



Teacher's Guide

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon & the Statue of Zeus at Olympia 14 Wonders of Our World Series

Grade Levels:

6-12

Subject Areas:

Social Studies

World History

World Geography & Cultures

Synopsis:

With re-enactments of the stories of King Nebuchadnezzar, Princess Amyitis and the Greek sculptor, Phidias, introduces two Ancient Wonders of the World and the mysteries of their construction. Explains that the remarkable gardens were constructed from mud bricks and irrigated with water lifted from the Euphrates River. Details Phidias' rise to fame as the creator of the statue of Athena in the Parthenon and his flight to safety in Olympia when gold to make the statue mysteriously disappeared. In Olympia, Phidias uses secret recipes to bend ivory plates to create the massive statue of a sitting but powerful Zeus, a stance that was copied in Lincoln's statue at the Lincoln Memorial. The sequence on the design of the Lincoln Memorial demonstrates the lasting influence of great works of architecture and statuary.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Appreciate the cultural significance of these Wonders of the World.
- Explain how the Gardens and the Statue of Zeus were constructed.
- Appreciate the skill, craftsmanship, and accuracy of ancient artists and engineers.

Vocabulary:

terraced gardens, alluvial plain, Archimedes water screw, pawn, legendary status, friezes, embezzlement, scepter, Byzantine, pagan cults, sanctuary

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

Who chose the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World? Why were they chosen? What did they represent?

Which of the wonders was a garden? What was unusual about this garden?
Where was it built?

Some of the wonders were statues. What were their titles?

In ancient Greece, what event took place each year at Olympia? Why would a temple be built there?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

Why were the Hanging Gardens of Babylon such a “wonder?” Why were they built? What does this show us about historical figures?

Why were the gardeners able to create such a beautiful garden? Where did they find the plants? How did they cultivate them? How do you know the gardeners were very skillful? What does this show us about ancient civilizations?

What is your opinion of Phidias? Was he a charlatan? Was he an artist? Was he a great craftsman? What makes you think so?

What evidence proves that the statute of Zeus at Olympia has had a lasting impression on other artists and designers? Do you agree that a sitting figure makes him appear more powerful? What is there about the statue of Lincoln that helps us understand that Lincoln was a powerful man? What kind of power did he have? Why do we still talk about him today?

Further Activities:

Investigate the life of Princess Amyitis to determine why she loved her country so much and if she understood the reasons for her marriage to the King.

Find a detailed plan or drawing of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Find further details about the life of Phidias and the influences on him as an artist.

Further investigate the influence of Phidias’ statue of Zeus on artists and sculptors who lived after he did.

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