

Ancient Cultures Mini Series



The Ancient Near East

Learning Packet





Table of Contents

How To Use This Packet	1
Introduction	2
What Do You Already Know?	3
Ancient Objects	6
Connecting Artwork	8
Vocabulary Matching	9
Bingo	10
Dive Deeper	11
Explorer's Notebook	14

How To Use This Packet

This packet is designed to offer activities, projects, and resources to accompany watching the short educational video about an object in the Ancient Near East gallery at Glencairn Museum. It's designed for you to do as much or as little of the packet as you would like! You can do every single activity or just half of one, whatever works for you, your students, or your family.

Parts to do before you watch the video:

- Introduction
- What Do You Already Know?
- Ancient Objects
- Connecting Artwork

Parts to do while watching the video:

- Vocabulary Matching
- Bingo

Parts to do after you watch the video:

- Dive Deeper
- Explorer's Notebook



Introduction

How do the objects of ancient cultures demonstrate the worldview of the culture that created them, and reflect their religious beliefs and daily practices? Human beings have shared common hopes and fears throughout time and across cultures. Through discovered objects, let's explore examples of common human concerns that people in Ancient Mesopotamia faced that might not be so different from ours today.

What is something that you hope for? Draw or write about it.

What is something that you fear? Draw or write about it.



What Do You Already Know?

In order to understand the significance of the objects from the Ancient Near East that survive today it is important to think about how the people of this area saw the world and their place in it. Before watching the Ancient Near East video, let's think about what you might already know about the Ancient Near East!

Here is a map of the Ancient Near East.





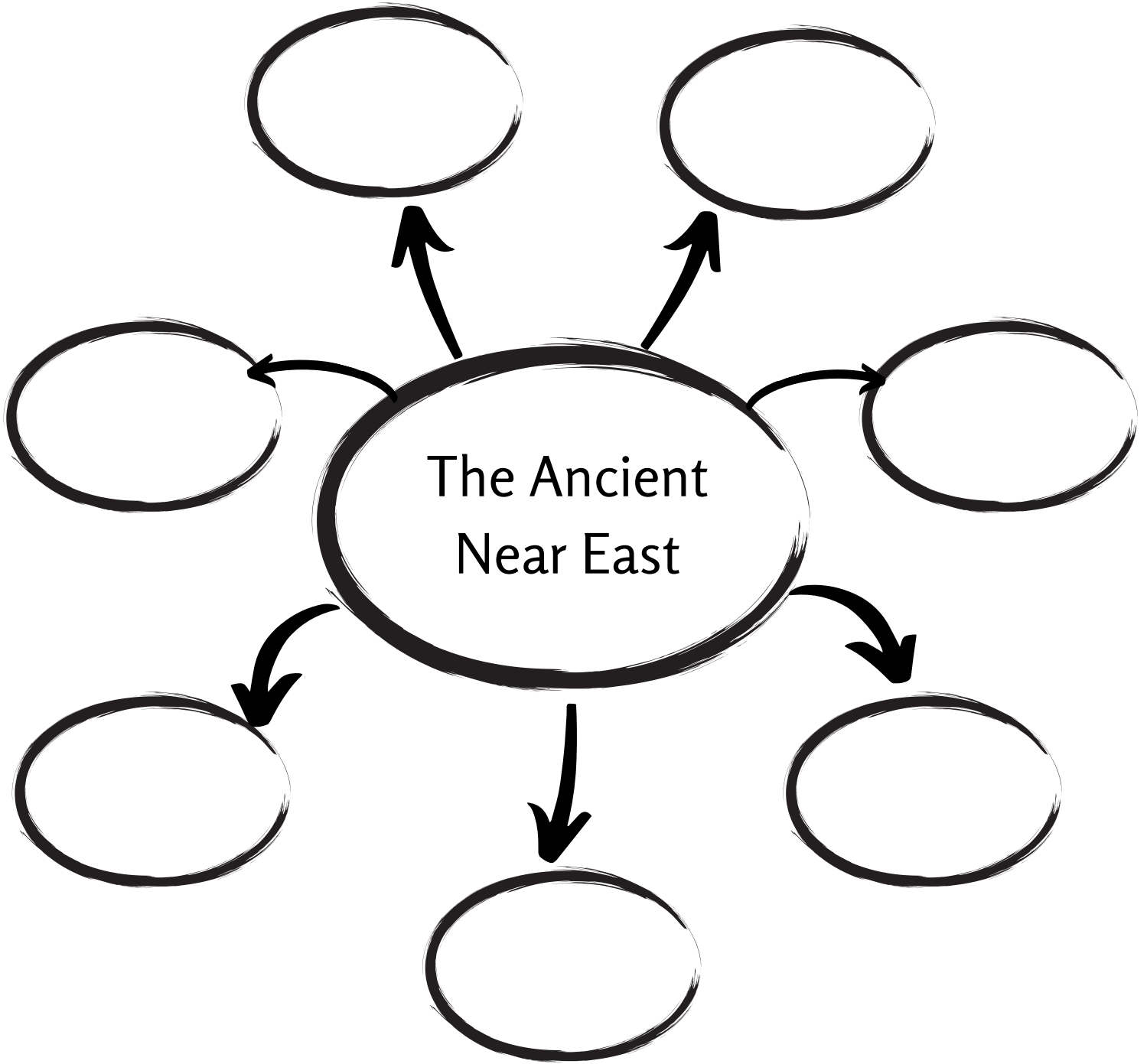
What Do You Already Know?

