Adventure Description:

In this adventure, you will think like a linguist and use the Code of Hammurabi to make new laws for a society. You will also discuss how studying a society's language helps people understand them better.

Activity

Teacher notes:

- This activity is long and can be completed across multiple days.

Step 1: Background Information (5-10 minutes)

- Show Video: Code of Hammurabi.
- As a class, discuss how linguists analyze language to learn about ancient and modern-day societies. There are many parts of language, including body language, verbal language, and written language. As a class, brainstorm what linguists can learn about societies by looking at language. For example, language can provide us with clues about how people form relationships with one another, how societies develop legal systems, how people's viewpoints have changed over time, what resources people have in an area.
- Next, discuss how some linguists study language from ancient civilizations that are now extinct. For example, some linguists study Akkadian. Akkadian was spoken by people in Mesopotamia who lived 4,000 years ago. Linguists have also analyzed the written language from ancient Mesopotamia. By looking at written artifacts, like the laws that were written down in the Code of Hammurabi, linguists have learned about how the society functioned.

Step 2: Activity Set Up (15 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will play a game where they will create laws for a new society. Provide students with Handout: Steps to Play the Game.
- As a class, discuss the overall goal of the game. Explain that students will create a set of laws for a new society. Each society will start with 1000 people in it. After groups create a set of laws, you (the teacher) will read through a list of problems that the societies will face. For each problem, students have to decide if they have a law that addresses the problem. If the groups have laws that address the problem, their population will stay the same or will grow. If groups don't have a law that addresses a problem, people in their society will die. The goal of the game is to have the largest population.
- Next, provide students with Handout: Understanding the Code of Hammurabi. Explain to students that this document has examples of laws. The document also has: categories that the laws are divided into, hashtags to provide students with a quick idea of what the meaning of the laws were, and a modern-day interpretation of the laws. It is important for students to know that the categories, hashtags, and interpretations were written by a group of professionals. Other professionals might have different interpretations of the laws or might have grouped the laws together differently. It is important for students to understand that professionals interpret historical documents differently.
- As a class, read through the categories of laws. Briefly discuss each law and its meaning. If time permits, discuss other interpretations of the law. Next, read through the limitations of the laws. Again, these limitations were created by one group of professionals. There are other interpretations of what limitations were.

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.

Step 2: Writing Laws (15+ minutes)

- Place students in groups 2-4 students. After they review the rules of the game, have students complete Step 3, writing their own set of laws. They will only be able to write 10 laws. They can decide whether they want to use the Code of Hammurabi as inspiration for their laws or if they want to write completely new laws.
- As students are working, ask the following:
    - What would happen if there weren't laws in a society? Do you think a society can survive without laws?
    - Will your laws include harsh punishments, like ones that are in the Code of Hammurabi?

Step 3: Analyzing Laws (10+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now complete Step 4, deciding if their societies have laws that address certain problems.
- See Handout: Teacher Prompts.
- Read prompts aloud, one at a time. After you read each prompt, have groups spend a few minutes discussing whether they have a law that addresses this problem. Then, have them change the population on their chart.
- After you read all prompts, have groups come to the board and write what the population of their society was at the end of the game. The group with the largest population wins the game.

Step 4: Class Discussion (5 minutes)

- Have a concluding discussion about the laws that groups created. Have groups compare and contract the types of laws they created and how that impacted the population in their societies.
- Ask groups if they would make changes to their laws after playing the game.
- If time permits, discuss similarities and differences between the Code of Hammurabi and laws written in the U.S. Constitution.

Materials List
Provided online:

- Video: Code of Hammurabi
- Handout: Steps to Play the Game
- Handout: Understanding the Code of Hammurabi
- Handout: Teacher Prompts

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.