Where Villages Grew

Read how rivers and farming shaped early communities.

SS24.7.5 "Explain common patterns that emerged in the shift from hunter-gatherer societies to permanent settlements in different regions of the world, including types and sizes of settlements..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways geography shaped settlement sites, circle two farming innovations, and number two changes in settlement size or work. Use your marks to trace how farming changed communities.

From Riverbanks to Villages

1 Imagine walking beside the Tigris and Euphrates rivers long ago. In this dry region of Southwest Asia, people built villages near water and fertile floodplains. Rivers supplied water for crops, while seasonal floods left fresh soil behind. Farmers grew domesticated wheat and barley and kept sheep and goats. They also dug canals to carry river water to fields when rain was scarce. Living near fields made moving from camp to camp less useful, but floods could damage homes and crops.

2 Along the Nile in northeast Africa, farmers settled by the river's narrow strip of fertile land, not far into the dry desert. Nile floods usually arrived in a regular season, helping people plan planting. In northern China, early farmers grew domesticated millet near the Yellow River, where water and rich soil supported crops. Yet the river could also flood suddenly and destroy fields. Across these regions, people chose sites with water and workable soil, even when nearby rivers posed risks. Their crops and flood patterns were not identical.

3 As farming spread, some families lived in small hamlets, while larger villages grew where food supplies supported more people. Over time, some settlements became towns with craft workers and traders. Farmers stored extra grain in clay containers, and some people spent more time making tools or pottery instead of growing food. Herding, planting, grinding grain, and caring for children could be divided among people in new ways. In some communities, women and men took on different farming and household tasks, but these roles varied by place and time.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did geography shape where people settled near the Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers?

2. What was one shared benefit of the Nile and Yellow River for farmers? How did their floods differ?

3. How could canals and domesticated crops help families stay in one place?

4. How might stored grain affect settlement size and jobs? What caution does the passage give about gender roles?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a new farming community beside a river that floods without warning. In 4 to 5 sentences, choose where its homes and fields should go, then explain how one farming innovation could change the size of the settlement and how people divide work, including a careful statement about gender roles.

ANSWER KEY

Where Villages Grew

GRADE 7 · SS24.7.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways geography shaped settlement sites, circle two farming innovations, and number two changes in settlement size or work. Use your marks to trace how farming changed communities. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did geography shape where people settled near the Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers?	**People settled near both river systems for water and fertile soil. Along the Nile, farms stayed near the narrow fertile strip rather than spreading into the desert.**
2	What was one shared benefit of the Nile and Yellow River for farmers? How did their floods differ?	**Both rivers provided water and fertile soil. Nile floods usually came in a regular season, while Yellow River floods could arrive suddenly and destroy fields.**
3	How could canals and domesticated crops help families stay in one place?	**Canals brought water to fields when rain was scarce, and domesticated crops could be grown near homes. Families could remain near the fields they tended.**
4	How might stored grain affect settlement size and jobs? What caution does the passage give about gender roles?	**Extra food could support larger villages or towns and allow some people to make tools or pottery instead of farming. Farming and household tasks might be divided between women and men, but those roles varied by place and time.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would build homes on higher ground to avoid sudden floods and plant fields on the fertile riverbank. Farmers could dig channels to bring river water to fields during dry weeks. A steadier harvest could support a larger village instead of a few scattered homes. Some people might make storage pots while others farm or care for animals. Women and men might share or divide these tasks in different ways, depending on the community.

Accept other sensible site choices that address flood risk, water access, and workable soil. Responses should link an agricultural innovation to settlement growth and divided work without claiming that gender roles were the same everywhere.