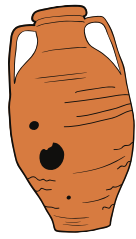
Using the chart on the next page, brainstorm what you might know. This could include:

- The names of different groups of people from the area of the Ancient Near East
- Their beliefs
- The practices and rituals they were known for
- The locations they inhabited or moved to
- What kinds of buildings and structures they created
- Types of artwork and objects that different cultures created
- Sources of food and particular dishes
- Organization of society within each culture
- Anything else that comes to mind!



What Do You Already Know?





Ancient Objects

These activities suggest ways for you to learn about a variety of objects that come from the Ancient Near East. You can find a list of objects on the next page that can be found in the Museum's collection, or you can do research of your own!

Building and Creating

Choose an object from the next page (or research one of your own) and see if you can make a model of it out of materials around your home or classroom, using things like clay, paper, cardboard, or Lego. Can you research how your object was made in ancient life?

Show and Tell

Choose an object from the next page (or look up one of your own) and do some research on it. What was it used for? Was it used for one very specific thing or for many things? Did kids use it? What was it made out of? Draw or print a picture of your object, and use it to present your research to someone else!

I-Spy

On page 8, there are several beautiful works of art that were made more recently that can remind us of ancient works of art. Look at the recent works of art and then think about some of your favorite works of art and artists. Can you find any ancient objects in their art? How are they inspired by ancient art? Pick your own modern day artist or artwork that reminds you of ancient art.



Ancient Objects

Mesopotamia



Foundation deposits



Cuneiform tablets



Cylinder Seals

(Find out about a cylinder seal in Glencairn's collection [here](#) or visit bit.ly/3xWhAKj)



Clay Tablets



Obelisks



Ceremonial cauldrons

(Find out about part of a cauldron in Glencairn's collection [here](#) or visit bit.ly/3epiE1M)



Relief plaques

(Find out about a relief plaque in Glencairn's collection [here](#) or visit bit.ly/2Q2F6V8)



Connecting Artwork

The art of Grandma Moses (Anna Mary Robertson Moses) can remind us of the ancient works of art that look like a photograph of a busy scene like many Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman murals and carvings.



Turkeys



Design Made at Airlie Gardens

The intricate and detailed paintings and drawings done by the artist Minnie Evans can remind us of the tiny and careful details of Mesopotamian carvings.

The sculpture of a pyramid outside of the Louvre Museum by I. M. Pei has become an iconic symbol of the museum, especially when it glows at night! It looks so similar to the pyramids at Giza in Egypt.



Glass Pyramid, by I.M. Pei



Vocabulary Matching

As you play the video, pay attention to these important vocabulary words. Can you match each word to its definition? Draw a line from each word to its meaning.

1. Ancient Mesopotamia

A) A kind of artwork that is created by carving out parts of a flat surface to make a picture

2. Polytheistic

B) A supernatural being; a genie

3. Relief

C) A belief in many gods

4. *Apkallu*

D) An area located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in present-day Iraq

Check the answer key on page 31 to see how you did!



Bingo

As you play the video, fill in an answer for the question that each box asks. When you get a whole row, you've got bingo!

