

## MESOPOTAMIA ACTIVITY

# Living the Mosaic

The class is divided into different social roles based on the Standard of Ur. This includes rulers, soldiers, craftspeople, and laborers. Each group wears simple costumes reflecting their status like different colored sashes or headbands.

The main project involves in recreating the mosaic using modern materials. Students use colored foam pieces, painted wooden tiles, and other materials to represent lapis lazuli, shell, and limestone. If there are not enough needed resources, trade routes for materials also need to be created (moving materials between classroom “cities”). The "ruler" group designs the overall scene, "craftspeople" arrange and attach pieces following the leaders' plans, and "laborers" cut and shape the materials.

What makes this activity unique is its incorporation of authentic Mesopotamian social structures - students must communicate and work within their assigned hierarchies, experiencing how ancient Sumerian society functioned. Additionally, pieces need to be recreated accurately and fit together properly. The activity includes the challenge of creating both a "war" and "peace" panel, helping students understand how ancient societies documented their history through art.

### Variations

1. Materials can already be pre-cut into specific shapes from the Standard of Ur. With a resource box, “labourers” would have the job of sorting and searching the pieces to find the correct fits and “craftspeople” would be responsible for arranging and placing them.
2. For more of an individual activity, each student can be assigned a specific section of either panel and recreate it with different materials. At the end, the sections of all students will come together to create the complete panels.