

Rivers, Roads, and Cities

Trace how place shaped three ancient civilizations.

SS.6.G.2.1 "Explain how major physical characteristics, natural resources, climate, and absolute and relative locations have influenced settlement, interactions, and the economies of ancient civilizations of the world."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each physical feature, resource, climate clue, or location clue. Circle the settlement, interaction, or economic effect it caused, then draw a line between each clue and its effect.

How Place Shaped Civilizations

- ① Ancient Egypt grew along the Nile River in northeastern Africa. The river flooded on a regular pattern, leaving dark, fertile silt on nearby fields. Farmers settled close to its banks and raised wheat and flax. In the dry desert beyond the river valley, travel and farming were difficult, so many people lived in the narrow strip of watered land. The Nile also served as a travel route. Boats carried grain, stone, and people between villages, helping Egypt trade and unite under rulers.
- ② Between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, Mesopotamian cities used irrigation canals to bring water to fields. The rivers could flood unpredictably, so communities built levees and worked together to manage water. The flat plains had little stone, timber, or metal. Traders exchanged grain and woven cloth for wood, stone, and metals from surrounding regions. Mesopotamia's location between Asia Minor, the Iranian Plateau, and the eastern Mediterranean helped connect trade routes. These contacts brought goods, ideas, and sometimes invading armies.
- ③ The Indus Valley civilization developed beside the Indus River in what is now Pakistan and northwestern India. Seasonal monsoon rains and river water supported farming, while nearby floodplains produced crops. Cities such as Harappa and Mohenjo-daro used baked bricks, made from local clay, for buildings and drains. Their position near mountain passes and the Arabian Sea linked them to traders from Central Asia and Mesopotamia. Merchants exported cotton textiles and other goods, and they received materials such as metals and stone.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How did the Nile River influence where many Egyptians settled and how they earned a living?

2 How did the lack of stone, timber, and metal on Mesopotamia's plains affect its economy and interactions?

3 What relative-location factor connected the Indus Valley civilization to other people, and which regions did it connect?

4 Compare how Egyptians and Mesopotamians responded to their rivers' flooding.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Imagine an ancient city beside a wide river, near a mountain pass. Write four sentences explaining how its physical characteristics, one natural resource, its climate, and its relative location could influence settlement, interactions, and the economy.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each physical feature, resource, climate clue, or location clue. Circle the settlement, interaction, or economic effect it caused, then draw a line between each clue and its effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Nile River influence where many Egyptians settled and how they earned a living?	People settled near the Nile because its floods left fertile silt for farming. The river also carried goods, supporting trade.
2	How did the lack of stone, timber, and metal on Mesopotamia's plains affect its economy and interactions?	Mesopotamians traded grain and woven cloth for wood, stone, and metals from surrounding regions.
3	What relative-location factor connected the Indus Valley civilization to other people, and which regions did it connect?	Its location near mountain passes and the Arabian Sea connected it with traders from Central Asia and Mesopotamia.
4	Compare how Egyptians and Mesopotamians responded to their rivers' flooding.	The Nile flooded regularly and left fertile silt for Egyptian fields. The Tigris and Euphrates could flood unpredictably, so Mesopotamian communities built levees and managed water together.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A city beside a wide river would attract farmers because annual floods could water fields. Clay from the riverbanks would provide material for bricks, so builders could make homes and storehouses. A long dry season would make canals important for saving water. Because the city stood near a mountain pass, merchants could trade grain and bricks with people from the other side of the mountains.

Accept answers that correctly connect a place factor to a result for settlement, interaction, or the economy. For the open response, accept reasonable cause-and-effect ideas that address all four required place factors.