Some Natural Resources Used in Old Babylonia

The Natural Resources Map [http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/geography/explore/natres.html] (available through a link from The Oriental Institute: The University of Chicago) shows where many source of materials were located in the Middle East and beyond. Some of the materials may be unfamiliar to your students. They include:

- **Bitumen**: a naturally occurring residue from underground oil deposits used in construction and manufacture, and to waterproof boats. A tarry, asphalt-like substance.

- **Calcite**: a relatively soft stone which could be formed into bowls and cylinder seals. Objects were often made from a mixture of ground calcite, quartz, and bitumen.

- **Carnelian**: a type of quartz ranging in color from orange to red to brown. It was often used for making beads and seals for imprinting in wax or clay.

- **Cedar**: a relatively lightweight and naturally fragrant wood excellent for many uses in building.

- **Chlorite**: highly desired mineral for bowl carving.

- **Copper**: used for decorative and practical objects. But, more importantly, the principal alloy in bronze, from which weapons were made.

- **Hematite**: a form of iron ore widely used for cylinder seals and other objects in Old Babylonia. Iron did not become important until after Hammurabi.

- **Lapis Lazuli**: a semi-precious blue stone.

- **Obsidian**: A hard, glossy volcanic stone that can be chipped, similarly to flint, to make sharp-edged tools such as arrow-heads, spear points, and knives.