

7.2 Where is the “Cradle of Western Civilization”?

Task: You have been invited to participate in a historical debate about the origins of “Western Civilization” in the ancient Mediterranean world. A group of historians will be presenting evidence for Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome as points of origin. You will be assigned to present the case for one of the four. Not only should you marshal your evidence, but you should also be prepared to counter the arguments offered by other historians. Prepare a written statement of approximately 500-words and a PowerPoint presentation with between 10 and 12 slides. All sites listed here were accessed December 27, 2018).



Mesopotamia – Assyrian Wall Carving



Egypt – Pyramids of Giza



Greece – Parthenon in Athens



Roman Coliseum

Mesopotamia: Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/ancient-near-east1/the-ancient-near-east-an-introduction/a/the-cradle-of-civilization>) places the “cradle of Western civilization” in Mesopotamia because of the development of urban centers, writing, money, and law.

Egypt: Many Egyptologists (<https://www.reference.com/history/egypt-called-cradle-civilization-51bfbd9e01b0769>) believe Egypt, one of the oldest continuous civilizations, was the “cradle of Western civilization.” Egyptians already inhabited the territory along the Nile River 8,000 years ago. Egyptians made major contributions to the development of mathematics, astronomy, writing and engineering.

Greece: The website MrDowling.com (<https://www.mrdowling.com/701greece.html>) presents Greece as the “cradle of Western civilization” because of their contributions to philosophy, science, art, and democracy.

Rome: Many historians partner Rome with Greece (<https://www.quora.com/What-were-the-greatest-achievements-of-the-Roman-Empire>) when describing the “cradle of Western Civilization.” Greek developments were channeled through Rome to the modern world. In addition, Rome added advances in architecture, engineering, government, and the military. Rome also nurtured Christianity into a major world religion.