

The History of the Phoenicians

The History of the Phoenicians may be covered as a six week history topic (much like studying the ancient Greeks/Aztecs etc) It covers many of the objectives for world history study though this needs to be done in addition to another topic.

Could run with Ancient Greeks (link to battle of Salamis?) and could be covered if required in a few sessions as an introduction only.

In this section you will find a scheme of work with learning objectives and ideas on how to present to the children, accompanying worksheets or activity ideas and photo packs to include maps of the region, time lines and artefacts. (Ideas may be downloaded online rather than in the packs themselves or on a CD)

Also included are ideas on expanding the topic through other areas of the curriculum.

Please use what you find useful from this section and please send us any ideas you have had on engaging the children with this topic so that we can upload them and expand the topic.

National curriculum - 13 a world study of past life

Phoenician learning objectives

You are going to learn...

- When the Phoenician civilisation existed and where they lived at that time.
- To identify the main features of Phoenician society and culture, and see how it compares and impacts on our own modern day styles of living.
- How the Phoenicians expanded and grew.
- How ancient artefacts can provide evidence and help us discover more about the past.
- Who the Phoenician people worshipped as their Gods, and what kind of religious festivals were celebrated.
- How important their ship building and sea travel was to adventure and trade.

Session 1 -

Learning objective = To identify when the Phoenician civilisation existed and where they lived at that time.

- Originally Canaanites, given name Phoenicians probably by the Greeks. Phoenix=name of purple shell dye that was exported by them and what they were famous for.
- Locate where Phoenicia was on a map- Saw themselves as separate city states, each ruled itself. Main cities: Tyre, Byblos, Sidon and Arwad. During period seems took turns in who was most important. What does the map tell us about the people? What jobs might they be very good at? Why did they thrive near the coast? Advantages: defence and trade. Disadvantages: difficulties of building near water, lack of space to farm.
- Phoenicians expanded by building up colonies
- Look at the chronology of events and understand the concept of BC and AD, place on time line in relation to Ancient Greeks, battle of Salamis (which Phoenicians helped in), fall of Carthage?

Key Questions - Where was the Phoenician civilisation located?

How long ago was the Phoenician civilisation?

What were the main cities of the Phoenicians?

Independent Activity: To mark the Levant and the main cities of the Phoenicians onto a map.

To work in small groups arranging timeline by date. Can point out how long the Phoenicians lasted. Children may be given own one to stick in books or for homework.

Alternatively, give children a street scene picture from Phoenician times. Can the children spot the odd objects in the scene and cross them out. (sheet available)

Session 2 -

Learning objective = To recognise the main features of Phoenician society, and compare to the modern day styles of living.

- Not much is known about how the society ran itself. In the homelands a king ruled with a council of elders. These were the heads of the wealthy and powerful families (oligarchy) says Josephus (Jewish historian living in Rome after time of Phoenicians). Each city ruled itself and was independent. (The colonies were different and did not have a king. Roman sources talk about a senate, it was not a democracy but ruled by the heads of wealthy families)
- Because of their location so close to the sea, the Phoenicians were excellent sailors and good at trade. They were the commercial link between the Mediterranean world and Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). They travelled far and wide and were great craftsmen, making beautiful objects to sell and exchange. They were especially good at metalwork, jewellery, ivory carving, glass and dying cloth.
- Classical sources and excavations tell us that Phoenician society was wealthy. They seemed to have a very good style of living with houses built solidly. Some had mosaic floors and plastered walls. The structure of the home was to have several rooms based around a courtyard. It seems that hygiene was very important to the Phoenicians as they had washrooms in their houses. It is thought the Phoenicians may have lived in extended family groups, so three generations could be living under the same roof at any one time.
- Style of living probably similar to Mediterranean coastal place of today
- They seemed to have worn colourful wrap around lengths of material much like a sari. These were decorated with tassles. Both men and women wore them though men also seemed to have a shorter version which came to the knee and was a bit like a kilt.
- They enjoyed playing games, two of which are the game of twenty squares (known to the Egyptians as Twenty Game) and Mancala (although not necessarily by that name).

Key Questions - What was it like to live as a Phoenician? Jobs available? Sea farers

Independent Activity: To write a diary extract from a Phoenicians point of view.

Dress up, in sari material and act out bargaining and haggling for objects.

Design a mosaic for their floor. What symbol or picture would you want in your entrance way? (Could also be done in session 5 (religion))

Draw and label a house floor plan for a Phoenician to live in. Remembering to include a kitchen, bedrooms and a washroom.

Learn and play the Royal Game of Ur in pairs (game available to print off)

Session 3 -

Learning objective = To look at how the Phoenicians expanded and grew, colonies.

- To look more closely at some of the colonies the Phoenicians founded and discover where they were founded.
- Name some of the main colonies founded by the Phoenicians and locate them on a map. The Phoenicians began creating colonies all across the Mediterranean at around 1100 B.C. These colonies spread very far, to the Atlantic coasts of Europe and Africa. The first colonies were, **Lixis** on the Atlantic side of Morocco, **Cadiz** on the Atlantic side of Spain, , **Utica** on the coast of North Africa, and **Kition** on the island of Cyprus. More followed on Sicily and Sardinia.
- What were the advantages to founding a colony in a particular place e.g. good trade routes, better connection to other people, they had valuable resources the Phoenicians wanted. (Particularly metals, tin and copper)
- Discuss why the Phoenicians chose to found colonies rather than invade and take over land. Colonies were founded in peace. The Phoenicians did not have a big army to fight. The Phoenicians were the McDonalds of the ancient world (J Tubb).
- Focus on one - Carthage - story of Carthage. According to tradition Carthage was founded by Dido during the 10 century B.C. (814 B.C.) She was the daughter of the king of Tyre and had to flee because of her brother who pushed her out. She sailed first to Cyprus where she picked up priests/priestesses and then sailed to North Africa. When she got there she bargained for a piece of land with the native inhabitants. She asked for a piece of land that could be covered by an ox hide and when this was agreed had it cut up into very thin strips so that she could encircle a much larger piece of land, this is now so called Byrsa hill in Tunis. (Byrsa means ox hide in Berber)
- It was a very important colony for the Phoenicians and quickly grew. It expanded and took on power of its own.
- The Phoenicians lost most of their colonies to the Romans between 264-146BC during the Punic Wars. The Roman's built up the empire with the help of these colonies which were now called her foreign provinces.
- How Carthage fell (see Donald Harden)

Key Questions - why was founding colonies beneficial to the Phoenicians?

