

# \*\* CLASS SET \*\* Law and Life in Two Ancient Societies

## Hammurabi's Code of Laws:

This collection of 282 written codes from ancient Mesopotamia was one of the earliest known legal systems that regulated people's relationships with one another. These laws were engraved on stone pillars in cuneiform writing and publically displayed for all to see and obey as the punishments for violating the Code of Hammurabi were severe.

## The Ten Commandments:

In the Hebrew civilization, the Ten Commandments are a list of religious and moral imperatives which, according to Biblical tradition, were written by God and given to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of two stone tablets. They feature prominently in Judaism and Christianity. Because the origins of Christianity are rooted in Judaism, the Ten Commandments are often considered by many Americans to be the foundation of U.S. law and sometimes placed in judicial buildings and other legal structures.

## Assignment:

Read both the ten examples from Hammurabi's Code and the Ten Commandments below and then answer the questions that follow.

Hammurabi's Code of Laws	The Ten Commandments
3. If a man has borne false witness in a trial, or has not established the statement that he has made, that man shall be put to death.	1. Do not worship any other gods.
6. If a man has stolen goods from a temple, or house, he shall be put to death; and he that has received stolen property shall be put to death...	2. Do not make or worship idols.
14. If a man has stolen a child, he shall be put to death...	3. Do not misuse the name of God.
22. If a man has committed highway robbery and has been caught, that man shall be put to death.	4. Keep the Sabbath holy.
53. If a man has neglected to strengthen his dike (dam) and a breach has broken his dike, and the waters have flooded a field, the man whose dike the breach has broken out shall restore the grain he caused to be lost	5. Honor thy mother and father.
128. If a man has taken a wife and has not executed a marriage-contract, that woman is not is wife.	6. Do not kill.
143. If a woman has not been discreet, has gone out, ruined her house, belittled her husband, she shall be drowned...	7. Do not commit adultery. (Do not engage in sexual relations unless you are married.)
195. If a son has struck his father, his hand shall be cut off.	8. Do not steal.
196. If a man has knocked out the eye of a patrician, his eye shall be knocked out.	9. Do not bear false witness.
229. If a builder has built a house for a man, and has not made his work sound, and the house has fallen, and caused the death of the owner, that builder shall be put to death.	10. Do not covet.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pd: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comparing & Contrasting Hammurabi's Code & the 10 Commandments

**Directions:** Answer the following questions using complete sentences:

1. Comparing Hammurabi's Legal Code to U.S. laws today:
  - a) How is one of Hammurabi's codes similar to a law in the U.S. today?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) How are the codes different from U.S. law today?
  
2. Which of the Ten Commandments are laws currently enforced in our country today?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What are two differences between Hammurabi's Code and the Ten Commandments?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Agree or Disagree with this statement: The Ten Commandments are a code of behavior more than a system of laws. Support your claim with evidence from the texts.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What punishments are included in the Ten Commandments for violators? Explain why this might be.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. **Critical Thinking:** The Ten Commandments are widely thought of as one of the foundations upon which the U.S. legal system is based. Because of this, depictions of the Ten Commandments sometimes appear in legal buildings in this country. What support is there for using the Ten Commandments as a symbol in a legal setting? What are the potential problems?

