River Shapes Settlement

Analyze how water, land, and routes shape where people live.

WG.C.1.2 "Utilize geographic skills to understand and analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on the Earth's surface."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two statements about where farms or towns are located, and circle two physical features that help explain those locations. Number Aswan and Cairo in the order that Nile water reaches them.

Egypt's River Pattern

1. From above, Egypt's settled areas would look less like an even blanket and more like a ribbon with a wide end. The Nile flows north through Egypt toward the Mediterranean Sea. On both sides of much of the river lies desert, while a narrow strip of land along the water supports many farms and towns. Cairo stands beside the Nile near the start of its delta. North of Cairo, the river divides into branches across a broad, low plain before reaching the sea. This shape helps explain why settlement follows the river and spreads outward in the delta.

2. Water and access to farmland help shape this pattern. For centuries, Nile floods left sediment on nearby fields, and people built canals to move river water to crops. Aswan lies on the Nile south of Cairo, so it is upstream from the capital. The High Dam near Aswan stores water that can be released for irrigation downstream. Today, farms do not rely on an annual flood in the same way they once did. Even with canals, supplying fields far into the desert takes more work than supplying fields beside the river.

3. The pattern also affects travel and risk. Roads and railways link places along the valley and across the delta, connecting farms with cities and markets. Alexandria, a port on the Mediterranean coast west of the Nile's main delta branches, links this region to sea routes. A grower near a delta road can reach several towns without following the narrow valley corridor used farther south. Yet the delta's low coastal areas face flooding and saltwater entering soil and water. A place that offers many routes and fields can also carry environmental costs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the shape of settled land change between the Nile valley and the delta? Explain what causes that change.

2. Which city does Nile water pass first, Aswan or Cairo? How can the High Dam's location affect farms near the other city?

3. Why would a field beside the Nile generally be easier to supply with water than a field far into the desert, even if canals are built?

4. How does Alexandria's position help connect the delta to distant markets? Name one environmental risk faced by low coastal areas of the delta.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a different dry region with a river flowing east, a broad floodplain on its north bank, hills on its south bank, and a road crossing the river at the floodplain's eastern end. In four sentences, choose locations for a town and farms, explain two advantages of those locations, and identify one risk or limitation.

ANSWER KEY

River Shapes Settlement

HIGH SCHOOL · WG.C.1.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two statements about where farms or towns are located, and circle two physical features that help explain those locations. Number Aswan and Cairo in the order that Nile water reaches them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the shape of settled land change between the Nile valley and the delta? Explain what causes that change.	**Settlement follows a narrow strip along the Nile in the valley and spreads across a wider area in the delta, where the river branches over a broad plain.**
2	Which city does Nile water pass first, Aswan or Cairo? How can the High Dam's location affect farms near the other city?	**Water passes Aswan first because it is upstream of Cairo. Water released from the dam near Aswan can supply irrigation downstream near Cairo.**
3	Why would a field beside the Nile generally be easier to supply with water than a field far into the desert, even if canals are built?	**Water must be moved farther to reach a desert field, while a field beside the river is close to the water source.**
4	How does Alexandria's position help connect the delta to distant markets? Name one environmental risk faced by low coastal areas of the delta.	**Alexandria's Mediterranean port connects the delta to sea routes. Low coastal areas face flooding or saltwater entering soil and water.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would put the town at the foot of the hills on the south bank, near the road crossing. I would place farms on the broad floodplain north of the river. The road would connect the town to the farms and other places, while the nearby river could supply water to the fields. Flooding could damage farms on the low floodplain.

Accept other town and farm locations if the student explains two advantages using the stated features and identifies a plausible risk or limitation. For the marking task, accept any two accurate location statements and two relevant physical features; Aswan must be numbered before Cairo.