Did the Ancient Mesopotamians believe in one god or many gods?	What does the word <i>mesopotamia</i> mean in Ancient Greek?	Were these reliefs in a palace or in a market?
What modern country is found in Ancient Mesopotamia today?	How many children did Mildred and Raymond Pitcairn have?	Were the <i>apkallus</i> for healing or protection?
Long ago, did these reliefs have many colors or were they plain?	What word might be used in English for the word <i>apkallu</i> ?	What are the <i>apkallus</i> wearing on their heads?

Check the answer key on page 31!



Dive Deeper

Ancient Mesopotamia is considered a location for some of the earliest human civilization. Many of the oldest objects in Glencairn's collections are on display in our Ancient Near East gallery. Taking a closer look at objects made by ancient Mesopotamian people can almost feel like traveling back in time ourselves. What do you think people who lived thousands of years ago cared about? Now that you've watched the video, explore the suggestions below to find out more!

Object Observations

[Click here](https://bit.ly/2w9Zhq4) or visit (bit.ly/2w9Zhq4) to view an image of an ancient Mesopotamian artifact in Glencairn's collection. Print, project or zoom in on the image to view it clearly and in detail. Using the questions below as prompts, have a discussion as a class or in small groups.

- What do you notice?
- What do you think the object is made of?
- How big or small do you think the object is?
- What do you think this object was used for? What would you use it for? Do you think it would break easily, or not?
- What do you think it tells us about people who made it? What about the people who saw it?
- Do you recognize anything about the object that is familiar to you?
- Do you think this object designed to be seen or hidden? Why do you think so?



Dive Deeper

Once you have had your discussion, [click here](#) or visit (bit.ly/3xO3zOS) to find out more about this object. How close were your observations and thoughts to the way ancient Mesopotamians viewed and used this object?

Ancient Mesopotamian Writing

Humans have always found a way to share and communicate with each other. Glencairn has several examples of cuneiform—one of the earliest forms of writing—in our Ancient Near East gallery. Many examples are on small clay tablets, including some that had a clay envelope just like [this one](#) (bit.ly/3h9UwBT) where you can see the inside tablet peeking out! Can you create a message in a different alphabet, and seal it in an envelope for someone to open?

Mesopotamian Palace Protection

The palaces of ancient Mesopotamian kings had walls lined with images of protective *apkallu* and beautiful scenes of nature, just like the one we explored in the video. The reliefs in our collection are just fragments from larger scenes. First—try to recreate what you imagine the rest of scene surrounding the figure was by printing out and sketching it in around the *apkallu* on the next page. Next—look at [this recreation of the full carving](#) (bit.ly/3uu0JNo) by staff at the CDLI!



Head of a Standing Winged Genius
Gypseous limestone
Nimrud, Iraq,
Room L of the Northwest Palace of
Assurnasirpal II Neo-Assyrian, 883-
858 BC



Explorer's Notebook



*A Multisensory Experience
Inspired by an Ancient Near Eastern Relief*

Hello, explorers!

Today, you are going to explore an ancient work of art. It is a carving of an apkallu. You might think of an apkallu as a genie. In the Ancient Near East, it was believed that apkallus were powerful spirits that protected people and things. The apkallu in this carving is helping a tree to grow.



A Kneeling Genie
Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at
Nimrud, Iraq
09.SP.1549

This type of flat carving is called a relief. In a relief, the carving stands out just a little bit from the background. This relief of an apkallu comes from Ancient Assyria, a country that doesn't exist anymore. The land that was Ancient Assyria is now many countries like Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

Look at the map on the next page. Do you see the dark green area? That's Ancient Assyria. Do you see the golden star? That's where the carving of the apkallu was. It was in a palace.



Do you know about any other ancient places?

Have a good adventure!


Exploration 1: Texture Treasure Hunt

By looking at the picture of the apkallu, you can see lots of different things carved and each one has a different texture or kind of feeling.



You can look for these textures around your house and in nature. The relief is made of stone. Can you find a stone? Draw or glue it here.

There are flowers growing on the tree in the relief. Can you find a flower? Draw or tape it here.



