



Comparing ANCIENT WORLD LIFE to

MODERN WORLD LIFE

A SHORT JOURNALING ASSIGNMENT!

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Instructions:

1.) This is great activity to compare how life has changed so drastically from the Ancient and Medieval World to the Modern World. Students should realize that now only is it what we are doing has changed, but how we experience life has even changed!

2.) Pass out the 2-sided worksheet and have students read over silently or read this over as a class! Have students discuss how life would be different in the variety of categories that are outlined on this handout!

3.) As a short journalling assignment, have students write a diary or journal entry from the perspective of someone living in the Ancient World. You can set the parameters for them as to how many details they need to include. Then, have students keep the general idea the same as their first journal, but change the facts to fit into the Modern World.

For example, here is an introductory sentence:

Ancient: Today I awoke to the sound of an oxcart bustling by my home. They must have been traveling at least 5 miles per hour. Wow!

Modern: Today I awoke to the sound of a tractor-trailer bustling by my home. They must have been traveling at least 65 miles per hour. Wow!

Comparing Ancient World Life to Modern World Life

In a time without cell phones, computers, telephones, automobiles, refrigerators, and all of the beeps, buzzes and noises of modern life, silence was common in the ancient world. In a time when the world's population was less than 50 million, **solitude** was common. In a time when populations lived or died according to the size of their local annual harvest, **austerity** was the norm. This paper will mention only a few.

solitude - the state of being alone

By design, man has always received information from the world outside of himself through his senses. However, in ancient times the senses of man were limited in what they could experience by the local environment. Today such limitations are far less.

austerity - extreme plainness or simplicity of style

Sense	Ancient World	Modern World
Sight	Without photographs and with drawings and paintings rare, man's visual input was limited to the sights of his immediate surroundings. With few written documents and little literacy, reading and analyzing documents was unusual.	Technology allows almost anyone to have almost any type of visual input, regardless of their environment. With millions of documents on every conceivable subject available to most people in an instant, people can spend large percentages of their time on them.
Hearing	The sounds of nature, the human voice, and the noises of a few manmade things such as the creak and groan of an ox cart and the crash of swords comprised the sounds available to be heard. The overall noise level, except near inherently noisy places such as waterfalls, was low.	The only limit of sounds to which one can be exposed is the ability of the human ear. One can listen to sounds from the deep sea or high atmosphere, sounds never experienced in person by anyone. The overall noise level is relatively high in the cities. Since over 50% of humanity lives in cities, most people experience more sounds than their ancestors did.
Smell	The smells accessible to man were those of the natural world immediately around them. Abraham, for example, probably never experienced the smells of cinnamon, nutmeg or cloves. Due to an increase in trade, the apostles may have.	Smells are more limited than sights or sounds because it is more difficult to transmit chemicals over the internet than electrons. Nonetheless, foods, flowers and other fragrant items can be transported across the globe in a matter of hours.
Taste	As with smells, food could not travel far, so people experienced only what was local.	As with smells, the only limit to tastes one can experience today is the limitations of the human body.
Touch	Tactile stimuli are more or less the same throughout the world.	Ancient man was far less protected from hot, cold, rough, smooth, and other such stimuli than we are today. Many of us spend our days in climate controlled houses, buildings and vehicles.

Too, the schedule of today's life is far different from what you would experience in the Ancient or Medieval world!

Time Period	Ancient World	Modern World
Day	Artificial light, usually candles or lamps lit with olive oil, was expensive. Most people had little. When the sun went down, they went to bed. Commoners and slaves usually did hard physical labor; farming, hunting, gathering, or construction, and were exhausted when evening came. David spent hours alone in the countryside with his sheep and Lincoln spent hours alone in the forest splitting wood.	Today artificial light is cheap and work is less often hard physical labor. Instead of being awake 12-14 hours per day like the ancients were, we are awake 16-18 hours per day, most of it filled with activity and sensation
Weekly	The phases of the moon and the movement of the stars were important for religious observances and for long distance navigation, especially nautical	Navigation is done with timepieces, maps, charts, and radio and satellite navigation aids. Celestial navigation is a vanishing art.
Year	As largely agricultural people, the seasons dictated man's activities. Wars could not occur during the harvest until there were enough people to do both at the same time.	Few in developed countries are one poor harvest away from starvation, so the seasons have far less impact on the lives of people.

What about health?

Health was one of the greatest differences. As late as England in the 18th century, 25 women died for every 1000 babies born.

According to estimates using data from the Roman Empire, about 300 of every 1000 newborns died before completing their first year. Modern non-industrial societies sometimes have infant mortality rates of up to 200/1000.

Average life expectancy was 25 years, but people who lived into adulthood probably made it to their 60s or 70s.

By contrast, modern life expectancy at birth is 75 to 80 years in the Western world and infant mortality is roughly three to five deaths per 1,000 births. Maternal mortality is roughly 10 deaths per 100,000 live births.

What about transportation?

Man can walk about three to four miles per hour over moderate terrain, and camel and donkey caravans averaged about the same speed. The typical day's journey was 25 to 30 miles although it was possible to go faster if the roads were good. Roads were made of dirt until the Roman era and trouble from highwaymen was common. Camels needed to spend up to two months in between long journeys to recuperate. Each camel would carry loads of up to 300 lbs.

Water transportation was by rowing or sailing ships. Depending upon the winds and the current, triremes (ancient Greek ships with rows and sails) typically traveled six to seven miles per hour and travel up to 60 miles per day. Most ships would stay close to the shore and anchor at night to avoid running aground unless they were in very familiar seas.

By contrast, modern trucks can travel 400 miles in one day while carrying 24 tons (48,000 lbs). Modern ultra large container vessels (ULCV) can carry up to 15,000 twenty foot equivalent units (TEU). Each TEU represents approximately 24 tons (48,000 lbs). Thus one modern ULCV can carry roughly 360,000 of load.

Name _____ Period _____

Comparing and Contrasting Daily Life:

THEN and Now!

THEN!

[illegible]

Directions:

On the left, write a journal entry about all the things you have experienced in the past year (using information from this handout)! On the right, keep the basic story the same, but change the details to fit with more modern times!

Now!

[illegible]