Waterways at Work

How river and sea routes helped ancient Egypt grow

SS24.7.7a "Describe the role of the Nile River and Mediterranean Sea in supporting the economic and cultural growth of ancient Egypt."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one economic benefit of the Nile and one of the Mediterranean Sea. Circle one cultural benefit of each waterway, then write N or M beside each mark to show which waterway it belongs to.

From Fields to Distant Shores

1 At the edge of the Nile, a farmer watches dark water spread across nearby fields. Each year, the river's flood left rich soil that helped crops grow after the water fell. Farmers also used river water to irrigate fields. Better harvests meant more food than a family needed, so some people could work as potters, builders, or traders instead of farming. Boats carried grain and other goods between towns along the river. In this way, the Nile supported both food production and busy markets.

2 The Nile connected people as well as goods. A traveler could take a boat to a town far downriver, stopping at places that were difficult to reach across the desert. Priests and families traveled to festivals at temples along the river. At these gatherings, people heard stories, watched ceremonies, and met neighbors from other towns. Craftspeople could see how others shaped objects or decorated buildings, then try new ideas at home. These journeys helped ideas and traditions spread among communities in ancient Egypt.

3 Near the Nile Delta, river routes met the Mediterranean Sea. Egyptian traders sailed from coastal ports to exchange grain and linen for goods such as cedar wood from the eastern Mediterranean. These sea routes brought materials that local workers could use to make boats and buildings, adding to economic activity. Sailors and visitors also carried stories, skills, and artistic ideas between Egypt and other shores. Egyptians did not simply copy everything they encountered. Contact across the sea gave people new ideas to adapt within their own communities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Nile's flood help Egyptians take on jobs besides farming?

2. How did travel on the Nile help ideas spread between Egyptian towns?

3. How did trade across the Mediterranean Sea support work in Egypt?

4. How could contact across the Mediterranean Sea change Egyptian culture?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a potter who lives beside the Nile and wants to sell your work and learn a new design from people across the Mediterranean Sea. In 4 to 5 sentences, explain how you would use both waterways to earn money and share ideas, and invent one detail about your pottery.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one economic benefit of the Nile and one of the Mediterranean Sea. Circle one cultural benefit of each waterway, then write N or M beside each mark to show which waterway it belongs to. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Nile's flood help Egyptians take on jobs besides farming?	**The flood left rich soil that helped farmers grow extra food, allowing some people to work as potters, builders, or traders.**
2	How did travel on the Nile help ideas spread between Egyptian towns?	**People traveled by boat to festivals and other towns, where they met others and encountered different stories, ceremonies, and craft ideas.**
3	How did trade across the Mediterranean Sea support work in Egypt?	**Traders exchanged grain and linen for materials such as cedar wood, which workers could use to make boats and buildings.**
4	How could contact across the Mediterranean Sea change Egyptian culture?	**Sailors and visitors brought stories, skills, and artistic ideas that Egyptians could adapt in their own communities.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I make small clay cups with blue fish painted on them. I would send the cups by boat down the Nile to a port near the sea. A trader could carry them across the Mediterranean to sell, bringing money back to me. I would ask the trader about designs seen on the journey and try one on my next cups. When I visit another Nile town, I could show its potters what I learned.

Accept other passage-supported links between each waterway and economic or cultural growth. For Part 3, the invented pottery detail may vary, but the response should explain a role for both waterways.