Life Along the Nile

How one river shaped farming, travel, and cooperation

6-9.WH.2.6 "Explain the impact of waterways on civilizations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three ways the Nile helped people and circle two problems its changing water levels could cause. Number each underlined detail to match a question it helps you answer.

A River That Shaped Ancient Egypt

1 In ancient Egypt, the Nile River ran through lands that were mostly dry. Each year, summer rains far to the south raised its water. When the river spread over nearby fields, it left behind dark, fertile soil. Farmers could grow wheat and barley on land that might otherwise have produced little food. But the height of the flood mattered. Too little water could leave fields dry, while too much could damage homes and crops. The river helped people farm, yet it also made their harvests depend on changing water levels.

2 The Nile also acted like a long road. Boats carried grain, stone, and people between settlements along its banks. A boat could float north with the current, while a sail could catch winds that often blew south. Moving heavy loads by water was easier than hauling them across dry land. This connection let farmers send food to towns and helped builders bring stone to construction sites. As goods moved, communities along the river could exchange supplies and ideas instead of relying only on what they made nearby.

3 Living beside the Nile took planning. Egyptians dug canals to bring water to fields beyond the riverbank. They also built barriers to direct water and stored grain for years when crops were poor. Such projects required people to work together and leaders to organize labor and supplies. River travel made it easier for rulers to reach settlements along the Nile and collect grain as taxes. In this way, the river shaped more than farming: it helped connect communities, supported government work, and made cooperation important when water levels changed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Nile's yearly flood help farmers grow food?

2. How did travel on the Nile affect what communities could get from one another?

3. Why did bringing river water to fields beyond the riverbank require cooperation?

4. How could a change in the Nile's water level affect a community's food supply?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a settlement beside a river that has deep water in summer but freezes for three winter months. In four sentences, explain how the river could affect food and travel, then describe a winter problem and a community solution not described in the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Life Along the Nile

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.2.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three ways the Nile helped people and circle two problems its changing water levels could cause. Number each underlined detail to match a question it helps you answer. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Nile's yearly flood help farmers grow food?	**The flood left fertile soil on fields, helping farmers grow wheat and barley in otherwise dry land.**
2	How did travel on the Nile affect what communities could get from one another?	**Boats moved goods between settlements, allowing communities to exchange supplies instead of relying only on what they made nearby.**
3	Why did bringing river water to fields beyond the riverbank require cooperation?	**People had to work together to dig canals, while leaders organized the labor and supplies.**
4	How could a change in the Nile's water level affect a community's food supply?	**Too little water could dry out fields, while too much could damage crops. Either could lead to a poor harvest.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In summer, people could catch fish in the river, giving the settlement another food source. Deep water would let boats carry goods to nearby villages. In winter, ice would stop boat trips, so supplies might arrive late. The community could build a land road to keep trade moving when the river freezes.

Accept other passage-supported cause-and-effect explanations for the short answers. For Part 3, look for plausible effects on food and travel, a problem caused by winter ice, and a solution that is not one of the Nile projects described in the passage.