**KEY ASSESSMENTS**

A variety of assessments, formal and informal, will be used throughout this unit. At the beginning, students will complete a KWI so that the teacher can identify what students already know, want to know, and are interested in. This information will allow the teacher to determine how the unit will be implemented with a specific group of students. The teacher will ensure content statements are met while also allowing students to research new information on the civilization that appeals to their interests. Informal assessments include the exit slips for each lesson. The teacher will use these to gauge student understanding after each lesson and determine ways student understanding can be improved (correct misunderstandings) or enhanced (extensions on the new knowledge to challenge students). The Venn diagram students create in lesson 4 will be formally assessed so that the teacher is able to determine if students are able to understand and apply the content they’ve learned thus far in the unit. The teacher will keep track of student class participation in the unit throughout the entire unit, taking note on a class roster each time a student participates in a class discussion or assignment. The roster will be used with the “Class Participation Rubric” at the end of the unit to assign a score to each student’s participation. The teacher should share this rubric with students at the beginning of the unit and remind students of it throughout so that they are aware and encouraged to participate. The remaining formal assessments will also be scored with rubrics at the end of the unit. The most important assessment is the “Artifact Box Rubric” because this will be used to determine if students have met the criteria for this project-based unit, which ultimately results in students creating an artifact box with accompanying research and writing to demonstrate their knowledge. This rubric outlines criteria for the kinds and number of artifacts students must include, as well as criteria for their presentation, writing, and creativity. Students will work on creating artifacts for their box throughout the unit and checkpoints are provided to ensure students are on-track based on the requirements of the artifact box. Additionally, because students are working in groups to complete this artifact box project throughout the unit, a “Group Work Rubric” will be used for students to determine the effectiveness of their group’s interactions so that the group’s work can be assessed. Additionally, students will complete a “Self-assessment Brag Sheet” so that each student can identify their specific contributions to the group’s assignment. Because students know that their group work and individual contributions will be assessed, students understand their group work and individual contributions are essential to the successful completion of this project-based unit.

**DESCRIPTION OF BP ELEMENTS IN UNIT**

Several Best Practice elements were included in the planning of our unit. Using our Best Practices Protocol we created, the student-centered element was incorporated throughout the unit. The teacher provides two essential questions to prompt student investigation and then allows students to investigate their own essential questions they develop from their own curiosity. The final project also takes into account students’ own interests, curiosities, and questions by allowing them to choose their final three artifacts in relation to certain aspects of the Mesopotamian civilization. The social/collaborative element was also included through the use of our project-based learning. Students will work together in small groups to research the essential questions they create together. Students will then self-assess their ability to work well collaboratively through the use of a “brag sheet” and a rubric. The teacher will act as a facilitator by providing initial essential questions to prompt investigation and then allow time for students to collaborate and discuss further questions that are tailored to their own curiosities.

Another Best Practice element included in our unit is the experiential/authentic aspect. As mentioned previously, students are given choices within the final project as to what they would like to complete for their final artifacts. This provides students with ownership over their learning experience. Authentic assessments are also incorporated throughout the unit. Cognitive learning is also a key component in our unit, as the inquiry-based learning taking place incorporates higher-order thinking for students. Students are engaged in developmentally appropriate activities with the assessments and activities being centered around the 6th grade OACS. Students are also given opportunities to reflect on both their ability to work in groups as well as on what they learned on day seven to come up with ideas for three other artifacts. The unit also involves exploration of open questions that challenge students’ thinking.