

Wonders Shape Life

Identify major natural features that influenced people in the ancient world.

SS.6.G.1.3 "Identify natural wonders of the ancient world."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main natural wonder in each paragraph. Circle the words that tell where each wonder is located.

Natural Wonders and Ancient People

- ① Long before satellites, people learned about striking land and water features by traveling, trading, and telling stories. These natural wonders were not built by people. In northeastern Africa, the Nile River flows north through Egypt toward the Mediterranean Sea. Its yearly floods once left rich soil along its banks. Ancient Egyptian farmers used that soil to grow crops, so the river shaped where many people lived. For them, its regular water was a life-giving wonder.
- ② The Sahara Desert spreads across much of northern Africa. It is the largest hot desert on Earth, although its landscape is not only sand. Rocky plains, gravel areas, and mountains also lie within it. Ancient travelers had to plan carefully for heat, dry conditions, and long distances between water sources. South of the Sahara, different climates supported farms and trade centers. The desert's vast size created a major geographic barrier, yet traders crossed parts of it with camel caravans.
- ③ In southern Asia, the Himalayas form a mountain system between the Indian subcontinent and the Tibetan Plateau. They include Mount Everest, Earth's highest mountain above sea level. Snow and ice in these high mountains feed rivers that carry water to millions of people. Steep slopes and cold weather made travel difficult, but mountain passes allowed some movement and trade. Like the Nile and Sahara, the Himalayas changed where people could travel, settle, and exchange goods in the ancient world.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which natural wonder flowed through Egypt, and what did its floods leave along its banks?

2 Which natural wonder was a major geographic barrier in northern Africa? How did some traders cross it?

3 Where are the Himalayas located? Name the two areas on either side of this mountain system.

4 How did the Nile and the Himalayas each affect the lives or movements of people?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Make a field-guide table for the three main natural wonders in the passage. For each one, identify its type, location, and one way it affected people.

NATURAL WONDER	TYPE OF FEATURE	LOCATION	EFFECT ON PEOPLE

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the main natural wonder in each paragraph. Circle the words that tell where each wonder is located. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which natural wonder flowed through Egypt, and what did its floods leave along its banks?	The Nile River flowed through Egypt. Its floods left rich soil along its banks.
2	Which natural wonder was a major geographic barrier in northern Africa? How did some traders cross it?	The Sahara Desert was a major geographic barrier. Some traders crossed parts of it with camel caravans.
3	Where are the Himalayas located? Name the two areas on either side of this mountain system.	The Himalayas are in southern Asia, between the Indian subcontinent and the Tibetan Plateau.
4	How did the Nile and the Himalayas each affect the lives or movements of people?	The Nile provided rich soil for farming and shaped where people lived. The Himalayas made travel difficult, although passes allowed some movement and trade.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

NATURAL WONDER	TYPE OF FEATURE	LOCATION	EFFECT ON PEOPLE
Nile River	river	northeastern Africa, through Egypt	Floods left rich soil for crops.
Sahara Desert	hot desert	northern Africa	It formed a barrier, though caravans crossed parts of it.
Himalayas	mountain system	southern Asia, between the Indian subcontinent and Tibetan Plateau	They made travel difficult but had passes for trade.

Accept equivalent location descriptions and effects that are supported by the passage. A complete table identifies the Nile, Sahara, and Himalayas as natural features rather than human-made structures.