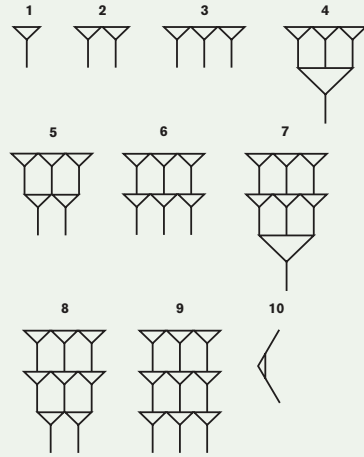


activities

1

The arithmetic, geometry, and algebra that we use now are based on math used in Sumer. Sumerians wrote multiplication tables, division problems, and complicated equations on clay tablets, some of which still exist. Create some simple math problems using this chart of cuneiform numbers. Be sure to record the answers on a separate sheet. Work with a partner and solve each other's math problems.



2

Research other Sumerian inventions. Choose three, and write an essay about why they are still relevant today.

3

Working in a small group, choose a conflict from your own lives or from current events. Write a short script where the characters use Ninhursag's advice to Inanna to solve the problem. Rehearse the play and perform it for the other groups in the class.



Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1a, 3.1d, 3.4, 4.1a, 4.1b, 4.1d, 4.4, 5.1a, 5.1b, 5.1d, 5.2, 5.4, 6.1a, 6.1b, 6.1d, 6.2, 6.4, 7.1a, 7.1b, 7.2, 7.4, 8.1a, 8.1b, 8.2, 8.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.7, 5.2, 5.7, 6.7, 6.9, 7.7, 8.9

CCSS 10: K-5

for more information

books

Mesopotamia, by John Farndon and Philip Steele, DK Eyewitness Series, 2007.

Inanna: Myths from Ancient Sumer, by Kim Echlin, illustrated by Linda Wolf-sgruber, Groundwood Books, 1st ed., 2003.

Hands-On History: Ancient Civilizations, by Garth Sundem, Shell Education, 2007.

Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia, by Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, Greenwood, 1998.

History Begins at Sumer: Twenty-Seven "Firsts" in Man's Recorded History, by Samuel Noah Kramer, University of Pennsylvania Press, 3rd ed., 1988.

web sites

<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/kids/people-places-kids/iraq-mesopotamia-kids/>

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournmuseum/discoverycentre/mesopotamia/exhibition-vid-eos/the-mesopotamian-minute/>

mesopotamia.lib.uchicago.edu/

• downloadable lesson plans, classroom activities, photos

www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools_and_teachers/primary/ancient_mesopotamia.aspx

• downloadable presentations, slide shows, hands-on activities

Miami Theater Center

9806 NE 2nd Avenue
Miami Shores, FL 33138
(305) 751-9550

mtcmiami.org

inanna and the huluppu tree

based on sumerian myths

by stephanie ansin & fernando calzadilla



By Stephanie Ansin & Fernando Calzadilla

Aerial Choreography by Ileigh Reynolds

Choreography by Octavio Campos

Original Music & Sound Design by Luciano Stazzone

Set, Costume & Lighting Design by Fernando Calzadilla

Directed by Stephanie Ansin

MTC
miami theater center

study guide



The huluppu (pronounced HOO loo pooh) tree was probably a type of willow – a tree with long, curved branches.

NINHURSAG'S ADVICE TO INANNA:
1 You must respect the order of the universe your elders have created.
2 One's strength is always also one's weakness.
3 Ultimate success requires the support of one's community.



the story

based on sumerian myths

Inanna, Goddess of Love, War and Fertility, Queen of Heaven and Earth, and the Morning and Evening Star, descends from heaven to crown the new king of Uruk. Prince **Gilgamesh**, however, fails to show up for his coronation ceremony. The citizens of Uruk grow restless. They have spent a year mourning the death of Gilgamesh's father, and they are eager to welcome and celebrate their new ruler. Stalling for time, Inanna turns to her brother **Utu**, God of the Sun, for help. As Utu dries the tears that have flooded Uruk, Inanna discovers a young huluppu tree floating in the river. She rescues the sapling and plants it in the center of town. She promises the citizens that by the time the tree is fully grown, they will have a new king.

As the huluppu tree grows, its succulent fruit attracts the attention of three deities: **Ningizzida**, the god of medicine; **Siduri**, the goddess of laughter and merriment; and **Anzu**, the god of storms. Instead of travelling around Sumer curing sick people, spreading joy, and watering the land, they decide to move into the tree. The deities spend their days fighting and feasting, and Inanna struggles to expel them from Uruk.

After thirty years, Inanna's spontaneous prophecy comes true: the huluppu tree reaches its full size, and Gilgamesh returns to Uruk! But the deities continue creating chaos. Inanna seeks advice from her great grandmother, **Ninhursag**, the Great Mother Earth Goddess. Her suggestions help Inanna and Gilgamesh work together to remove the deities from the tree. Harmony returns to Uruk, and Gilgamesh finally becomes king.

Sketches by Fernando Calzedilla, 2008. Photos by Pavel Antonov, 2009



inanna
Goddess of Love, War, and Fertility; Queen of Heaven and Earth; Morning and Evening Star



ninhursag
Great Mother Earth Goddess



utu
God of the Sun



gilgamesh
Prince of Uruk



siduri
Goddess of Laughter and Merriment



nannasuen
God of the Moon



anzu
God of Storms



ningizzida
God of Medicine and Trees

the characters

explaining the world

Sumerians believed in almost 3,000 gods and goddesses! These powerful, mischievous, and heroic figures populated the Sumerians' **myths**, stories people of all cultures create to help them understand and explain their lives. **Inanna and the Huluppu Tree** was adapted from a series of myths written on clay tablets about 4,000 years ago.



Photo by Pavel Antonov, 2009

priests

sumerian innovations

Historians call Sumer "the cradle of Western civilization" because so many sophisticated ideas and innovations were born there nearly five thousand years ago:

- **Irrigation:** Because their land was fertile [see GEOGRAPHY], but rainfall was unpredictable, Sumerians devised methods of managing their water supply with storage systems, canals, and sewers. The resulting ability to water their farms as needed led to a steady surplus of food – and free time to focus on other innovations!
- **Wheels:** Sumerians created the potter's wheel, figured out how to transport grains and other heavy goods on wheeled carts and chariots pulled by donkeys, and used wheels to grind barley and wheat.
- **Medicine:** Sumerian doctors discovered many methods of treating patients. They made medicine out of thyme, mustard, plum leaves, pears, figs, willow, manna, fir, pine, beer, wine, and vegetable oils. They always carried salt, tar, oils, wool, milk, turtle shells, and dried water snakes in their medicine bags.
- **Writing:** The oldest writing in the world, **cuneiform** (pronounced KYOO nee uh form), is from Sumer. Sumerian scribes carved symbols into damp clay tablets as small as credit cards or as big as laptop computers. These tablets were used to record everything from recipes to observations of the stars.



Cuneiform Tablet/Image from www.bigstockphoto.com

geography

The city of Uruk was located in **Sumer** (pronounced SOO mur), a land on the shore of the Persian Gulf that is now part of Iraq. The abundance of water and sunshine and the rich silt that traveled down the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers made Sumer a good place to grow food and raise animals. Fish and birds filled the marshes outside the cities, and shepherds grazed sheep and goats on the long grass.



Map by Elise Gianocostas

Map by Elise Gianocostas