laws from a god.

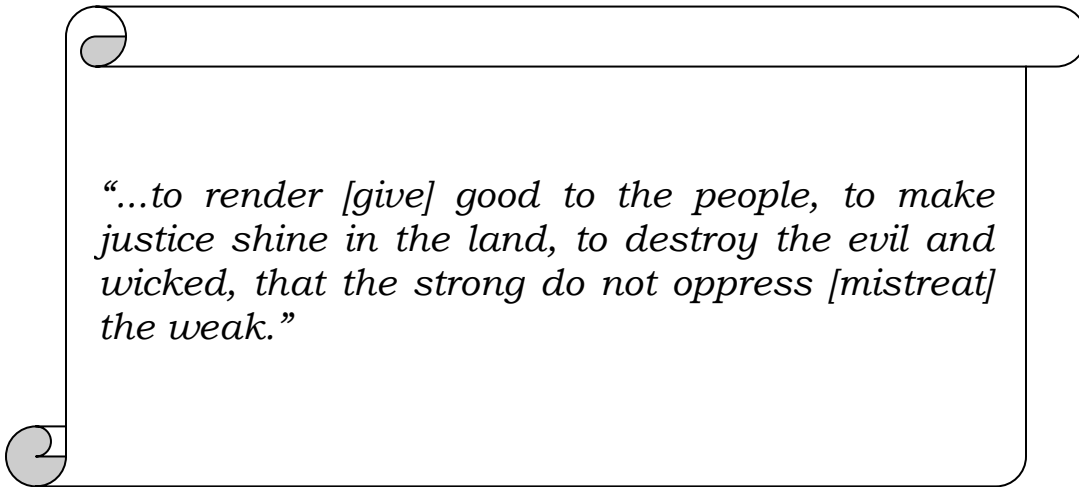


1. Based on the passage above and the picture, who do you think are the two figures pictured on the stone?

2. How might it change people's actions to believe that Hammurabi's laws came from a god rather than from Hammurabi himself?

DOCUMENT #4

In the Code of Hammurabi, the laws concerned daily life, business, medicine, property, and family. Punishment for breaking these laws was very harsh. For example, people caught stealing could be put to death. Those who did not show care and respect for the property of others had to pay a fine. Hammurabi stated his goal for the law code in this way:

