

Mesopotamia and egypt comparative assignment assignment

[History](#)



Matthew B Owens World History AP-3 21 September 2011 Mesopotamia and Egypt Comparative Essay While both the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations share similar political, social and economic qualities, the details of these broad spectrums branch off in opposite directions. For example, both Mesopotamia and Egypt were ruled by kings, but in Egypt, their kings were called pharaohs and they had significantly more power than the Mesopotamian kings of the city-states.

Both civilizations also had social classes in which a person fit into, but in Mesopotamia, many more rules and restrictions were forced onto women, especially young girls, than Mesopotamian boys or Egyptian boys or girls.

Both Mesopotamia and Egypt traded with each other, but the goods they traded were completely dependent of their civilization's special needs.

Pharaohs played a powerful role in the Egyptian society, more so than the kings did in the Mesopotamian civilization.

Although both rulers had great responsibilities such as leading their armies, managing their civilizations, and ruling over the people in their jurisdiction, the Egyptian pharaohs ruled over much more land and people than the Mesopotamian kings did. This is because Mesopotamia was divided into small city-states in which one king was assigned to, but in Egypt the pharaoh ruled over the entire civilization and was expected to bring them wealth and prosperity.

The pharaohs were even thought to have godly powers and used them to communicate with other gods to protect the Egyptians from the flooding of the Nile and other disasters. Socially, Mesopotamia and Egypt are very

similar in such ways like they both have social classes. Both Mesopotamian and Egyptian social classes strongly reflect one another with the priests and kings at the top, followed by the wealthy people, then the common people, then the slaves, however in Egypt, slaves could climb up the social ladder by marrying someone in another class.

In Mesopotamia, slaves could not do this since some were born into slavery and could only hope to earn freedom by working diligently day and night. When it came to men vs. women, the women had far better rights in Egypt than they did in Mesopotamia. While the women in Egypt had most all of the privileges Egyptian men had, girls in Mesopotamia had to wait until they became adults to obtain their full rights because they were not allowed to attend the schools where upper class boys went to.

Compared to other civilizations such as the Huang He River Valley area where the women of the society had little to no rights, both the women of Egypt and Mesopotamia were treated extremely well for the time period. Mesopotamian and Egyptian religions share their similar traits such as polytheism and the belief of an afterlife as well. Even though the Egyptians saw their pharaoh as a god and the Mesopotamians saw their kings simply as representatives of the gods, they both still believe that their leaders have something to do with a god. While both civilizations believed in an afterlife, their perceptions of it are completely different.

For example, the Egyptians built massive pyramids for their pharaohs because they believed that their king would rule even longer after death than they would while they were still alive, so their pyramid should be even

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more important than their palace, yet the Mesopotamians believed in a completely different afterlife in which they would receive no help from their gods and they would be sent to the land of no return, an extremely gloomy and depressing land between the crust of the earth and the ancient sea; which is quite opposite to the Egyptian's ideas of a majestic afterlife in which the rulers rule for eternity.

Mesopotamia and Egypt both had an agriculturally based economy which was also supported by trade. Both civilizations traded with each other and they both used slaves to work in the fields, but from here, their similarities cease and their differences set in. Unlike in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, there was no annual time that the rivers near their farms would overflow and deposit nutrient rich soil to their crops. Since they had no Nile River to provide their crops water, the Mesopotamians built irrigation canals to do the all important job.

Also, Egypt was abundant with the resources required for making tools and buildings, but Mesopotamia was not, so the Mesopotamians traded their grains and cloths with other nearby settlements including the Egyptians for the stone, lumber, and metal they needed. Furthermore, the Egyptian government was very controlling of the Egyptian economy, but the Mesopotamian government was far less controlling of the Mesopotamian economy. Although the Egyptian government control may have been needed to help with the irrigation of the Nile, it might have hindered the economy overall by not giving the Egyptians the responsibility they needed. While both civilizations start with similarities, the branches and extensions of these

similarities quickly transform into the differences that make each civilization the distinctive civilization we know today. By comparing their political, social, and economic qualities like their similar rulers with different powers, their similar class system with different exceptions, and their similar trade partners with different goods, the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations become uniquely defined as their own civilization not exactly like any other.