

THE AGE OF ANTIQUITY

ELEMENTARY ACTIVITY SHEET



SUMER: INGENIOUS INNOVATORS

Be amazed by this exquisitely preserved Sumerian Lady's headdress and necklace from the British Museum in London. Contrary to modern assumptions, the Sumerians were highly accomplished in numerous areas!

SUMERIAN INVENTIONS:

The Sumerians were very creative and invented many items that we still use today.

Look at the inventions below:



WRITING ACTIVITY:



Can you imagine life today without these inventions? Let's think specifically about the wheel.

- Make a list of 5 activities that you would not be able to do without wheels.
- Write 1 sentence describing how you think we would travel without wheels.

ART AND MUSIC ACTIVITY: STRUM YOUR LYRE

Ancient Sumerians used musical instruments much like we do today. This Lyre (a harp) is from the collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Instruction:

Make a box harp and decorate it like the Sumerians. You can use a magazine storage box (or other modified box like in the video), rubber bands, and decorative craft supplies you may have around the house.

Choose your favorite animal and embellish the harp with interesting features.

The [YouTube video](#) shows the homemade harp. The harp player even tuned the rubber bands to be able to play a song!

KINETIC ART ACTIVITY: MAKING MUD BRICKS

Sumerians built many walls and structures out of mud bricks, baked in the sun or dried in a kiln. The kiln-fired bricks were harder and more enduring. Interestingly, archeologists have discovered portions of fortification walls and other buildings constructed from mud bricks!

Instruction:

To appreciate the Sumerian's brick-making process and effort, follow the instruction [HERE](#) to make your own mud bricks. The materials needed are: dirt, straw, water, a bowl, and a wooden frame mold.



ART ACTIVITY: CONE MOSAIC

Temple Decorations: Cone Mosaics of Uruk

Look at how ornately the Sumerians decorated the temple walls. They had mud and water for natural resources. The people of Uruk developed this decoration style. The craftsmen formed cones from wet clay and painted them. Then, they arranged them in engaging patterns on wet clay walls to dry in place.



As seen in the picturen above on the right, a cone pattern of repeated triangles was often used. How much more beautiful to look at than a plain wall!

A mosaic is an art form in which small pieces of material, often tiles, are pushed into a wet base to form a picture. When the base material (clay or plaster) dries, the work is a permanent whole. Dream up your own pattern for a wall or use the designs of Uruk to inspire you!

Materials:

- Newspaper or table covering
- Pencil and scrap paper for planning
- Styrofoam block, at least 2" thick and 4" wide on each side (The bigger the block, the more tees required. Check local craft stores for choices.)
- 64 wooden golf tees
- 2-5 colors of acrylic paint (your choice)
- Paintbrushes
- Water in cup

Directions:

1. Cover your table with newspaper or other covering to make clean-up easy.
2. Plan and sketch out a pattern. How many colors do you want? How many golf tees in each color will you need? (You will be sticking the tees into only one side of the Styrofoam block. They are hard to rearrange once you stick them in, so plan your design first.)
3. Paint the ends of the tees the appropriate colors and let them dry.
4. Push the tees into the block. (Be sure to leave enough room in between each of the tees so that you can stick them all the way in, but do not place them so far apart that you cannot see your pattern.)
5. If you like, you can paint the other sides and top of the Styrofoam block.
6. While you let your mosaic dry, clean up.

Adapted from Ancient Egyptians and their Neighbors: An Activity Guide, Marian Broida. Chicago Review Press, 1999, pgs. 53,56.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [**Ancient Egyptians and their Neighbors**](#) is a wonderful resource for Mesopotamian art related projects.
- [**DK Eyewitness Books: Mesopotamia: Discover the Cradle of Civilization the Birth place of Writing, Religion, and the Rule of Law**](#)
- [**Ancient Civilizations \(DK Visual Dictionaries\) Hardcover, September 15, 1994.**](#)
While here are only 4 pages about Mesopotamia and Sumer, this book is a great resource as you study the ancient civilizations of the world.
- [**Overview of Sumerian culture**](#)
- [**Overview of Sumerian culture**](#)
- [**For Kids from the British Museum's Middle East Department**](#)
- [**History of Mesopotamian featuring a map, ziggurat, and gods**](#)
- [**Invention of the wheel**](#)
- [**Coloring Pages**](#)

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.



EDUCATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery at Bob Jones University seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, students learn to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, and to become creative problem solvers. M&G's individual STEAM lessons and fully-developed unit plans are designed to help students better understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve their literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to hone their aesthetic perceptions and to enrich their analytical skills. Through this mission, M&G is privileged to inspire educators in the task of developing a community of citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.