Where were some of the colonies founded?

Was there another choice the Carthaginians could have made instead of war?

Independent Activity: To mark the Phoenicians major colonies on a map.

Retell the story of Carthage, its founding/ its fall. Write an account (creative writing)/ playscript to act out. Illustrate founding and fall of Carthage through a comic strip.

Depict story of Carthage on pottery, like Greeks depicted stories ask children what visual clues would be needed to tell the audience what story you are depicting and what scene you want to depict.

Session 4 -

Learning objective = Understand how ancient artefacts can provide evidence and help us discover more about the past.

- Look at Phoenician remains and discuss.
- Use books and the internet to find different artefacts and say what these tell us about the Phoenicians. (ICT suite) What survives, where was it found? What is it for?
- What influences can be seen in their art? Egypt/ Mesopotamia
- Think about who the artefacts were for. The Phoenicians made objects that would sell and adapted their style of art to their buyers.
- Why don't we see many Phoenicians in their art? They made art for other people so did not tend to represent themselves as these would not see as well.
- Give children a small section of a piece of Phoenician art. What can they see on it? What was it made from? Can they complete the rest of the piece for themselves. (link to art)
- Give children piece of furniture. Can they decorate it using Phoenician ivories?
- Jewellery - looking at the styles and designing their own.

Independent Activity: Either: Finish the vase with your own design

Or: Recreate the object from the jigsaw pieces (resources available)

Or: Create your own design/piece of Phoenician art, describing the material

needed and what this piece is for. (proforma available)

Or: From a choice of objects select only two to go on display at a museum.

Children say what the objects are and why they have chosen them. (worksheet available)

Or: Select and write about an object in no more than twenty words for a museum

label. (worksheet available)

Session 5 -

Learning objective = Learn about some of the Phoenician Gods and see them represented in art. To discuss the possibility of human sacrifice. To explore Phoenician myths and legends

- Read about Phoenician gods and religious practices. The supreme god was El. The principal active gods were Baal, Anath and Astarte. Baal was the warrior god, Astarte goddess of fertility and Anath was the consort of El and looked after the underworld. Below them were many gods and goddesses responsible for different aspects of daily life e.g. weather/storm/ agriculture etc.
- They worshipped them in temples and probably high places (on hills). Temple at Amrit, probably filled with water and dedicated to a water god.
- Classical writers said the Phoenicians sacrificed children to Baal, Hammon and Tanit, this seemed to be supported by the finding of the so called Tophets, meaning children's cemeteries at places like Carthage and Sardinia. These cemeteries have the remains of children in pottery urns buried in shallow pits each with a limestone stela above. The stelae often have dedications to the gods saying 'X is being given to Baal/Hammon/Tanit' People interpreted this as given to in sacrifice. In reality there is no tradition of infant or human sacrifice in Canaanite or Phoenician culture and the term 'given to' means 'given into the care of'. Why do you think these

stories were made up about the Phoenicians? (propaganda)

- Explore Phoenician art, music (percussion) and dance - links to religious celebrations. See pictures of people playing drums, pipes etc and paper article on it by J. Tubb
- Read some of the Phoenician myths e.g. Adonis, Isis and Osiris, Elissa (Dido), Europa. They were recorded by Greek and Roman authors so it is difficult to say exactly how much of the myth is Phoenician and was passed down orally and recorded but which no longer exist.

Key Questions - What were the names of the principal Phoenician Gods? What did they represent?
Why is there confusion as to whether the Phoenicians performed human sacrifice?

Independent Activity: To draw and colour the main gods with their attributes. To act out the myths and legends of the Phoenicians in drama. To incorporate music into the performance based on looking at the types of instruments represented in Phoenician art. To create a sin mask to ward off bad luck.

Session 6 -

Learning objective = Understand how important trade and commerce and the art of sailing was to Phoenician society

- Look at the ships built and discuss where the ships may have sailed to. Look at a map and trade routes taken.
- The ships were special in their construction. They were built without ribs.
- Look at how the Phoenicians used their ships for trade, exploration, founding colonies, defence and aiding others in battle
- Look at what the Phoenicians left to us as a legacy; alphabet, navigation
- Look at some of the things that the Phoenicians may have brought back from distant lands, focus on Africa - food tasting session, mango, guava etc
- Herodotus records that it took the Phoenicians 3 years to sail around Africa. He described the position of the sun as they sailed and describes how they stopped to plant and harvest in the lands they sailed to.

Key Questions - How did the Phoenicians build their ships?
Where did the Phoenicians sail to?
Why did their trip around Africa take so long?
What foods may they have discovered there?

Independent Activity: To draw and label a diagram of a Phoenician ship. To design/ make their own ships. To taste and describe the foods from Africa. To revise our knowledge of the Phoenicians through 'Pub Quiz' game (children working in small groups).
To decode Phoenician messages reading their alphabet. To write our own Phoenician messages.