

#### Activity 4: Hammurabi's Code: How does it reflect Babylonian society?

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Group 1 Health Care in Babylonia

Read the excerpt below from the essay [Medicine in Ancient Mesopotamia](#) available through EDSITEMent-reviewed web resource [Exploring Ancient World Cultures](#) .

Among Hammurabi's laws were several that pertained to the liability of physicians who performed surgery. These laws state that a doctor was to be held responsible for surgical errors and failures. Since the laws only mention liability in connection with "the use of a knife," it can be assumed that doctors in Hammurabi's kingdom were not liable for any non-surgical mistakes or failed attempts to cure an ailment. It is also interesting to note that according to these laws, both the successful surgeon's compensation and the failed surgeon's liability were determined by the status of his patient. Therefore, if a surgeon operated and saved the life of a person of high status, the patient was to pay ten shekels of silver. If the surgeon saved the life of a slave, he only received two shekels. However, if a person of high status died as a result of surgery, the surgeon risked having his hand cut off. While if a slave died from receiving surgical treatment, the surgeon only had to pay to replace the slave.

After reading the excerpt on medicine in Babylonia and precepts 215, 218, 221, 224 of [Hammurabi's Code](#) at the Edsitement-reviewed [Avalon Project](#), answer the following questions:

1. What do they indicate about health care and the state of medical science in Babylonia? What can you learn about doctors' skills?

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2. What can you learn about surgery?

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3. What can you learn about medical treatment for animals?

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4. What can you learn about payment to doctors?

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5. What can you learn about malpractice laws?

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