Choices by the River

How early civilizations used resources and exchanged goods

SS.6.E.1.3 "Describe the following economic concepts as they relate to early civilization: scarcity, opportunity cost, supply and demand, barter, trade, productive resources (e.g., land, labor, capital, entrepreneurship)."

NAME ______________________________ DATE ______________

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each economic concept named in the passage. Underline the nearby words that show what the concept means or how it affected a choice.

Village Choices

1 Near the Nile River, an early Egyptian village had rich soil and river water, but it did not have enough timber or metal for every family. This shortage was scarcity. Village leaders had to choose how to use the limited wood. If builders used a log for a fishing boat, they gave up using that log for a house beam. The next-best choice they gave up was the opportunity cost. Scarcity made people decide carefully.

2 Farmers grew extra grain in good years, while potters made jars. Grain and jars were supplies, the amounts available for people to use or sell. Demand was how much people wanted them. When many families wanted jars after harvest, potters could ask for more grain for each jar. At first, a farmer might barter grain directly for a jar. Later, villages traded goods with other places, exchanging grain and cloth for materials they could not produce nearby.

3 Every product depended on productive resources. Land included natural resources, such as river water, clay, and fields. Labor was the work of farmers, boat builders, and potters. Capital meant human-made tools used to produce other goods, such as plows, looms, and ovens. An entrepreneur noticed an opportunity, organized land, labor, and capital, and accepted risk to start a business. For example, a person who gathered clay, hired workers, and used an oven to make pots acted as an entrepreneur.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What resources were scarce in the Egyptian village? What was the opportunity cost of using a log for a fishing boat?

2. How did demand for jars affect what potters could ask for each jar?

3. How was barter different from trade in the passage?

4. Give one example each of land, labor, and capital from the passage. Then state what the entrepreneur did.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent an early civilization village problem and response. In 6 to 8 sentences, use these terms correctly: scarcity, opportunity cost, supply, demand, barter or trade, land, labor, capital, and entrepreneur.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each economic concept named in the passage. Underline the nearby words that show what the concept means or how it affected a choice. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What resources were scarce in the Egyptian village? What was the opportunity cost of using a log for a fishing boat?	**Timber and metal were scarce. The opportunity cost was using the log for a house beam.**
2	How did demand for jars affect what potters could ask for each jar?	**When many families wanted jars, potters could ask for more grain for each jar.**
3	How was barter different from trade in the passage?	**Barter was a direct exchange, such as grain for a jar. Trade involved villages exchanging goods with other places for materials they could not produce nearby.**
4	Give one example each of land, labor, and capital from the passage. Then state what the entrepreneur did.	**Land examples include river water, clay, or fields. Labor includes the work of farmers, boat builders, or potters. Capital includes plows, looms, or ovens. The entrepreneur organized resources, accepted risk, and started a business.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In a river village, wood was scarce after a flood carried away many trees. The leaders used the remaining logs for irrigation gates instead of fishing boats, so fishing boats were the opportunity cost. Fishers wanted nets, but few nets were available, so supply was low and demand was high. A farmer bartered baskets of onions for one net. Later, the village traded onions with a hill town for flax. An entrepreneur used land near the river, hired labor from weavers, used capital looms, and risked savings to start a net-making business.

Accept accurate examples and explanations that match the passage, even if students use different wording. For the open response, check that each required concept is used correctly in a connected early-civilization scenario.