

People on the Land

Use map clues to explain ancient population patterns.

SS.6.G.2.7 "Interpret choropleths or dot-density maps to explain the distribution of population in the ancient world."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline places shown as having higher populations, circle places shown as having lower populations, and number the two reasons that helped people settle near rivers.

Reading Ancient Population Maps

- ① Historians use ruins, farm land, and written records to estimate ancient population. A dot-density map can show these estimates. Its key tells what one dot represents. Dots placed close together suggest many people lived in that area. Empty spaces do not always mean nobody lived there because evidence can be limited.
- ② On a map of the ancient Mediterranean world, each dot stands for an estimated 10,000 people. The map has clusters along the Nile River in Egypt and near Mediterranean coasts. Few dots appear across the Sahara Desert. Rivers supplied water and travel routes, while desert conditions made settled populations harder to support. The table records clues from both maps.

CLASSROOM MAP EVIDENCE

Region	Dots on Dot-Density Map	Choropleth Shade
Nile valley, Egypt	18	Darkest
Mesopotamian river lands	15	Darkest
Eastern Mediterranean coast	12	Dark
Arabian Peninsula	3	Light
Sahara Desert	1	Lightest

- ③ A choropleth map uses shades instead of dots. A dark shade means a higher category and a light shade means a lower category. The second map uses the same regions as the dot map. Its darkest areas are the Nile valley and Mesopotamian river lands. Its lightest areas are the Sahara and Arabian Peninsula. The maps show uneven population distribution.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What population estimate does one dot on the dot-density map represent?

2 Use the dot and shade evidence to name two regions with higher populations.

3 What do the few dots and lightest shade for the Sahara indicate about its population compared with the Nile valley?

4 Explain one reason why river areas had more settled people than desert areas.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In the two panels, create maps of an imaginary ancient region with a river, a coast, and a dry interior. In Panel 1, make a dot-density map with a key and exactly 12 dots, six by the river, four by the coast, and two in the dry interior. In Panel 2, make a matching choropleth map. Write two sentences explaining the distribution.

	
---	--

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline places shown as having higher populations, circle places shown as having lower populations, and number the two reasons that helped people settle near rivers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What population estimate does one dot on the dot-density map represent?	One dot represents an estimated 10,000 people.
2	Use the dot and shade evidence to name two regions with higher populations.	The Nile valley in Egypt and the Mesopotamian river lands had higher populations.
3	What do the few dots and lightest shade for the Sahara indicate about its population compared with the Nile valley?	The Sahara had a much lower population than the Nile valley.
4	Explain one reason why river areas had more settled people than desert areas.	Rivers supplied water and travel routes, which helped support settled populations.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My dot-density map has a key showing that one dot equals 10,000 people, with six dots by River Nara, four by the coast, and two in the dry interior. My choropleth map shades River Nara darkest, the coast dark, and the dry interior lightest because water and travel routes support more people.

Accept equivalent statements that correctly connect more dots or darker shades with higher population and fewer dots or lighter shades with lower population. For the open task, check that the two student-made maps match and that the explanation uses geographic reasons for the pattern.