Document A

**Source:** Stone stele of Hammurabi's Code from the ancient artifacts collection of the Louvre Museum in Paris, France, circa 1754 BCE.

**Note:** The stele, carved from black diorite, stands more than eight feet tall and weighs four tons. This photograph shows the top third of the stele.

The carving at the top of the stele shows Hammurabi standing before Shamash, the god of justice, who is seated on his throne. Shamash is instructing Hammurabi in the law.

Below the two figures is the Prologue, in which Hammurabi lists the names of the gods, saying that they have given him the right to rule. The Prologue, like the rest of the code, is written in wedge-shaped cuneiform letters that have been carved into the stone.

Below the Prologue, closer to the base, are the 282 laws, organized by theme, including family life, agriculture, theft and professional standards. There are a total of 3,500 lines of writing, covering both sides of the stele.

Following the laws is an Epilogue, in which Hammurabi states how the laws should be carried out.