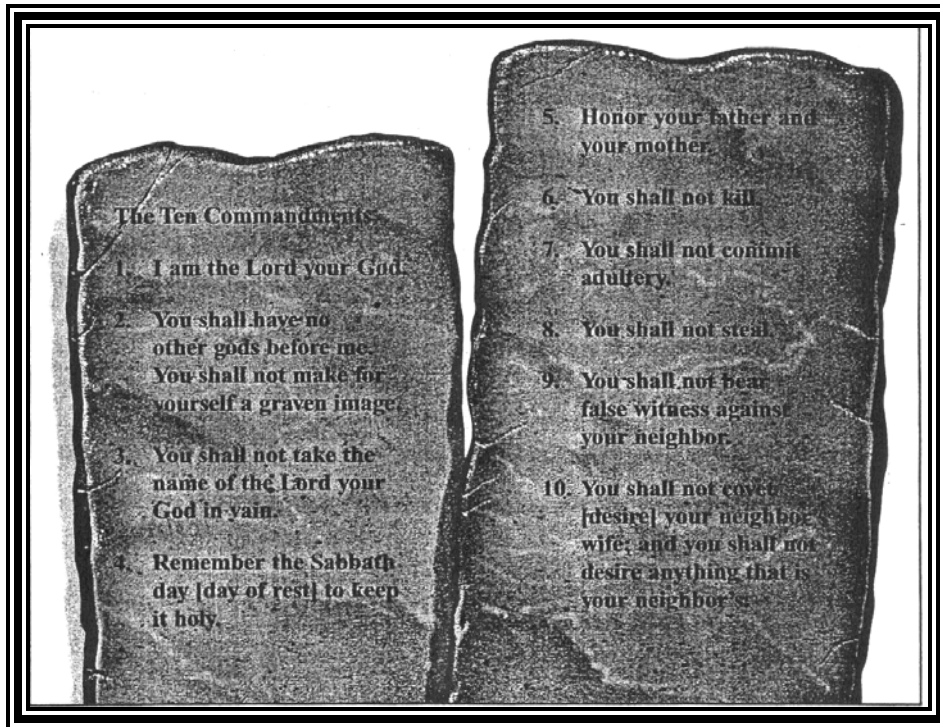


1. Name **three** things Hammurabi wanted to accomplish with this set of laws.

2. How were people punished for stealing in Hammurabi’s time?

DOCUMENT #5

The Hebrews in ancient Mesopotamia were one of the first groups to practice monotheism, the worship of only one God. The Hebrews recorded their history and laws in the Hebrew Bible, which tells the story of God meeting Moses on a mountain. God gave Moses a set of laws called the Ten Commandments. These laws gave rules for how the Hebrews were to treat both God and other men.

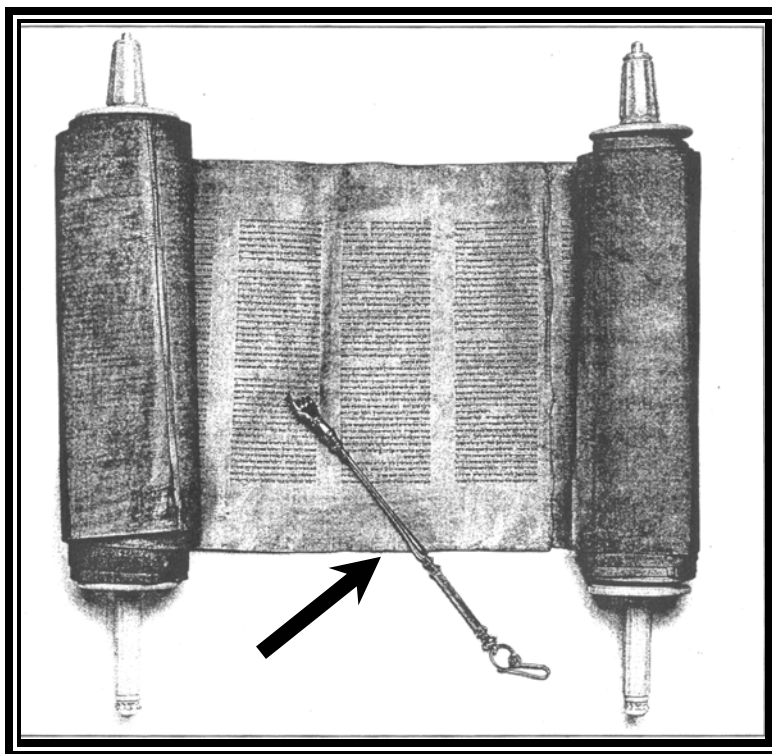


1. Which commandment tells the Hebrews to worship only one God?

2. Which commandments specifically describe how people should treat one another?

DOCUMENT #6

The first five books of the Hebrew Bible are called the Torah. These books contain laws and teachings about how the Hebrews should act toward one another and toward God. The Torah is still considered sacred today by followers of Judaism. Torah scrolls are still handwritten. The photo shows a Torah scroll with a pointer called a yad. Jewish law requires the use of a yad so that the writing on the scroll is not touched by a human hand while it is being read.



1. What does the Jewish law requiring use of a yad tell you about the value placed on the Torah by the Hebrews?

Putting It All Together

Directions

Using the documents, your answers from Part A, and your knowledge of social studies, write a well-organized essay about the following:

Discuss the ideas about religion and morals of the ancient Mesopotamians.

In your essay remember to:

- Tell how these beliefs set guidelines for living a moral life.
- Remember to include ideas from the Sumerians and Akkadians, the Babylonians, and the Hebrews.
- Include an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
- Include details, examples, or reasons to develop your ideas.
- Use information from the documents in your answer.

Helpful Hints

- Use your graphic organizer for the documents
- Use the graphic organizer for writing the essay
- Edit your work
- Use the documents to feed the essay; however do not forget outside information!!