

## Answer Key: Code of Hammurabi

**Name of Legal System:** Code of Hammurabi

### Background:

- One of earliest written legal codes
- Hammurabi was a king in Babylon (1792 to 1750 B.C., present-day Iraq)
- The code (laws) was carved into stone

### What areas of law were included?

- Commercial interactions - i.e., contracts, prices, tariffs, trade, commerce
- Administrative law
- Family law - i.e., marriage and divorce
- Criminal law - i.e., assault, theft
- Civil law - i.e., slavery, debt

### How does the system work?

- Collection of 282 rules
- Standards for commercial issues
- Fines and punishments for justice
- Accused person was considered innocent until proven guilty
- If- then phrasing (“if a man steals an ox, then he must pay back 30 times its value)
- Different standards for the three social classes of Babylonian society
  - i.e., “Penalties for malpractice followed the same scheme: a doctor who killed a rich patient would have his hands cut off, while only financial restitution was required if the victim was a slave.”

### Main Principles:

- Retribution (an eye for an eye)

### Example:

- “If a man breaks down a wall of a house in an attempt to rob it (quite literally "breaking into") and is caught, his punishment will be to become sealed up inside the wall as a patch.”

### References:

“Code of Hammurabi.” 2018. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. , Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Code-of-Hammurabi>

“Code of Hammurabi.” 2020. *History.com*. A&E Television Networks. <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/hammurabi>