Crossroads of Ideas

Locate the Levant and trace the movement of goods and writing.

AWH.C.4.1 "Locate on a map of the ancient Mediterranean world the center of Levantine civilizations and describe the role of Levantine peoples in transmitting Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilization."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the words that locate the Levant relative to the sea, Egypt, and Mesopotamia; circle one Egyptian example and one Mesopotamian example, then number the steps that show how each moved into or through the Levant.

The Levant Between Worlds

1. Imagine arriving by ship at the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. The Levant stretches along that coast and into nearby inland valleys. Egypt lies to its southwest, beyond the Sinai Peninsula; Mesopotamia lies to its east, beyond the inland routes. Coastal cities such as Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre were part of this region, as were communities farther inland. To locate the center of Levantine civilizations on an ancient Mediterranean map, find the coast north of Egypt and west of Mesopotamia. Ships could dock there, while roads led inland, making the region a meeting place for travelers.

2. At Byblos, ships could carry cedar wood toward Egypt and return with Egyptian papyrus, a writing material made from a Nile plant. Egyptian objects and decorative designs also reached Levantine cities through trade. A merchant did not need to invent papyrus to help spread its use. By moving it through coastal ports and inland markets, Levantine traders brought an Egyptian product to people beyond Egypt. The direction of travel was not always the same: cedar from the Levant was valuable to Egyptians. This two-way exchange connected societies whose farms, workshops, and rulers lay far apart.

3. Mesopotamian scribes developed cuneiform, writing pressed into clay. In the Late Bronze Age, rulers in Canaan, a southern part of the Levant, used cuneiform on clay tablets to correspond with the Egyptian court. Some letters found at Amarna in Egypt preserve this exchange. Centuries later, Phoenician sailors from Levantine ports carried an alphabetic writing system across the Mediterranean. That alphabet was different from cuneiform, so the two should not be confused. Together, these examples show how Levantine peoples adapted or carried practices across regions, linking Egyptian and Mesopotamian traditions to wider networks.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. On an ancient Mediterranean map, where would you look for the center of Levantine civilizations? Use the sea, Egypt, and Mesopotamia to describe its location.

2. How did the Levant's location help its peoples move goods and ideas between regions?

3. Trace the route of one Egyptian writing material through the Levant. How did Levantine traders help transmit it?

4. How did rulers in Canaan connect a writing practice from Mesopotamia with Egypt?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 65 to 85 word museum label for an imagined travel bag left at Byblos. Describe the city's location relative to Egypt and Mesopotamia, place an Egyptian material and a Mesopotamian writing practice in the bag, and explain how the bag shows transmission rather than invention.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the words that locate the Levant relative to the sea, Egypt, and Mesopotamia; circle one Egyptian example and one Mesopotamian example, then number the steps that show how each moved into or through the Levant. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	On an ancient Mediterranean map, where would you look for the center of Levantine civilizations? Use the sea, Egypt, and Mesopotamia to describe its location.	**Along the eastern Mediterranean coast and nearby inland areas, north of Egypt and west of Mesopotamia.**
2	How did the Levant's location help its peoples move goods and ideas between regions?	**Mediterranean ports connected with inland roads, allowing travelers to carry goods and ideas by sea and over land.**
3	Trace the route of one Egyptian writing material through the Levant. How did Levantine traders help transmit it?	**Ships brought Egyptian papyrus to Byblos. Levantine traders then moved it through ports and inland markets to people beyond Egypt.**
4	How did rulers in Canaan connect a writing practice from Mesopotamia with Egypt?	**They used cuneiform, developed in Mesopotamia, on clay tablets sent to the Egyptian court.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This imagined bag belongs to a traveler stopping at Byblos, on the Mediterranean's eastern coast, north of Egypt and west of Mesopotamia. Inside is Egyptian papyrus carried through the port to inland buyers. A clay tablet bears cuneiform, a writing system developed in Mesopotamia and used by some Levantine rulers when writing to Egypt. The bag suggests that Levantine people moved materials and used writing from other regions, connecting distant societies rather than inventing every practice themselves.

Accept other plausible routes through Levantine ports and inland roads. Look for a clear distinction between transmitting a practice and inventing it.