

# Hammurabi's Code

**Do Now:**

List all school rules you can think of:

Do you have a clear sense of what happens when you break one? Are the consequences clear/standardized/fair/just?

Who has the power to make these decisions and how did they get this power?

What does this teach us (being anthropologists for a minute) about our school?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Hammurabi's Code

## King Hammurabi

Hammurabi was a king of Babylonia in southern Mesopotamia (the site of present-day Iraq). He probably ruled for about 40 years beginning in 1792 B.C. Babylon was one of several city-states in this area near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Hammurabi was a skilled military leader and under his leadership, Babylon **conquered** the other city-states of the area and **united** much of Mesopotamia under his **authority**.

Hammurabi was also a skilled **administrator**. He is most famous for his **code** of laws. Many of these laws came from the city-state of Sumer, but they added a new concept – that of revenge instead of just punishment. For example, under Sumerian law, the punishment for crimes was often a fine; under Hammurabi’s law, the guideline was “an eye for an eye.” Punishment also depended on who was wronged, and reflected a belief that people with more power were more important. If a person put out the eye of a slave, he would not lose his eye but would pay a fine. If that person put out the eye of a nobleman, he would lose his eye as punishment.

Hammurabi had his laws posted throughout Babylonia. They were written on stone slabs and placed in prominent places for the people to see. There were 282 laws as far as we know. Interestingly, there was no law number 13 – it was an unlucky number even then.

## Hammurabi's Code

Read and think about these laws taken from the Code of Hammurabi, and then answer the questions on the back. (You might want to read the questions first.)

1. If a person accuses another person of a crime, the accused shall go to the river and jump in. If he drowns, the person who accused him may have the accused person's house. If the accused doesn't drown, then the River-God has decided that he is innocent. The person who made the accusation is to be put to death, and the accused shall take his house.
2. If anyone opens his ditches to water his crop, but is careless, and the water floods the field of his neighbor, then he shall pay his neighbor grain for his loss.

3. If he be not able to replace the grain, then he and his possessions shall be divided among the farmers whose grain he has flooded.

4. If a physician kills a patient or cuts out a patient's eye when trying to remove a tumor, the physician's hands will be cut off.

5. If a builder builds a house and the house collapses and kills the owner of the house, the builder shall be put to death. If the house collapses and kills the owner's son, then the son of the builder shall be put to death.

6. If a son hits his father, his hands shall be cut off.

7. If a fire breaks out in a house and a person who helps to put out the fire steals something from the house, that person shall be thrown into the fire.

8. If a man destroys the eye of another man, his eye shall be destroyed. If he breaks the bone of another, his bone shall be broken.

10. If a man wishes to divorce his wife, he must return her dowry and give her the use of part of his field for farming and part of his property so she can provide for her kids.

11. If a man's wife becomes sick, the husband may take a second wife, but must continue to care for the sick wife as long as she lives.

12. If a person steals from a temple or takes goods stolen from the temple, he shall be put to death.

\*Want to read more? Here are links to most of the code from [Wright State University](#) and a slightly trickier but full list [from Yale](#).

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**Based on these laws, what can we learn about Babylonian society?**

Religion:

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Marriage & family life:

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Making a living:

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Other aspects of Babylonian society:

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From the laws that you studied today, which one do you think is best? Worst? Explain your answer.

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Do you think that Hammurabi's code was fair? Why or why not?

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**Plan** a formal four paragraph response to Hammurabi's code.

## Was Hammurabi's code fair or just?

Why or why not?

Whatever your answer, you must back it up with **reasons & evidence/examples**.

**Use a word web or other way to PLAN your thesis here:**

\*\*See Rachel's list of sample theses for ideas!!!

**MY THESIS:**

Now PLAN what your main reasons/examples (your two body paragraphs) going to be.

***You have THREE DIFFERENT OPTIONS for how to plan this essay.***

**Outline** a four paragraph response.

Option 1: Type each sentence directly into the following outline:

*Intro Paragraph*

- *(Hook. Something interesting to get the reader's attention.)*
- *(Some general background info about Hammurabi's code. (What it is, when it was, who did it, where it was, how it was written, why, etc.)*
- *(Thesis statement - can be one of the samples above.)*

*First Body Paragraph*

- *(Restate the (a) part of your thesis statement.)*
- *(Give **evidence** for that reason - a short quote from a law.)*
- *(Explain the evidence and why it makes you believe (a))*
- ❖ *[Optional: Give another piece of **evidence** for that reason?]*
- *[Optional: Explain the evidence and why it makes you believe (a)]*

*Second Body Paragraph*

- *(Restate the (b) part of your thesis statement.)*
- *(Give **evidence** for that reason - a short quote from a law.)*
- *(Explain the evidence and why it makes you believe (b))*
- ❖ *[Optional: Give another piece of **evidence** for that reason?]*
- *[Optional: Explain the evidence and why it makes you believe (b)]*

*Conclusion*

- *(Restate your thesis in new words)*
- *(Say why this matters or relates to today)*

OR

Option 2: Plan in this graphic organizer

Hook:  
Background:  
Thesis:

Restate part of thesis:

Evidence:

Explain:

Restate part of thesis:

Evidence:

Explain:

Restate thesis:  
How does this matter today?

Option 3: Plan here.

## Intro Paragraph:

Hook. Something interesting to get the reader's attention.

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Some general background info about Hammurabi's code. (What it is, when it was, who did it, where it was, how it was written, why, etc.)

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Thesis statement \_\_\_\_\_

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## First Body Paragraph

Restate the (a) part of your thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_

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Give **evidence** for that reason - a short quote from a law.

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Explain the evidence and why it makes you believe (a) \_\_\_\_\_

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### Second Body Paragraph

Restate the (b) part of your thesis statement. \_\_\_\_\_

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Give **evidence** for that reason - a short quote from a law.

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Explain the evidence and why it makes you believe (b)

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### Conclusion

Restate your thesis in new words \_\_\_\_\_

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Say why this matters or relates to today \_\_\_\_\_

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