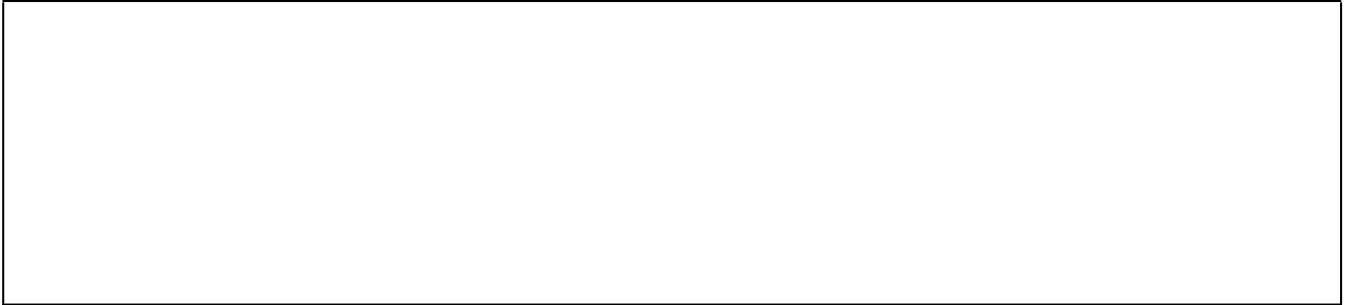
The apkallu has big wings made of feathers. Can you find a feather? Draw or tape it here.



The apkallu is wearing clothing made from sheepskin. Wool also comes from sheep. Can you find something made of wool? Draw it here.



The apkallu is wearing jewelry made of metal. Can you find any jewelry made of metal? Draw it here.



Exploration 2: Making Simeat

If you lived in Ancient Assyria, you might have eaten simeat. Simeat might remind you of bagels. Many people still eat simeat today in countries like Iraq.

Simeat

Yields 28 rolls

You will need:



For the bread:

- 3 tablespoons dried yeast
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 4 cups warm water
- 10 cups bread or all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/4 cup oil

For glaze:

- 1 egg-white whisked in 1 tablespoon water
- Sesame seeds, dry toasted, for sprinkling

Directions:

- Ask a grownup for help to preheat the oven to 450°F.
- Combine and stir to dissolve yeast and sugar in 1 cup warm water, and set aside for 5 minutes.
- In a big bowl, combine flour and salt. Make a well (a small hole) in the middle, and then pour in yeast mixture, oil, and 3 cups warm water. Mix liquids into flour in a circular movement using a wooden spoon. With oiled hands, knead for 6 to 7 minutes until you get a smooth dough. Let rise in a warm draft-free place for about 1 hour.
- Punch down dough, and divide it into 28 portions. Let it rest for about 10 minutes, covered.
- On a slightly oiled surface, form into simit rings as follows. Divide each portion into two parts. Roll each part into a rope about 9 inches long (if dough feels elastic and springs back, let it rest for 5 minutes). Lay 2 ropes next to each other, and wind one rope around the other. Curve and twist into a circle, matching the ends to form a continuous ring. Make sure to join and seal the ends very well to prevent them from opening while rising and baking. Put shaped pieces aside on a flat surface. After making about five, brush them with the glaze, and dip each, face down, in the toasted sesame seeds. Arrange rings on a greased baking sheet. Leave space between them to allow for expansion. Repeat with other batches.
- Let rise in a warm place for 40 to 45 minutes, covered with a kitchen towel.

- Ask a grownup for help with this step. Bake in the middle of the preheated oven. To create a good crust, spray simeat and oven with water. Repeat about 2 to 3 times, for the first 5 minutes. Total time of baking is about 15 minutes or until golden brown. Serve immediately or let pieces cool off in a wicker basket or on a rack. Cooled ones can be kept in plastic bags in the refrigerator or freezer.

What did you smell as the simeat was cooking? You can write about it or draw a picture.

What does the simeat taste like? Have you ever tasted something like it before?

Exploration 3: Making a Harp

A common instrument used to play music in Ancient Assyria was the harp, an instrument with lots of strings that you play by plucking the strings with your fingers.

You can see a person playing the harp in this replica (a copy) of an Ancient Assyrian relief of a royal banquet scene of King Ashurbanipal and his queen.



Reproduction of an
Assyrian Relief showing
a harp player

You will need:

4 popsicle sticks

Liquid glue

A few rubber bands of different thicknesses

Markers, paint, or anything you would like to use to decorate the harp

Directions:

- Glue the popsicle sticks together in a square.
- Once the glue is dry, stretch the rubber bands across the popsicle sticks.
- You can decorate the popsicle sticks however you would like to.

