

Geography Shapes Power

Trace how location influenced culture and government.

SS.6.G.2.4 "Explain how the geographical location of ancient civilizations contributed to the culture and politics of those societies."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each geographic feature and circle each cultural or political result. Draw a pencil arrow from each feature to one result it helped cause.

Land, Water, and Leadership

- ① Ancient Egypt grew along the Nile River in northeastern Africa. Each year, floods left dark, rich soil on narrow strips beside the river. Farmers raised grain, and boats carried food, stone, and people between villages. Because most people depended on one river, Egyptians shared seasons and farming routines. The river also connected the kingdom from south to north. Pharaohs could send officials, taxes, and orders by boat, helping a central government control lands far beyond one town.
- ② In Mesopotamia, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers supplied water in a dry region. Their floods could be sudden and damaging, so communities dug canals and built levees to guide water to fields. Managing these projects required workers, rules, and leaders. The broad, open plains had few natural barriers, making travel and invasion easier. Instead of one long-lasting unified kingdom, many independent city-states competed for water, farmland, trade routes, and power. Their rulers organized labor and defended their cities.
- ③ On the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, Phoenician cities stood beside natural harbors and forests of cedar. Shipbuilders used cedar, while sailors traveled across the sea to trade purple dye, glass, and other goods. Contact with many peoples encouraged Phoenicians to use and spread an alphabet that merchants could write quickly. Mountains and the sea separated several coastal cities from one another. Cities such as Tyre and Sidon remained independent, led by their own rulers, rather than forming one large empire.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What two Nile conditions helped Egyptians produce food and connect villages?

2 How did the Nile help pharaohs control a large kingdom?

3 Why did Mesopotamian rulers need to organize workers and make rules?

4 How did Phoenician coastal geography shape one cultural activity and one political arrangement?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine a civilization that begins on an island chain with safe harbors but little farmland. Write 3 sentences explaining how this location could shape one cultural practice and one political choice. Use because or so to connect geography to each effect.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each geographic feature and circle each cultural or political result. Draw a pencil arrow from each feature to one result it helped cause. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two Nile conditions helped Egyptians produce food and connect villages?	Annual floods left rich soil for farming, and the Nile allowed boats to carry people and goods between villages.
2	How did the Nile help pharaohs control a large kingdom?	Pharaohs could use boats on the river to send officials, taxes, and orders throughout the kingdom.
3	Why did Mesopotamian rulers need to organize workers and make rules?	Communities needed canals and levees to manage the rivers' sudden, damaging floods and bring water to fields.
4	How did Phoenician coastal geography shape one cultural activity and one political arrangement?	Harbors and cedar supported shipbuilding and sea trade, while mountains and the sea helped keep coastal cities such as Tyre and Sidon independent.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Because the islands have safe harbors, people could become skilled sailors and trade with distant communities. Because farmland is scarce, leaders might make rules for trading fish and other goods for grain. This rule would help the islands get enough food.

Accept answers that accurately connect a geographic feature to a cultural practice and a political decision or system. Students may use different reasonable cause-and-effect ideas in Part 3 if both links are clear.