



ECLIPSE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE PROJECT

WHAT DID ECLIPSES MEAN FOR DIFFERENT CULTURES DURING ANCIENT TIMES?

1st-5th grade 6th - 8th grade 9th-12th grade *Activities for each on the following pages.*

GET EXCITED!

Solar and lunar eclipses have had significant meaning attached to them throughout history. Many cultures believed they were a bad omen or even a sign of end times. Our scientific understanding of these fantastic events has alleviated these past fears, but it is still useful to understand how eclipses affected our ancestors.

GETTING STARTED

You can find a great deal of information with simple web searches on the traditions a beliefs associated with eclipses, but here are a few useful links that may help you get started:

- [Lunar eclipse myths from National Geographic](#)
- [Solar eclipse myths from National Geographic](#)
- [Ancient eclipse traditions from NASA](#)
- [Solar eclipse myths from Time and Date](#)
- [Sample project from emaze](#)
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GRADE 1-5

- Each student should work with a partner to do some library or web research about the cultural importance of eclipses to an ancient culture, such as one of the following cultures. Note: The activity may be particularly meaningful to students if they choose any ancient culture that reflects their own ancestry.

Chinese Egyptian Ancient Babylonian Ancient Greek Mesoamerican Incan Middle Eastern

- Create a poster board or diorama that summarizes what you have learned. Be sure to illustrate key details about the cultural importance of solar or lunar eclipses in your chosen culture.
- Prepare and give a 3- to 5-minute presentation to your class *from the point of view of someone in that culture from that time period.*
 - To the extent possible, dress up as members of the culture you are presenting on. If you don't have clothing you can use for this purpose, try to create something with simple materials such as construction paper.



CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE PROJECT

GRADE 6-8

Write a 2 page research paper on the cultural importance of solar and/or lunar eclipses to an ancient culture, such as one of the following cultures. Note: The activity may be particularly meaningful to students if they choose any ancient culture that reflects their own ancestry.

Chinese Egyptian Ancient Babylonian Ancient Greek Mesoamerican Incan Middle Eastern

In addition to a general explanation of what your chosen culture believed, be sure to explain:

- The myths they believed at the time, and what we know about them today.
- How their ideas might have seemed to make sense at the time.

GRADE 9-12

Write a 3 page research paper, with proper bibliography and citations, on the cultural importance of solar and/or lunar eclipses to an ancient culture, such as one of the following cultures. Note: The activity may be particularly meaningful to students if they choose any ancient culture that reflects their own ancestry.

Chinese Egyptian Ancient Babylonian Ancient Greek Mesoamerican Incan Middle Eastern

For the first 2 pages, provide a general explanation of what your chosen culture believed, and be sure to include:

- The myths they believed at the time, and what we know about them today.
- How their ideas might have seemed to make sense at the time.

For the 3rd page, find a specific example of a solar or lunar eclipse that made an impact on your culture or that is associated with a specific legend of your culture. Describe the event or the legend in your own words and try to find evidence to support your claims. For example, if you were writing on Chinese beliefs about eclipses, you might cite the following story:

Legend has it that 2 astrologers, Hsi and Ho, were executed for failing to predict a solar eclipse. Historians and astronomers believe that the eclipse that they failed to forecast occurred on October 22, 2134 BCE, which would make it the oldest solar eclipse ever recorded in human history.