If you strum the rubber bands, what sound do they make?

Can you make the rubber bands make different sounds by pulling them tighter?

What differences do you notice between the sounds of the thicker rubber bands and the sounds of the thinner rubber bands?

Can you compose (make up) a tune?

Exploration 4: Coloring an Apkallu



A Kneeling Genie
Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at
Nimrud, Iraq
09.SP.1549

Even though this apkallu is all one color now, it was painted bright colors in the past. What colors did you notice on this apkallu from the video?

What shapes do you see on this apkallu?

You can color the apkallu on the next page however you would like!



Exploration 5: Pose Like a Plant

There are two living things shown in this relief: the apkallu and a plant. Plants are all around us in our homes, schools, and neighborhoods. Take a walk outside to see what sort of plants you can find. You can start in your own yard or you can ask a grownup to take a walk with you to a park to look for more plants.

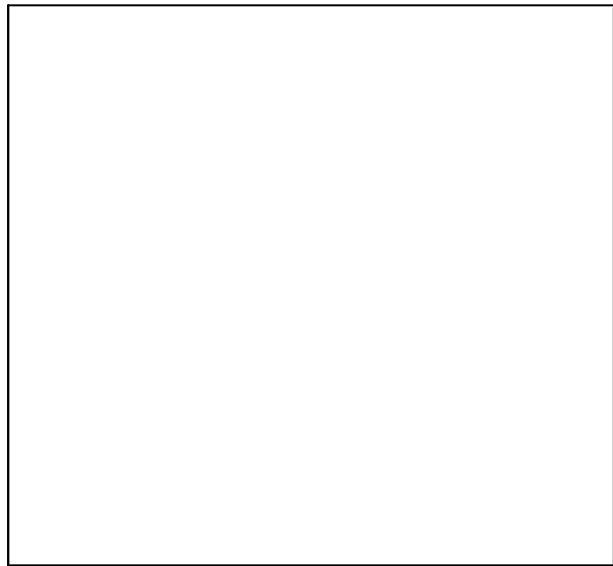
See if you can find a tree. What does it look like? Try making your body into the shape of the tree. Draw a picture of what you looked like as the tree.



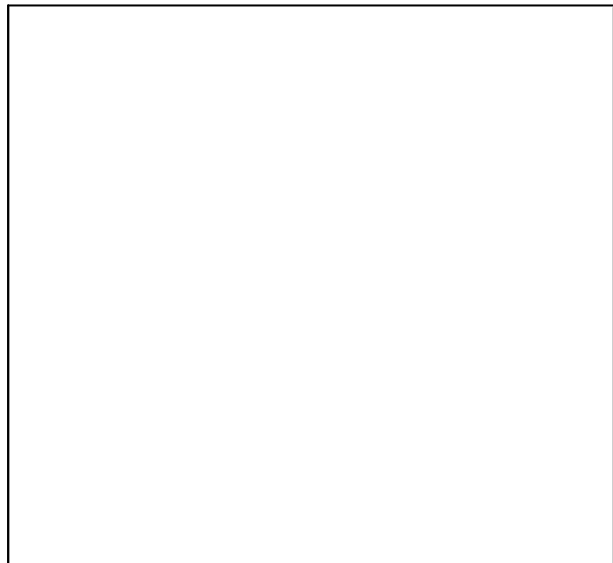
What about a bush? How does it look different from the large tree? How can you show the difference in your body? Draw a picture of what you looked like as the bush.



What does the grass around you look like?
What does your body look like when you act out being grass? Draw a picture of what you looked like as the grass.



Are there any flowers blooming around you?
What does your body look like when you act out being a flower? Draw a picture of what you looked like as the flower.

