

# Meeting Ancient Needs

How ancient communities responded when important resources were scarce.

**SS.6.G.5.1** "Identify the methods used to compensate for the scarcity of resources in the ancient world."

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK \_\_\_\_\_ Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each method people used to deal with scarcity, and circle the scarce resource or needed good connected to that method.

### Ways to Manage Scarcity

- ① Ancient communities often lived where an important resource was scarce. In Mesopotamia, farmers needed water beyond the short spring rains. They dug canals from rivers and built ditches that carried water to fields. Workers also raised earth banks to guide floods. These systems did not create new water, but they moved available water to crops when rain was limited. Cities had to organize labor because canals needed digging, repairs, and guards during the dry season.
- ② People also prepared for times when food would be scarce. In ancient Egypt, grain from a successful harvest could be dried and stored in granaries. Officials collected some grain as taxes and kept records of supplies. During a poor harvest, the stored grain could be distributed or sold. Storage did not end drought, but it saved food from spoiling and gave people a reserve. This method helped a community manage an uneven food supply from year to year.
- ③ Along the eastern Mediterranean, Phoenician cities had narrow coastal plains and limited farmland. Merchants sent ships carrying cedar wood, glass, and costly purple-dyed cloth. In return, they obtained grain, metals, and other goods from places with different resources. Trade connected communities that had different shortages and surpluses. It could not guarantee supplies during war or storms, but it gave cities another way to meet needs. Like canals and granaries, trade required planning, workers, and records.

**2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Use the passage

**1** What resource was scarce for many Mesopotamian farmers? How did canals help them deal with this scarcity?

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**2** How did storing grain in granaries help ancient Egyptians during a poor harvest?

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**3** What goods did Phoenician merchants obtain through trade, and why did their cities need them?

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**4** How did both canal building and trade help communities deal with scarcity? Give one difference between the two methods.

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**3 YOUR TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ Your own words

Imagine an ancient coastal village has very little farmland but can make clay pots. Write three sentences that name two methods the village could use to get enough food and explain how each method would help.

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**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline each method people used to deal with scarcity, and circle the scarce resource or needed good connected to that method. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                                                | ANSWER                                                                                                                                               |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | What resource was scarce for many Mesopotamian farmers? How did canals help them deal with this scarcity?               | <b>Water was scarce when rains were limited. Canals and ditches moved river water to fields.</b>                                                     |
| 2 | How did storing grain in granaries help ancient Egyptians during a poor harvest?                                        | <b>Stored grain gave people a food reserve that could be distributed or sold during a poor harvest.</b>                                              |
| 3 | What goods did Phoenician merchants obtain through trade, and why did their cities need them?                           | <b>They obtained grain, metals, and other goods. Phoenician cities had limited farmland and needed resources from other places.</b>                  |
| 4 | How did both canal building and trade help communities deal with scarcity? Give one difference between the two methods. | <b>Both helped communities get needed resources. Canals moved available river water to fields, while trade brought goods from other communities.</b> |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

The village could trade its clay pots for grain from a farming community. Trade would bring in food that the village could not grow on its small fields. The village could store extra grain in a granary so it would have food when trading ships could not arrive.

Accept answers that identify two suitable methods, such as trade and storage, and accurately explain how each method responds to limited farmland or an unreliable food supply. Students may use a different traded product if the explanation is logical.