

# River Systems Compared

Compare how early river civilizations organized daily life.

**SS.6.W.2.4** "Compare the economic, political, social, and religious institutions of ancient river civilizations."

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

**YOUR JOB** As you read, write E, P, S, or R in the margin beside each detail about an economic, political, social, or religious institution. Then draw a line between two marked details that show a similarity or difference.

### Life Along Great Rivers

- ① Along the Nile, Egypt's yearly floods left rich soil for wheat and flax. Farmers paid taxes in crops and labor, which supported storehouses, canals, and trade. Pharaohs ruled as powerful kings and led a government of officials. Egyptian society included nobles, scribes, craftspeople, and farmers. Most Egyptians believed the pharaoh had a special link to the gods. Priests cared for temples, collected offerings, and performed rituals for gods and for the dead in daily life.
- ② Between the Tigris and Euphrates, Sumerian city-states were ruled by separate kings. Each city controlled fields and traded grain, wool, metals, and wood. Merchants used weights and measures, while temple workers recorded goods on clay tablets. Social groups included kings, priests, merchants, artisans, farmers, and enslaved people. Temples were religious centers and also owned land and employed workers. In the Indus Valley, planned cities such as Mohenjo-daro had streets, drains, and workshops. Archaeologists have found seals and trade goods, but their writing has not been read, so we know less about their rulers and beliefs.
- ③ Near the Yellow River, early Chinese rulers led kingdoms and collected crops or labor from farmers. Families often lived in villages, and social rank shaped people's duties. Kings and nobles held more power than farmers. Chinese people honored ancestors and sought messages from gods through oracle bones. Like Egypt, early China had strong rulers and religious practices connected to government. Unlike Sumer, it was not divided into many independent city-states. All these river civilizations depended on farming and trade, but their political systems, social groups, and religious institutions were not the same.

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

**1** How were the political institutions of Egypt and early China similar, and how was Sumer different?

**2** Compare the economic institutions of Egypt and Sumer. Give one detail about how each civilization organized goods, work, or trade.

**3** How did religious institutions affect life in Egypt and Sumer? Use one detail from each civilization.

**4** What economic evidence from the Indus Valley can historians compare with other river civilizations? Why are its political and religious institutions harder to compare?

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

Choose any two civilizations from the passage. Complete all four rows, one each for economic, political, social, and religious institutions, then write a comparison in the last column.

| CATEGORY | FIRST CIVILIZATION | SECOND CIVILIZATION | COMPARISON |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------|------------|
|          |                    |                     |            |
|          |                    |                     |            |
|          |                    |                     |            |
|          |                    |                     |            |

**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

As you read, write E, P, S, or R in the margin beside each detail about an economic, political, social, or religious institution. Then draw a line between two marked details that show a similarity or difference. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                                                                                                | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | How were the political institutions of Egypt and early China similar, and how was Sumer different?                                                                      | <b>Egypt and early China had strong rulers who collected crops or labor from farmers. Sumer was divided into separate city-states ruled by separate kings.</b>                                                |
| 2 | Compare the economic institutions of Egypt and Sumer. Give one detail about how each civilization organized goods, work, or trade.                                      | <b>Egyptian farmers paid taxes in crops and labor to support storehouses, canals, and trade. Sumerian cities traded goods, and merchants used weights and measures.</b>                                       |
| 3 | How did religious institutions affect life in Egypt and Sumer? Use one detail from each civilization.                                                                   | <b>In Egypt, priests cared for temples and performed rituals, and people believed the pharaoh had a link to the gods. In Sumer, temples were religious centers that also owned land and employed workers.</b> |
| 4 | What economic evidence from the Indus Valley can historians compare with other river civilizations? Why are its political and religious institutions harder to compare? | <b>Seals, trade goods, workshops, and planned cities provide evidence of Indus economic life. Its writing has not been read, so historians know less about its rulers and beliefs.</b>                        |

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

| CATEGORY  | FIRST CIVILIZATION                                                    | SECOND CIVILIZATION                                                                          | COMPARISON                                                          |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic  | Egypt: farmers paid crop taxes and labor                              | Sumer: cities traded grain and wool                                                          | Both depended on farming and trade, but Egypt collected farm taxes. |
| Political | Egypt: a pharaoh ruled with officials                                 | Sumer: separate kings ruled city-states                                                      | Both had kings, but Sumer had many independent cities.              |
| Social    | Egypt: nobles, scribes, craftspeople, and farmers had different roles | Sumer: kings, priests, merchants, artisans, farmers, and enslaved people had different roles | Both societies had ranked social groups.                            |
| Religious | Egypt: priests cared for temples and performed rituals                | Sumer: temples were religious centers and owned land                                         | Both had temples, but Sumerian temples also employed workers.       |

Accept accurate comparisons supported by the passage, including similarities or differences. For the Indus Valley, accept a statement that rulers or beliefs are less known because its writing remains unread.