From Fields to Cities

Trace how resources and new skills helped Mesopotamian settlements grow.

SS24.7.6a "Describe how agriculture, domestication of animals, inventions, irrigation, metalsmithing, and mining contributed to the settlement and growth of Mesopotamian civilizations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline an example of each of these six developments: agriculture, animal domestication, inventions, irrigation, mining, and metalsmithing. Circle a phrase near each example that shows how it helped people settle or build larger communities.

How a Village Became a City

1. Imagine a family choosing a home beside the Tigris or Euphrates River. Each spring, floods left rich soil behind, but the water did not always arrive when crops needed it. Farmers planted barley and dates, storing extra food after harvest. To water fields more reliably, communities dug canals that carried river water onto dry land. Maintaining canals took neighbors working together. Steadier harvests meant families could remain in one place, and stored grain could feed people who did not farm.

2. Families also raised sheep, goats, and cattle instead of depending only on wild animals. Sheep provided wool for cloth, and oxen pulled plows through fields, helping farmers prepare more land. People invented tools and ways to move goods, including the plow and wheeled carts. A cart could carry heavy loads of grain to a market more easily than a person could carry them. With more food and easier transport, villages could support craft workers and traders, and some villages grew into cities.

3. Southern Mesopotamia had little stone or metal ore, so traders brought materials from other regions. Miners in distant highlands dug copper ore from the ground, and traders carried it to Mesopotamian towns. Metalsmiths heated and shaped copper into tools, containers, and ornaments. These goods supported building, farming, and trade. Farmers traded surplus food for materials and skilled work. Trade and specialized jobs drew more people to cities, where shared projects and busy markets supported the growth of civilizations.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did farming and canals work together to help families stay in one place?

2. How did raising animals help people produce food or other useful goods?

3. How could a wheeled cart help a village grow beyond farming?

4. How did mining and metalsmithing in different places both contribute to the growth of Mesopotamian cities?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a new village with good soil but few local materials for making tools. Write one paragraph of five or six sentences explaining how at least four developments from the passage could work together to help it grow. Include a cause-and-effect chain from food production to a new kind of work.

ANSWER KEY

From Fields to Cities

GRADE 7 · SS24.7.6a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline an example of each of these six developments: agriculture, animal domestication, inventions, irrigation, mining, and metalsmithing. Circle a phrase near each example that shows how it helped people settle or build larger communities. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did farming and canals work together to help families stay in one place?	**Canals brought water to fields when crops needed it. Steadier harvests gave families food to eat and store, so they could remain in one place.**
2	How did raising animals help people produce food or other useful goods?	**Oxen pulled plows so farmers could prepare more land, and sheep provided wool for cloth.**
3	How could a wheeled cart help a village grow beyond farming?	**Carts made it easier to carry grain to markets. Easier transport helped villages support traders and craft workers.**
4	How did mining and metalsmithing in different places both contribute to the growth of Mesopotamian cities?	**Miners dug copper ore in distant highlands, and traders brought it to Mesopotamian towns. Metalsmiths made goods from the copper, supporting trade and specialized jobs that drew people to cities.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Villagers dig irrigation canals to move river water to their fields when rain is scarce. They grow barley and store extra grain, so fewer families need to search for food. They raise oxen to pull plows, which lets farmers prepare more land. With food to spare, some villagers become traders instead of farmers. The traders exchange grain for copper ore that miners dug in distant highlands. Local metalsmiths shape the copper into useful goods, attracting more workers and helping the village become a town.

Accept other accurate links between developments and settlement growth. The open response should explain at least four developments and connect food production to specialized work.