

DEAD SEA SCROLLS HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION LESSON

Objective:

Students will use images of the Dead Sea Scrolls to examine how historians piece together the past and the importance of artifacts to learning about human history.

Standards:

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1](#) Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.
 - [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1a](#) Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
 - [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1b](#) Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
 - [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1c](#) Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](#) Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Materials:

- Copies of activities #1-4

Time:

One class period (45-60 minutes), plus homework

Procedures:

- Divide students into groups of 3 or 4, based on your preference (ability, random, kids' choice, etc). This activity works well in any format
- Give each group a copy of activity #1. Allow approximately 10 minutes for the group to complete the questions. It may be helpful to have multiple copies of the image per group.
- Debrief the entire class about their observations. Encourage one student from each group to report back on their thoughts.
- Pass out activity #2 to each group, and again allow about 10 minutes for it to be completed. Repeat the report-out, choosing a different student to speak if possible.
- Distribute activity #3 to each group, and grant students a final 10 minutes to complete the questions. Ask a third student from each group to share their observations with the class in a final report-out session.
- For homework, have each student complete the reflection (activity #4).
- Begin the following class having students write their best suggestion for future research on the Dead Sea Scrolls on the board, on post-its that are added to a board, or on an interactive bulletin board or chat room such as Padlet.com or TodaysMeet.com

Activity #1: A Historic Treasure

Deep in a cave, explorers found the following parchment:



With your group members, ponder the following:

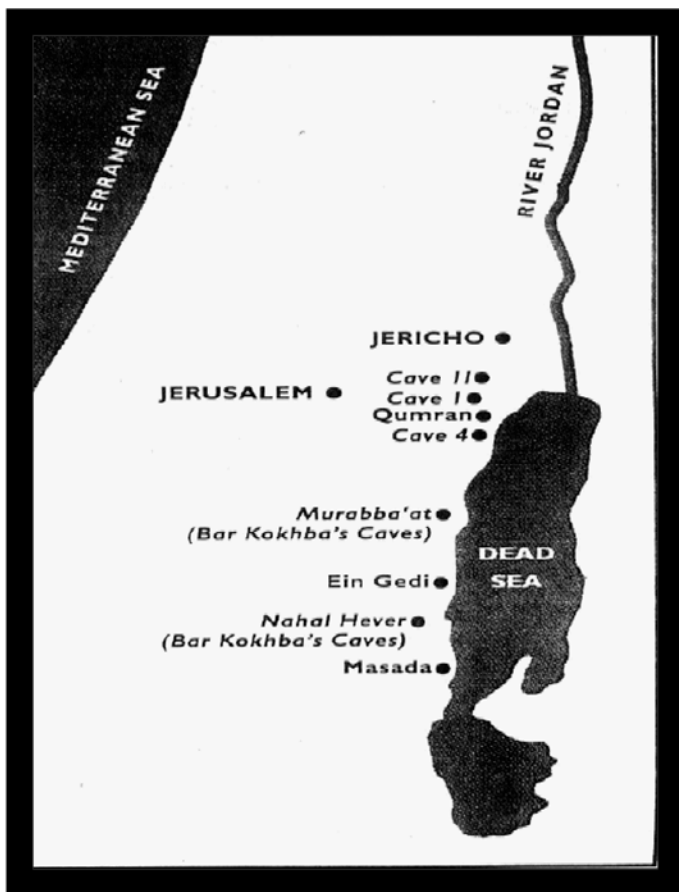
- What is it?
- What language do you think it's written in?
- How old do you think it is?
- What do we know about the people who made it?

ACTIVITY #2: A FORGOTTEN CIVILIZATION

Below you find an image of the cave where the historical parchment was found, and a map of the region.

With your group members, ponder the following:

- Does seeing the location change your answers to any of the questions from activity #1? If so, how?



- Can you predict what information might be contained on the parchment based on where it was found?
- How might this discovery change our view of history?

ACTIVITY #3: TRANSLATION AND REVELATION

The discovered parchment, written in Hebrew, was read and discovered to be a very early version of the Book of Isaiah, one of the Old Testament texts. It was dated to 125 BCE. Here is the text, translated to English, on the left along with a more common translation of the Book of Isaiah on the right.

Chapter 2	
1 The word that <i>Isaiah</i> son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.	1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
<i>The Glorified Jerusalem</i>	
2 It will come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house <i>will be</i> established on the peak of <i>mountains</i> , and will be raised up above the hills; and all the nations will stream <i>over</i> it.	2 And it shall come to pass in the end of days, that the mountain of HaShem's house shall be established as the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
3 Many peoples will come, and say: "Come, let us go up <i>to the house</i> of the God of Jacob, so that <i>they</i> may teach us his ways and so we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion instruction will go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.	3 And many peoples shall go and say: 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of HaShem, to the house of the G-d of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of HaShem from Jerusalem.
4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide disputes for many peoples; they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; <i>and</i> nation will not take up the sword against nation, nor will they learn warfare any more.	4 And He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

With your group members, ponder the following:

- Are the two translations similar? Different? How so?
- Before this parchment was discovered, the oldest copy of the Book of Isaiah was from the Codex Leningrad, from about 1000 CE. What does it tell us that this edition, 1100 years older, is so similar?
- How did the discovery of this parchment (part of a treasure trove known as the Dead Sea Scrolls) affect our view of history?

ACTIVITY #4: REFLECTION

The Dead Sea Scrolls were a remarkable discovery. They contained the oldest versions of several Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) books as well as records about the lives of the Jewish inhabitants of the region. However, they also left many unanswered questions: Why were they hidden in the caves? Who wrote them? How did they survive for nearly two millennia undiscovered?

In today's activities, you acted like a historian, slowly revealing the story of the scrolls as you learned more information. In your reflection, you will continue this task. How would you learn more about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the people who made them? (that's your claim) Consider written sources you may consult, artifacts you might examine, or people you may interview (that's your evidence). You don't need to actually find these sources, only explain how you would do so. (eg, you can say you would visit a museum with Hebrew artifacts, you don't actually have to go to the museum).

Your 250 word reflection should be thoughtful and show an understanding of how historians learn about the past. Please use proper writing conventions, include words and phrases you have learned about the study of history, type and double space your response. Your score will be based on the following:

	Approaching Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeding Standard
Claim	Student is able to identify one way to learn more about the Dead Sea Scrolls	Student is able to identify multiple ways to learn more about the Dead Sea Scrolls	Student is able to identify multiple, diverse ways to learn about the Dead Sea Scrolls
Support for Claim	Student provides vague examples to support claim	Student provides a few specific examples to support claim	Student provides multiple thorough examples to support claim
Writing Conventions	Several errors are present	No more than a couple of errors are present	No errors are apparent
Historical Vocabulary	Word choice is basic	Word choice is grade-appropriate	Word choice is advanced

Works Cited

- "English Translations of the Book of Isaiah." *Digital Dead Sea Scrolls*. Israel Museum, 2013. Web. 04 Nov. 2013. <http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/chapters_pg>.
- "The Great Isaiah Scroll." *Digital Dead Sea Scrolls*. The Israel Museum, 2013. Web. 04 Nov. 2013. <<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah>>.
- "Map of the Dead Sea Region." Map. *Dead Sea Scrolls*. Library of Congress, 27 July 2010. Web. 4 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/scrolls/images/dsmap.gif>>.
- Schick, Alexander. *Cave 11*. Digital image. *Discovery Sites*. The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library, n.d. Web. 4 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/img/content/cave11.jpg>>.