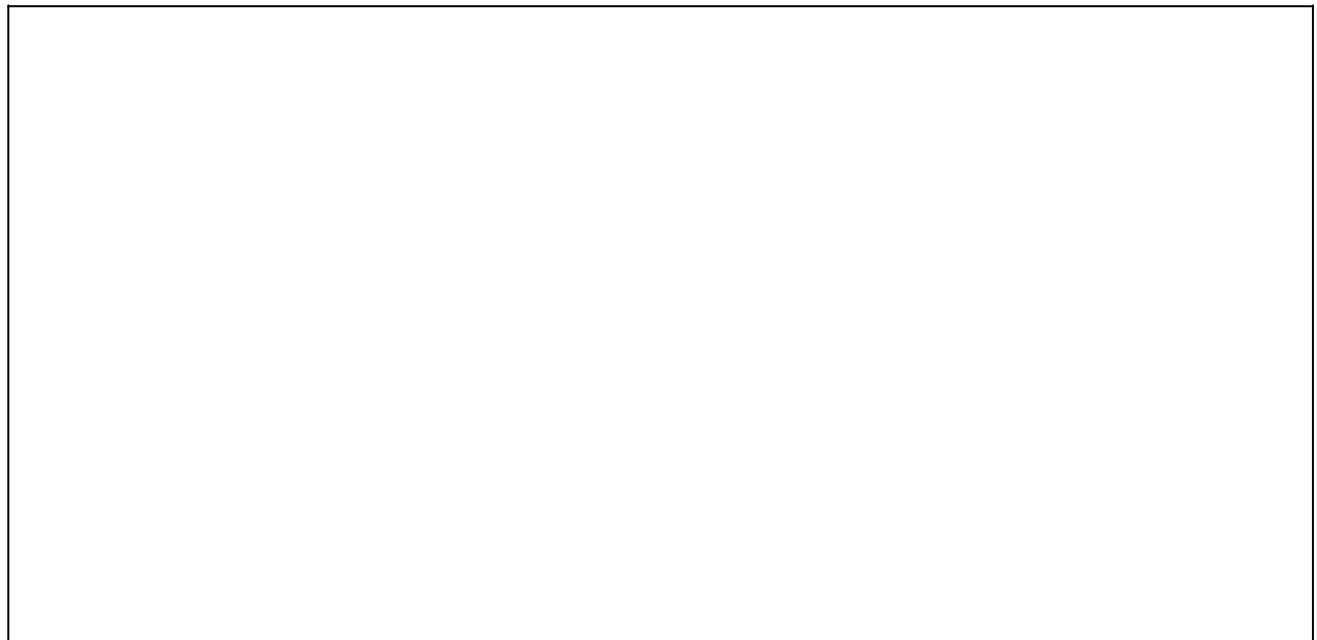


Additional Activity: Plant Protector

The apkallu in the relief is protecting a tree and making sure it can grow.

How do you protect trees?

What plants grow where you live? Draw them here.



Plants need sunshine and water to grow. How can you take care of the plants around your house?

Some people sing to their plants to help them grow! What song would you sing to your plants?

Vocabulary Matching Answer Key

1. and D. 2. and C. 3. and A. 4. and B.

Bingo Question Answers (left to right, top to bottom)

Many gods, two rivers, palace, Iraq, nine, protection, many colors, genie, horned headdress

Sources

Kilmer, Anne Draffkorn. "The Musical Instruments from Ur and Ancient Mesopotamian Music." Expedition Magazine, 1998, pp. 12-19, <https://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/the-musical-instruments-from-ur-and-ancient-mesopotamian-music/>. Accessed 11 Jun 2020.

"Kneeling winged genie (apkallu)." 883-858 B.C. Glencairn Museum, <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/kneeling-winged-genie-apkallu/IQH7DjbylYq8Q>. Accessed 11 Jun 2020.

Miller, Eva. "Assyrian Reliefs in Glencairn Museum: Framing the Ancient Past." Glencairn Museum News, 30 Sep 2016, <https://glencairnmuseum.org/newsletter/2016/9/27/assyrian-reliefs-in-glencairn-museum-framing-the-ancient-past>. Accessed 11 Jun 2020.

Nasrallah, Nawal. "Twisted Sesame Rings, Simeat Bagels of Baghdad." In my Iraqi Kitchen: Recipes, History and Culture, 19 Sep 2013, <https://nawalcooking.blogspot.com/search?q=bagels>. Accessed 11 Jun 2020.

Credits

Developed by Fiona Dwyer for Glencairn Museum
Bachelor of Special Studies Student
Devised and Ensemble Based Theatre in Marginalized Communities
Cornell College

For more information, please contact:

Amy Glenn | Educational Programs Manager | Glencairn Museum
1001 Cathedral Road | PO Box 757 | Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
267-502-2962 | amy.glenn@glencairnmuseum.org