

Land Shapes Work

Trace how land and water shaped ancient farming and production.

SS.6.G.3.1 "Explain how the physical landscape affected the development of agriculture and industry in the ancient world."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each physical landscape feature, circle each crop, raw material, or product, and draw a line from each feature to a circled item it affected.

How Landscapes Shaped Ancient Life

- ① Across the ancient world, people studied the land before they decided what to grow and make. In Mesopotamia, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flooded nearby plains. Their water and silt made soil fertile, so farmers raised barley and wheat. Floods could also be unpredictable. Communities dug canals and built levees to guide water to fields. The rivers supplied reeds for boats and clay for bricks and pottery. These resources supported farming, trade, and craft work in growing cities.
- ② In ancient Egypt, the Nile River flooded in a fairly regular yearly pattern. Its water and silt allowed farmers to grow grain on a narrow strip of fertile land beside the river. Beyond this strip lay dry desert, where farming was difficult. Egyptians cut limestone and granite from areas near the desert. They used this stone to build temples and tombs. Papyrus plants along the Nile supplied material for writing sheets, creating another useful product.
- ③ Ancient Greek communities lived among steep mountains, small valleys, and a long rocky coast. Mountains left little flat land for large grain fields. Farmers planted olives and grapes on hillside terraces, while some valleys produced grain. The coast offered natural harbors and fish. People built ships, traded across the Mediterranean Sea, and made goods such as olive oil and wine for exchange. Quarries provided marble and stone for buildings and statues.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers help Mesopotamian farmers, and what challenge did flooding create?

2 How did Egypt's desert limit agriculture but support building work?

3 Why did Greek farmers grow olives and grapes instead of relying only on large grain fields?

4 How did physical features lead Egyptians and Greeks to produce different useful goods? Give one example from each society.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent an ancient settlement with a river plain, mountains, forest, coast, or desert nearby. In exactly 3 sentences, explain how its landscape supports one crop and one industry.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each physical landscape feature, circle each crop, raw material, or product, and draw a line from each feature to a circled item it affected. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers help Mesopotamian farmers, and what challenge did flooding create?	River water and silt made the soil fertile for barley and wheat. Floods were unpredictable, so communities built canals and levees to guide water.
2	How did Egypt's desert limit agriculture but support building work?	The dry desert made farming difficult beyond the Nile's fertile strip. Areas near the desert provided limestone and granite for temples and tombs.
3	Why did Greek farmers grow olives and grapes instead of relying only on large grain fields?	Steep mountains left little flat land for large grain fields. Olives and grapes could be grown on hillside terraces.
4	How did physical features lead Egyptians and Greeks to produce different useful goods? Give one example from each society.	Egyptians used papyrus plants along the Nile to make writing sheets. Greeks grew olives and grapes on hillsides to make olive oil and wine.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The settlement stands on a river plain beside a forest. River silt helps farmers grow wheat, and the river supplies water during dry months. Wood from the forest supports boatbuilding, so people can carry wheat to nearby towns.

Accept answers that accurately connect a named landscape feature to both a crop and an industry. For Question 4, accept other accurate Egypt or Greece examples stated in the passage, as long as the physical cause is explained.