

Ancient Hebrews

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Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about the Hebrews. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical world history class.

★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- **A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of world history**

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards—Assessment 1 addresses Common Core Reading Standard 1, Assessment 2 addresses Common Core Reading Standard 2, and so on. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- **Based on primary or secondary sources**

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone. Links to online versions of print media are available in the Bibliography. Please note that these links were valid at the time of production, but the websites may have since been discontinued.

- **Brief tasks promoting historical literacy**

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the students' mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- **Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments**

A *basic* and an *advanced* version of each assessment are provided. The *basic* assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The *advanced* assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the *basic* version.

- **Easy to use as both learning and assessment tools**

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess students' historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- **Evaluating student responses**

Brief but specific suggestions are provided, defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly, they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

Assessment 1 *Basic Level*

“I Will Give You the Rains”

★ *Key Ideas and Details*

1. (6–8) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

[This section is not available for review on sample pages]

“I Will Give You the Rains”

Directions: This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Document 1: A Primary Source

And it shall come to pass, if you shall [diligently obey] my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rains for your land in [its] due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your corn, and your wine, and your olive oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your cattle, that you may eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, [so] that your heart be not deceived, and you turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them. And then the LORD’S wrath [will] be kindled against you, and he [will] shut up the heavens, [so] that there will be no rain, and that the land [will] yield not her fruit, and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD has given you.

Source Information: This document is from Deuteronomy 11:13–17 in the Hebrew Bible. In it, God tells the Israelites what will happen if they obey his commandments and if they disobey them. This version of the passage is adapted from the King James Version of the Bible. The text is available on the website Bible Hub.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

Yet the covenant with Yahweh did not prevent the Israelites from frequently worshipping other local deities, notably Ba’al, the Canaanite god of rain. This was not surprising given the absence of a reliable source of water in this region. Unlike the Egyptians and the peoples of Hebrews, for whom the Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers overflowed annually and provided a more than adequate source of water, the peoples who lived in the Land of Canaan depended heavily on rainfall. The chronic concern for water is an underlying theme in the covenantal relationship between God and Israel, particularly in the obligatory covenant in Deuteronomy. At the heart of the litany of blessings and curses enumerated in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, an abundance of seasonal rain to assure good crops is the ultimate reward; drought and the ensuing crop failure is the ultimate punishment for violating the terms of the covenant.

Source Information: This passage is a secondary source document about the conditions facing the Hebrew people in the land of Canaan, which they believed God had granted to them. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. This passage is from *Jews and Judaism in World History* by Howard N. Lupovitch (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 7.

Assessment 7 *Advanced Level*

King Solomon's Realm

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 7. (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

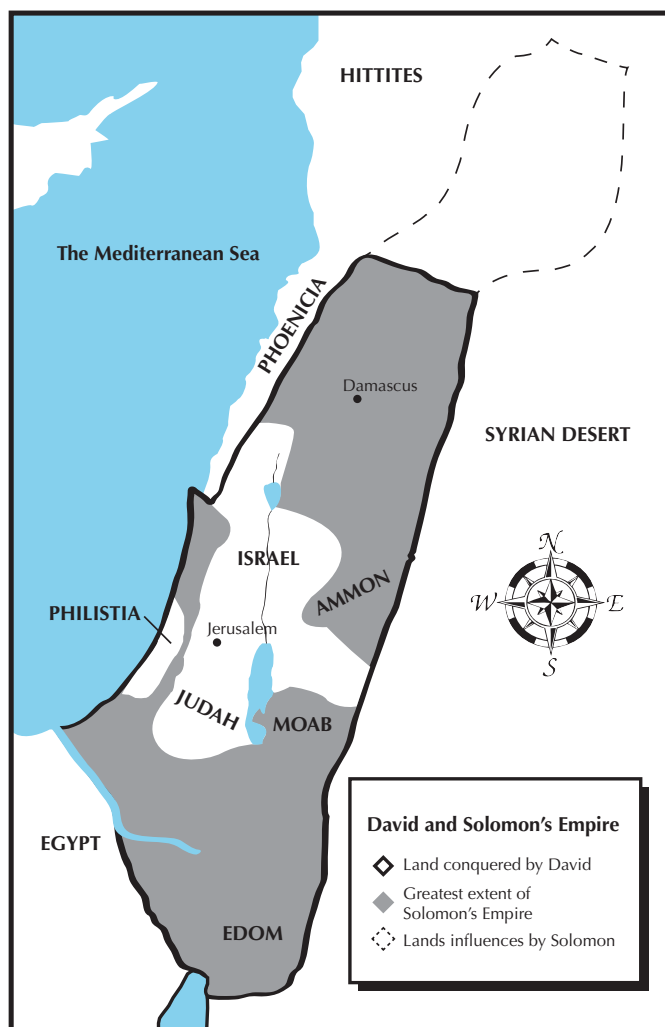
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King Solomon's Realm

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer two questions on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 7: (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Document 1: A Secondary Source



Map Source: Adapted from "The United Kingdoms of David and Solomon: 1000 BC," Bible Maps of Bible Times

Source Information: This is a map of the united monarchy under David and Solomon, according to the Hebrew Bible. The two kings are often said to have ruled from around 1000 to 931 BCE. However, archaeologists and other historians have some doubts as to the accuracy of both the map's outlines and these dates of the kings' rule.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

