## Cohen Middle School 100 Robinwood Avenue Elmira Heights, NY 14903 734-5078

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## Hammurabi's Code

Hammurabi was a Mesopotamian king who recorded a system of laws called the Code of Hammurabi. He ordered 282 laws engraved in stone and placed in a public location for everyone to see.

Hammurabi's Code prescribed specific punishments for citizens who broke the law. One law said, "If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out." Later historians summarized Hammurabi's Code with the phrase, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." This means that whoever commits an injury should be punished in the same manner as that injury.

Hammurabi's code included what we today call both criminal and civil law. Criminal law

consists of rules that define conduct. One law said, "if a son strikes his father, his hands shall be hewn off." Civil law settles disputes among individuals. Hammurabi's Code states, "if a man builds a house badly, and it falls and kills the owner, the builder is to be killed. If the owner's son was killed, then the builder's son is to be killed."

One exception existed to the

principle of "an eye for an eye." It demonstrated that Hammurabi believed the gods had power over people and events. An accused person could jump into the Euphrates River. "If he sinks in the river, his accuser shall take possession of his

house. But if the river proves that the accused is not guilty and he escapes unhurt, then he who had brought the accusation shall be put to death, while he who leaped into the river shall take possession of the house that had belonged to his accuser." We can surmise from this law that not many people at that time were able to swim.

Hammurabi reigned from 1795 to 1750BCE in Babylon. Babylon was one of the many citystates that formed in ancient Mesopotamia. Babylon became famous for its spectacular entertainment. People still refer to a rich city with many luxuries as "a Babylon."

Hammurabi's Code helps us understand what life was like in ancient Babylon. Equal punishment existed only when both parties were of equal rank. The penalty for injuring a woman or a slave would be less than the penalty for injuring a free man. One law said, "if a man strikes a free-born woman so that she loses her unborn child, he shall pay ten shekels for her loss." Another says, "if a man has caught either a male or female runaway slave in the open field and has brought him back to his owner, the owner of the slave shall give him two shekels of silver."

Hammurabi's Code is the earliest form of law that we are able to read and study because, in 1901, a French expedition to Mesopotamia uncovered a copy of the Babylonian king's laws. The stone pillar where Hammurabi had his laws engraved is now on display at the Louvre, a museum in Paris, France.

**Answer in complete sentences** 

*1.	Draw	a pictograj	phic senten	ce that de	escribes	the	phra	se most	often	associated	with	Hammu	ırabi.
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2. Why did Hammurabi have his laws engraved in stone and placed in a public place?

<sup>\*</sup>This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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Fill in the Blanks
Hammurabi was a Bb_l_n_an king who placed his laws in a pb_ic place
for everyone to see. Hammurabi's Code is based on the principal, "An e for an e,
a t_o_h for a t_o_h." This means that a p_n_s_m_nt would usually be equal
to the crime.
Hammurabi's Code covered both c <u>i</u> ial and c <u>v</u> l law, and while punishments
were harsh by today's standard, an odd exception did exist. Hammurabi's Code states that an
accuosed person could prove his i_n_c_n_e by jumping into the E_p_r_t_s
River. If the accused person survived the ordeal, the person who made the ac_s_t_on
would face punishment. Hammurabi's Code did not treat people equally. The punishment
would not be as great if the injured person was a wm_n or a sa_e.
We know about Hammurabi's Code because a French ep_d_t_on uncovered a
stone p_l_ar with the Babylonian k's 282 laws. The pillar is now on display at
the L_u_re, a m_s_um in P_r_s, France.
Answer in complete sentences
*3. Imagine that Hammurabi live in modern society. Where might he post his laws so that everyone
would see them?
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*4. Was Hammurabi's Code fair? Defend your answer using facts from the article.
5. Why do we know more about Hammurabi's Code than other early forms of law?

<sup>\*</sup>This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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	CTIONS: Respond to these questions. Use textual evidence to support your nses.
1.	Compare and Contrast (a) How was child number 26 similar to Michaela? (b) How was she different from Michaela?
2.	(a) <b>Interpret</b> What did the magazine photograph of the ballerina symbolize for Michaela? (b) <b>Relate</b> What inspires similar feelings in you or in someone you know well?
3.	Summarize How did Michaela develop her interest in ballet after she was adopted and moved to the United States?
4.	Analyze Why did Michaela's conversation with her ballet teacher about her skin condition become a significant turning point for Michaela and her goal of becoming a professional ballerina?



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