

Classical Civilizations Comparative Activity

One of the major skills of this course is finding similarities and differences among political entities, people, and places. So let's discuss how the Classical Age had important similarities and differences among the various Empires and Civilizations that made that era so foundational.

One aspect of comparison that students can struggle with is making sure that what they are comparing is actually the same. You want to compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges, not apples to oranges. So if you're discussing Rome's legal system, don't compare that to Greece's voting process, as those two things are of the same generic topic (government) but not specifically linked. So, the plan for today is to work on a few of these together.

1. Choose two civilizations (list to the left).
2. Choose a specific item to compare (check out the list to the right).
3. Use the sentence-stems below to write a comparative sentence or two that would effectively compare that aspect of the civilizations.
4. Share with a neighbor or with the class when I ask for examples.
5. Repeat.

Check out the example below to help you out!

Possible Civilizations/Political Entities	Possible Items of Comparison
Persia and/or Parthia - Middle East	Social Hierarchy
Qin and/or Han - East Asia	Political Structure/Leadership/Law Code
Mauryan and/or Gupta - South Asia	Economy/Trade Relationships
Greece and/or Rome - Mediterranean	Religious Beliefs
Nubia (continued to prosper) along the Upper Nile	Architecture/Technology/Innovation
Mayans - Mesoamerica	Human Rights
Moche - South America	Rise or Fall of the Empire/Civilization

Here are a few sentence frames that can help you compare the aspects of the civilizations we've learned about. Do you have to use this format? Nope. Make it flow for you. This exercise is supposed to get you thinking about how to compare civilizations effectively!

- Civilization's Specific Thing is similar to Other Civilization's Same Specific Thing because Reason for Similarity.
- Civilization's Specific Thing differs from Other Civilization's Same Specific Thing because Reason for Difference.
- While Civilization's Specific Thing is similar to Other Civilization's Same Specific Thing because Reason for Similarity, they are vastly different because Reason for Difference.

Examples using older civilizations:

Egypt's religion is similar to Nubia's religion because both were polytheistic. Nubia even adopted some of the Egyptian gods and goddesses.

Egypt's religion is different from Nubia's religion because even though they both had some of the same gods and goddesses, there were plenty of gods and goddesses that were indigenous to Nubia and had nothing to do with Egypt.