Where Centers Grew

How rivers and trade routes helped cultural centers develop

7.C.5.2.A "Examine how and why major cultural hearths developed along major river valleys and crossroads of trade (e.g., Mesopotamia's Fertile Crescent; the Nile, Indus, Huang He and Yangtze River Valleys; the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways rivers or trade routes helped people meet their needs. Circle two choices people made to use those advantages and help communities grow.

Water, Routes, and Growing Communities

1 Picture a town beside the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Mesopotamia. Their floods left rich soil, but the water did not always arrive when farmers needed it. People dug canals to carry water to fields, helping farms produce extra food. With more food, some residents could become builders, traders, or record keepers, and cities grew. Along the Nile in Egypt, yearly floods also renewed farmland. Egyptians planned their planting around the floods and used the river to move people and goods between communities.

2 In the Indus River Valley, farmers used river water to grow crops. The food supported cities such as Mohenjo-daro, where residents built straight streets and drains to manage water and waste. Farther east, communities along China's Huang He grew crops in fertile soil left by river sediments. Floods could destroy homes, so people built barriers to limit damage. In the warmer Yangtze River Valley, plentiful water helped farmers grow rice. Across these valleys, access to water helped produce food, while decisions about managing water helped settlements last.

3 The West African kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai grew at different times near important trade routes. Caravans crossed the Sahara carrying salt, while traders from lands farther south brought gold. Rulers taxed trade, using the wealth to support armies and towns. Mali and Songhai also benefited from the Niger River, which carried goods and linked farming communities to markets. In Timbuktu, under Mali and later Songhai, merchants and scholars gathered. These crossroads spread goods and ideas, helping the city become a center of learning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did people in Mesopotamia and Egypt respond differently to their rivers? Explain one way the rivers helped their communities grow.

2. Why could a city grow in the Indus River Valley, and how did its residents manage a challenge of city life?

3. How did conditions along the Huang He and Yangtze help farming? What problem did people along the Huang He also have to manage?

4. How did trade routes help Ghana, Mali, and Songhai grow? Explain how the Niger River and the movement of ideas also helped Timbuktu develop.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a settlement where a river meets an overland trade route. In four or five sentences, explain two geographic advantages, two choices people make to build a lasting cultural center, and one similarity and one difference between your settlement and a named place in the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Where Centers Grew

GRADE 7 · 7.C.5.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways rivers or trade routes helped people meet their needs. Circle two choices people made to use those advantages and help communities grow. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did people in Mesopotamia and Egypt respond differently to their rivers? Explain one way the rivers helped their communities grow.	**Mesopotamians dug canals when water did not arrive as needed. Egyptians planned planting around the Nile's yearly floods. River water supported farming, which helped communities grow.**
2	Why could a city grow in the Indus River Valley, and how did its residents manage a challenge of city life?	**River water helped farmers grow food to support cities. In Mohenjo-daro, residents built drains to manage water and waste.**
3	How did conditions along the Huang He and Yangtze help farming? What problem did people along the Huang He also have to manage?	**Fertile river sediments helped crops grow along the Huang He, and plentiful water helped Yangtze farmers grow rice. Huang He communities built barriers to limit flood damage.**
4	How did trade routes help Ghana, Mali, and Songhai grow? Explain how the Niger River and the movement of ideas also helped Timbuktu develop.	**Rulers gained wealth by taxing trade. The Niger carried goods and connected farms to markets for Mali and Songhai. Merchants and scholars brought ideas to Timbuktu, helping it become a center of learning.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At Pine Ford, a river carries logs from nearby forests, and a mountain path brings traders with stone. Residents build a landing to unload logs and set up a market where visitors exchange stone for wood. They also open a workshop where traveling carvers teach children, passing on a local craft. Like Timbuktu, Pine Ford draws people together to exchange goods and ideas. Unlike Timbuktu's links to Saharan trade, its trade route crosses mountains.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of how geography and human choices helped communities grow. For Part 3, look for two distinct advantages, two plausible choices, and an accurate comparison with a named place.