

Sharing and Society

How communal systems shaped early communities and states

SS.6.HC.1.1 "Explain ancient communal systems and the effect on their respective societies."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that show how people shared resources or labor. Circle the effects those practices had on their society.

Working Together, Living Together

- ① Long before cities, many hunter-gatherer bands used communal practices. A band might share meat after a hunt, lend tools, and gather plants together. Because food could be uncertain, sharing helped members survive illness, poor weather, or an unsuccessful hunt. Decisions often involved discussion among adults rather than a permanent ruler. These practices did not mean that everyone had identical possessions. They meant that the group depended on cooperation, which could build trust and reduce the danger that one family would face hunger alone.
- ② In ancient Sumer, cities such as Uruk depended on canals that carried river water to fields. Temple institutions organized workers to dig and repair canals, and they collected and stored grain. This shared labor supported farming and helped cities feed people beyond the farming families. Yet the system also gave temple leaders control over important supplies and work. As cities grew, jobs became more specialized, and differences in power and wealth became clearer. Sumer shows that communal work could strengthen a society while also creating hierarchy.
- ③ Across the Andes, the ayllu was a community of families connected by kinship and shared duties. In Inca times, ayllus worked land assigned for households and joined labor projects, including planting, harvesting, and building. People also owed labor service to the state, called mita. These arrangements helped produce food in difficult mountain environments and supported large projects. However, state officials could demand labor, so community members did not control every decision. Like Sumer, the Inca system combined cooperation with unequal power, affecting daily life and the growth of the wider society.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name two communal practices used by hunter-gatherer bands. What was one effect of these practices?

2 How did temple institutions organize communal work in Sumer? Give one effect this work had on Sumerian society.

3 What work did members of an ayllu do together, and how did this help Inca society?

4 What evidence from both Sumer and the Inca system shows that cooperation did not always mean equal power?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a riverside village with a communal system. Write exactly four sentences that explain what resource or work villagers share, who makes decisions, two effects on society, and one possible challenge.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that show how people shared resources or labor. Circle the effects those practices had on their society. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two communal practices used by hunter-gatherer bands. What was one effect of these practices?	Bands shared food, lent tools, and gathered plants together. Sharing helped people survive hard times, built trust, and reduced the risk of hunger for one family.
2	How did temple institutions organize communal work in Sumer? Give one effect this work had on Sumerian society.	Temple institutions organized canal work and collected and stored grain. This supported farming and city growth, but it also gave temple leaders control over supplies and work.
3	What work did members of an ayllu do together, and how did this help Inca society?	Ayllu members planted, harvested, and built together, and they owed labor service to the state. Their work produced food in mountain areas and supported large projects.
4	What evidence from both Sumer and the Inca system shows that cooperation did not always mean equal power?	In Sumer, temple leaders controlled important supplies and work. In the Inca system, state officials could demand labor, so community members did not control every decision.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In my riverside village, families share a grain store and take turns repairing the water channel. A council of adults decides when grain is given out. This system helps families survive drought and keeps the channel working. However, families may disagree if the council gives more grain to some households.

Accept accurate explanations that connect shared resources or labor to effects on a society. For the open response, accept different systems if the student includes sharing, decision-making, two effects, and a reasonable challenge.