

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# The Law Code of Hammurabi

*Directions:* Read the excerpts from the Law Code of Hammurabi and think what the purpose of the law was. After briefly describing the purpose, determine if any modern-day laws closely resemble it, and describe/explain that in the box to the right. After completing each one, answer the questions that follow in complete sentences.

Hammurabi's Law Code	Purpose	Modern Law
143. If a wife has been... neglecting her house and belittling her husband, they shall throw that woman into the water.		
195. If a son has struck his father, they shall cut off his hand.		
196. If a man has destroyed the eye of another man, his own eye shall be destroyed.		
198. If he destroyed the eye of a peasant, or broken a bone of a peasant, he shall pay one mina of silver.		
199. If he destroyed the eye of a man's slave, or broken a bone of a man's slave, he shall pay half his value.		

## Questions

1. How does the law code show how people in Mesopotamia are unequal?
2. Mesopotamian society has been characterized as *patriarchal* (ruled by men). Do these excerpts support this?
3. Do you believe these laws are fair? Why or why not?



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Hammurabi's Law Code	Purpose	Modern Law
143. If a wife has been... neglecting her house and belittling her husband, they shall throw that woman into the water.	To ensure that women obey men in such a patriarchal society.	Possibly harassment or
195. If a son has struck his father, they shall cut off his hand.	Maintain respect for the head of the family.	Domestic violence or assault laws.
196. If a man has destroyed the eye of another man, his own eye shall be destroyed.	To prevent violence.	Assault and battery charges.
198. If he destroyed the eye of a peasant, or broken a bone of a peasant, he shall pay one mina of silver.	To prevent violence against peasants, but not be so severe as to eliminate it altogether.	Assault and battery charges.
199. If he destroyed the eye of a man's slave, or broken a bone of a man's slave, he shall pay half his value.	Slaves were valuable property at this time and if they were injured and could not work, an owner would lose out on money.	Assault and battery charges.

## Questions

- How does the law code show how people in Mesopotamia are unequal?

**When looking at the punishments, it is clear that slaves and peasants have fewer rights than others, because acts of violence against them require only fines.**

- Mesopotamian society has been characterized as *patriarchal* (ruled by men). Do these excerpts support this?

**Hammurabi's Code 143 supports this because a woman will be "thrown into the water" for simply neglecting her house, but no such punishment is mentioned for men who belittle their wives.**

- Do you believe these laws are fair? Why or why not?

**Open to student opinions but they should defend their answers with support from the text.**

