Cities and Communities

Compare how people organized life in and beyond an early city.

WH.1.2 "Identify the key components that make up a civilization and the key differences between civilizations and how people organize themselves outside of civilizations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show how Uruk was organized as a civilization, and circle details that show how people organized life outside the city. Use your marks to compare the communities.

Life In and Beyond Uruk

1. Imagine standing near Uruk in southern Mesopotamia around 3200 BCE. Boats bring barley along waterways toward a crowded city where some people farm, while others make pottery, weave cloth, or manage supplies. Irrigation canals carry river water to fields that help feed residents who do not grow their own food. Temple complexes serve as centers for religious activity and the collection and distribution of goods. Administrators use early forms of writing to track supplies. Uruk's large population, specialized work, public institutions, and record keeping are linked features of an early civilization, not separate inventions that appeared overnight.

2. Not everyone in the region lived in a city. Families in small farming villages tended fields and shared work, such as maintaining nearby ditches. Other groups moved with sheep or goats to find seasonal grazing. They could exchange animal products for grain or crafted goods from settled neighbors. Decisions in a mobile group might be made by elders or through agreements among families rather than by city administrators. These communities still had ways to divide tasks, settle disputes, and pass on knowledge. Their organization did not require an urban population, monumental buildings, or written accounts.

3. The difference is not that one way of life had order and the other did not. Uruk supported many residents in one place through food surpluses, specialized workers, and institutions that managed shared resources. A village or mobile group could coordinate labor on a smaller scale and adjust to local needs without the same citywide offices. Writing helps historians study Uruk's supply system, but the absence of written records from a group does not mean it lacked rules or leaders. Historians identify civilizations by combinations of traits and compare how different communities met practical needs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Identify two linked features that made Uruk an early civilization. How did one help support the other?

2. Identify two ways people organized work or decisions outside Uruk.

3. How did Uruk's management of shared resources differ from decision-making in a mobile group?

4. Someone claims that a group without written accounts could not have rules. What evidence from the passage challenges that claim?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent two communities near a desert oasis, one an urban civilization and the other organized outside a city. In four sentences, describe at least two features of each community and explain one key difference without treating either as less capable.

ANSWER KEY

Cities and Communities

HIGH SCHOOL · WH.1.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that show how Uruk was organized as a civilization, and circle details that show how people organized life outside the city. Use your marks to compare the communities. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Identify two linked features that made Uruk an early civilization. How did one help support the other?	**Irrigation helped produce food to support residents who did not farm, including specialized workers.**
2	Identify two ways people organized work or decisions outside Uruk.	**Village families shared work maintaining ditches, and mobile groups could make decisions through elders or family agreements.**
3	How did Uruk's management of shared resources differ from decision-making in a mobile group?	**Uruk had institutions and administrators who managed goods and tracked supplies in writing. A mobile group might make decisions through elders or agreements among families.**
4	Someone claims that a group without written accounts could not have rules. What evidence from the passage challenges that claim?	**Mobile groups could settle disputes and make decisions through elders or agreements among families without written accounts.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the oasis, the city of Namar keeps written grain accounts and supports full-time potters who trade their wares. A council assigns work to repair its shared water channels. Nearby, the traveling Talin families move their goats between seasonal pastures and choose camp leaders through discussion. Both groups cooperate to obtain water, but Namar relies on permanent institutions and records while the Talin organize through family agreements that travel with them.

Accept other passage-supported features and comparisons. For the open task, look for two plausible features of each invented community, a clear difference in organization, and no claim that the nonurban group lacks social order.