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Contact: Jessica Moody, VP Marketing
(800) 562-2139 x101
jmoody@greyhouse.com

Salem Press Announces the Newest Addition to the Popular Defining Documents in History Series: *The Ancient World (2700 B.C.E. –c.500 C.E.)*

Defining Documents in World History: Ancient World is the first Defining Documents title that broadens the scope of the series to include world history. This title contains 40 primary source documents that provide a compelling view of this unique period of world history.

The earliest form of writing occurred in the Middle East in the third millennium BCE. The favorable conditions in the Tigris-Euphrates and Nile River valleys gave birth to the world's earliest civilizations and continued to support them for hundreds of thousands of years. The Chinese civilization spread from the Huang River valley sometime around 3000 BCE. By the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, early Chinese literature and philosophy, which had existed since about 1500 BCE, began to mature. Descriptions of nature and historical figures became more elaborate. Of the various schools of philosophy that emerged during this period, two of them, Confucianism and Taoism, became major sources of spiritual guidance and understanding for centuries to come. Classical Greek civilization, which emerged from the ruins of Mycenaean culture after 1000 BCE, left an extensive literature. In the period of the developed city-state (500-404 BCE), Greek explanations of natural and social phenomena were essentially mythical; even thereafter, myth remained central in Greek poetry; philosophy; and, to a lesser extent, science. Lastly, the "barbarians" of Europe were labeled as semi-nomadic and they were also prone to military encounters with neighboring peoples and the use of armies for conquering new territories. Thus, it is no surprise that as the Roman Empire declined, the barbarian presence increased. Outside of ancient Mediterranean Europe, the Near East, North Africa, India, and China, the only other developed writing system during this era is found in Mesoamerica, where the Mayans recorded the succession of kings and other calendrical events. The Maya also maintained an oral tradition of myths and legends that passed down through the generations.

Defining Documents in World History: Ancient World surveys key hieroglyphic writing and documents produced from 2700 B.C.E. to c.500 C.E., organized under six broad categories:

- Mesopotamia
- Egypt and Environs
- Asia: China and India
- Greece
- Rome
- Distant Lands

Each document is supported by a critical essay, written by historians and teachers, that includes a Summary Overview, Defining Moment, Author Biography, Document Analysis, and Essential Themes. Readers will appreciate the diversity of the collected texts, including journals, letters, speeches, political sermons, and laws among others. An important feature of each essay is a close reading of the primary source that develops evidence of broader themes, such as author's rhetorical purpose, social or class position, point of view, and other relevant issues. In addition, essays are organized by section themes, listed above, highlighting major issues of the period, many of which extend across eras and continue to shape life as we know it around the world.

Each section begins with a brief introduction that defines questions and problems underlying the subjects in the historical documents. A brief glossary is included at the end of each document, highlighting keywords that are important in the study of the primary source. Each essay also includes a Bibliography and Additional Reading section for further research.

About the Series

Defining Documents consists of a collection of essays on important historical documents by a diverse range of writers on a broad range of subjects in American history. The series offers a broad range of historical documents on important authors and subjects in American history, with primary source documents, in-depth analysis, and comprehensive lesson plans that represent the diversity of ideas and contexts that define social, political and cultural subjects throughout American history. *The Defining Documents* series is perfect for students, those researching a particular era, or anyone interested in American History since 1492.

The following titles make up the entire Defining Documents series:

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• The Reconstruction Era (1865-1880)	• Vietnam War (1956-1975)
	• Ancient World (2700 B.C.E.-c.500 C.E.)

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