

**Date Reviewed**

October 2020

**Course**

[Social Studies 7](#)

**Topic**

Legal Milestones in the Ancient World

**Big Idea**

Increasingly complex societies required new systems of laws and government.

**Essential Question**

What aspects of ancient legal systems can be seen in our current world?

**Learning Standards****Content**

*Students are expected to know:*

- legal systems and structures that emerged in the ancient world.

**Curricular Competencies**

*Students are expected to be able to do:*

- identify legal milestones that marked periods of change and continue to influence the modern world. (continuity and change)

**Core Competencies:**

[Communication](#) - I can name legal milestones from a variety of ancient civilizations.

[Thinking](#) - I can consider the ways that ancient laws continue to influence us today.

[Personal and Social](#) - I can explain how there are consequences for our decisions and actions.

**First People's Principles of Learning**

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

**Introduction**

One of the most popular items at the Louvre Museum in Paris is the Law Code Stele of Hammurabi. Show this 3-minute [video](#) from Khan Academy to introduce students to a famous and significant artifact from ancient Mesopotamia.

After showing the video, ask:

- What was the purpose of this artifact? Why was it made?
- Where did these laws come from? Who made these laws?
- Do you think most people in Mesopotamia could read these laws?
- Were the consequences for breaking Hammurabi's laws fair and reasonable?

### Pre-Assessment

Use a [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy to assess students' prior knowledge:

- Can civilization exist without laws?
- What might be the first laws ever written?
- What types of laws would be necessary in the ancient world?

### Interactive Learning Activities

- Explain that laws are the foundation of civilization and that the laws of ancient civilizations continue to influence us today.
- Organize students in small groups using the [Jigsaw Strategy](#).
- Assign each expert group one legal milestone to research.
- Provide students with access to [Law Museum](#) website or to printed copies of relevant sections of the website.
- Provide each student with a copy of the notetaking sheet "Legal Milestones in the Ancient World" and have students record their findings in the relevant section.
- Organize students into jigsaw groups so that each new group has at least one member who researched each legal milestone. Have students share their findings with members of their new group in order to complete the other sections of the notetaking sheet.

### Post-Assessment

[Exit Ticket](#):

- Why are laws necessary for civilization?
- What were some of the first written laws?
- What parts of ancient legal systems can be seen in our world today?

### Extension Activities

- Students may be interested to discover that Mosaic Law contained many rules about food which have become the basis for the Jewish kosher diet. Students can learn more at [My Jewish Learning](#).
- Highlight the fact that cultural influences and dietary restrictions influence the food choices that people make. Encourage students to consider how their culture and possible dietary restrictions (food allergies, gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan...) influence what they eat each day.

## Additional References

Britannica. 2013. "Code of Hammurabi." September 11,  
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Canadian Law. [n.d.] "Justinian Code."  
<http://www.canadianlawsite.ca/JustinianCode.htm>

Duhaime's Law Dictionary. 2010. "China: A Legal History: Part 2: [Code of Li kvej](#)." May 29,  
[http://www.duhaime.org/LawMuseum/LawArticle-366/China--A-Legal-History--Part-2.aspx#:~:text=In%20350%20BC%2C%20\(date%20approximate,for%20the%20subsequent%20Tang%20Code.](http://www.duhaime.org/LawMuseum/LawArticle-366/China--A-Legal-History--Part-2.aspx#:~:text=In%20350%20BC%2C%20(date%20approximate,for%20the%20subsequent%20Tang%20Code.)

Duhaime's Law Dictionary. [n.d.] "Mosaic Law."  
<http://www.duhaime.org/LegalDictionary/M/MosaicLaw.aspx>

## Materials and Resources

## Legal Milestones in the Ancient World

Legal Milestone	Date	Ancient Civilization	Key Ideas	Influence on modern world
<a href="#">Great Law of Manu</a>				
<a href="#">Code of Li kvei</a>				
<a href="#">Code of Hammurabi</a>				
<a href="#">Mosaic Law</a> (Law of Moses)				
<a href="#">Roman Law</a>				
<a href="#">Justinian Law</a> (Law of Emperor Justinian)				

## Answer Key: Legal Milestones in the Ancient World

Legal Milestone	Date	Ancient Civilization	Key Ideas	Influence on modern world
Great Law of Manu	200 BCE	India	-First written laws of Asia -Mix of religion and law -Hindu caste (class) system	-Influenced Hindu law
Code of Li kvei	350 BCE	China	-Dealt with theft, robbery, prison, arrest	-Influenced Tang Code which influenced law in countries surrounding China
Code of Hammurabi	1700 BCE	Babylon (Mesopotamia)	-Consequences for crimes included repayment and harsh punishment -Didn't matter if crime was intentional or accidental	-Influenced Ten Commandments which are found in Bible
Mosaic Law (Law of Moses)	1300 BCE	Israel	-Crimes were considered offenses against God	-Found in the first 5 chapters of the Bible. -Includes Ten Commandments.
Roman Law	500 BCE	Rome	-12 Tables -Laws must be written -Law cannot be left up to judges alone	-Became law of England and foundation for modern law -First use of lawyers
Justinian Law (Law of Emperor Justinian)	500 CE	Byzantine	-Based on Roman law -Organized laws into categories	-Civil Law -Foundation of law in Western Europe