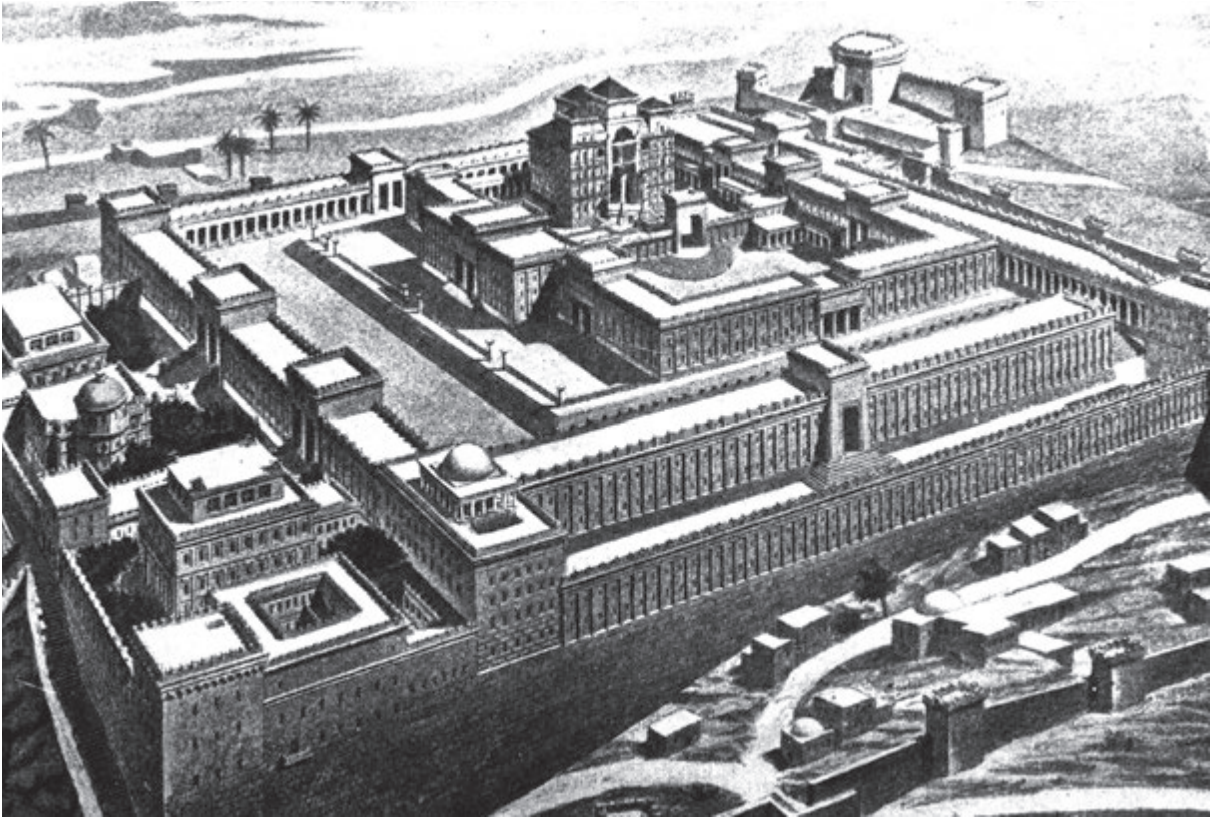


Image Credit: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Source Information: This is an idealized reconstruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem based on the description of the temple in the Bible. The reconstruction is not based on archaeological evidence.

Document 3: A Secondary Source

To ensure peace and security along his borders, [Solomon] established close ties with neighboring states and with his vassals, ties drawn closer by treaties and by taking the daughters of their kings to wife. These marriages were frowned upon in I Kings 11:1–13 [in the Bible], because of the foreign cults which they introduced into Jerusalem. . . .

Another treaty of consequence was with Egypt, sealed by Solomon's espousal of the Pharaoh's daughter, who was accorded every honor in the Israelite capital. . . . The arrangement paved the way for a period of active political and economic cooperation, a far cry from the friction that had previously marred relations between the two countries. To give the daughter of a Pharaoh to a foreign king in marriage was almost unprecedented in Egyptian history, and attests to some degree to the value which Egypt attached to its connection with Solomon.

Obviously, the relations established with other countries, too, were signs of the respect in which Solomon's kingdom was held, and of Israel's geopolitical position. Solomon was now dominating the trade routes between Egypt and the Mesopotamian Basin and Arabia itself, and deployed a multitude of merchants busying themselves in the royal commerce. Moreover, his ports on the Mediterranean and the Red Sea provided him with exclusive maritime access to the most distant lands.

Source Information: This passage is from *A History of Israel and the Holy Land*, a book published in 1969. The details are based mainly on accounts found in the Hebrew Bible. It is important to keep in mind that very little archaeological or other historical evidence exists identifying Solomon or any of the details of his rule. The Bible disapproved of Solomon's marriages. However, such "state wedlock" was common among royalty as a way to strengthen alliances among states. This passage is from "The Canaanite and Israelite Periods (3200–332 BC)" by Hanoeh Reviv, in *A History of Israel and the Holy Land*, edited by Michael Avi-Yonah (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1969), p. 76.

Assessment Questions

1. Construct a thesis statement or claim about Solomon's kingdom that could be supported by evidence from *all three* of these sources.
2. Explain how some historians might criticize or challenge your claim as based on these sources.