Freedom and Responsibility

Trace how ancient Israelite beliefs and texts shaped later ethical traditions.

WH.1.5 "Examine the development of Judaism and the civilization of Ancient Israel, including the origins of monotheism, the significance of the Exodus from Egypt..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that shows how Israelite belief changed, circle the sentence that connects the Exodus to community duties, and box the sentence that explains how biblical teachings reached Western societies.

Belief, Liberation, and Law

1. Imagine a family in ancient Israel teaching children why they worshiped one God. Israelite religious ideas developed over many centuries in the eastern Mediterranean. Early Israelites shared a cultural world with neighboring peoples who honored many gods. Biblical writings describe a covenant, a binding relationship in which Israel was to be faithful to its God. Over time, worship of the God of Israel became a clear claim that only one God exists, a belief called monotheism. This change helped shape Judaism, the religious tradition of the Jewish people, and distinguished Israelite worship from that of many neighbors.

2. The Exodus story in the Hebrew Bible tells of Israelites escaping enslavement in Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Its central event, liberation from slavery, became a lasting way to explain Israel's bond with God. In the story, God hears an oppressed people and leads them toward freedom. At Mount Sinai, the Israelites enter a covenant and receive laws, including the Ten Commandments. The account joins freedom with responsibility: a people rescued from oppression must build a community governed by obligations. Historians cannot verify every detail of the Exodus account, but its religious and cultural significance is clear.

3. The Hebrew Bible preserves laws, stories, poetry, and teachings from different times; its texts were gathered and edited over centuries. The Ten Commandments, found in this collection, call for loyalty to God and prohibit acts such as murder, theft, and false testimony. These rules address both worship and relationships among people. Later Jewish communities studied and interpreted biblical teachings as they shaped religious life. Christianity also adopted the Hebrew Bible, and its teachings influenced moral and ethical traditions in many Western societies. Those traditions had other sources too, so the influence of ancient Israel should not be mistaken for the only source of Western ethics.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the development of monotheism distinguish Israelite worship from that of many neighboring peoples?

2. Why does the passage connect the Exodus account to both freedom and responsibility?

3. How do the Ten Commandments address two kinds of obligations? Give an example of each from the passage.

4. How did teachings in the Hebrew Bible reach later Western societies, and what limit does the passage place on their influence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences for a new community welcoming people who have fled danger. Propose one specific rule not named in the Ten Commandments, connect it to the Exodus account, explain how it supports relationships among people, and acknowledge that Western ethics have other sources too.

ANSWER KEY

Freedom and Responsibility

HIGH SCHOOL · WH.1.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that shows how Israelite belief changed, circle the sentence that connects the Exodus to community duties, and box the sentence that explains how biblical teachings reached Western societies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the development of monotheism distinguish Israelite worship from that of many neighboring peoples?	**Israelite belief developed toward the claim that only one God exists, while many neighboring peoples honored multiple gods.**
2	Why does the passage connect the Exodus account to both freedom and responsibility?	**The account describes liberation from slavery, followed by a covenant and laws that set obligations for the community.**
3	How do the Ten Commandments address two kinds of obligations? Give an example of each from the passage.	**They address worship through loyalty to God and relationships among people through prohibitions on acts such as theft or false testimony.**
4	How did teachings in the Hebrew Bible reach later Western societies, and what limit does the passage place on their influence?	**Jewish communities studied and interpreted the teachings, and Christianity adopted the Hebrew Bible. Ancient Israel influenced Western ethics but was not their only source.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our community will provide every new family with a fair share of food for its first month. The Exodus account links freedom from oppression to the duty to build a responsible community. Sharing supplies helps neighbors care for one another, much as biblical teachings guide relationships among people. This rule draws on an ancient Israelite tradition, but Western ethics have other sources as well.

Accept reasonable explanations grounded in the passage. For the open task, look for a specific new rule, an accurate connection to the Exodus account, a link to relationships among people, and recognition of other sources of Western ethics.