

Border Clues

Read geographic evidence to compare ancient civilizations.

SS.6.G.1.7 "Use maps to identify characteristics and boundaries of ancient civilizations that have shaped the world today."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each natural feature that could mark an edge of a civilization. Circle each phrase that tells how a river, landform, or location helped people live, travel, or stay protected.

Ancient Civilizations on Maps

- ① Maps help historians see why ancient civilizations developed where they did. A map of ancient Egypt shows the Nile River running north to the Mediterranean Sea. Deserts lay to the east and west, while the Mediterranean formed a northern edge. The Nile supplied water, fish, and rich soil for farming. Because travel across deserts was difficult, these natural features helped protect and connect Egyptian settlements. The river also linked southern settlements with northern towns near the sea.
- ② Farther east, maps of Mesopotamia place many early cities between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This region was part of the Fertile Crescent and had soil enriched by river floods. Unlike Egypt, Mesopotamia had broad plains rather than strong desert barriers on every side. Armies and traders could cross the plains, so separate city-states often competed. Rivers supported irrigation, trade, and writing centers. Modern Iraq includes much of this ancient river region today, showing how borders change.
- ③ On maps of the Indus Valley civilization, the Indus River flows from mountains toward the Arabian Sea. The Himalayas stood to the north, and dry lands lay west of the river valley. Cities such as Harappa and Mohenjo-daro used planned streets and drainage systems. Their location near rivers aided farming and travel. Today, Pakistan and northwest India cover much of the area once occupied by this civilization. Map boundaries help us compare ancient places with modern countries.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name two natural features that formed Egypt's boundaries. Include the direction of each feature.

2 What geographic evidence shows that Mesopotamia had fewer natural barriers than Egypt?

3 According to the passage, what direction did the Indus River flow toward, and which mountain range was north of the valley?

4 Give one ancient civilization and modern country pairing that the passage says overlap.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Use a teacher-provided historical atlas map of ancient China that states the period and shows the Huang He, Gobi Desert, eastern coast and political extent. Actually locate the three physical features and trace the political extent shown. Use brief notes in the table to classify each feature as resource or natural barrier/edge and explain a possible effect. On separate paper, record the map title and period, and one difference between a natural feature and the political boundary shown.

FEATURE	DIRECTION OR LOCATION	RESOURCE OR NATURAL EDGE?	EFFECT ON PEOPLE

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each natural feature that could mark an edge of a civilization. Circle each phrase that tells how a river, landform, or location helped people live, travel, or stay protected. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two natural features that formed Egypt's boundaries. Include the direction of each feature.	The Mediterranean Sea formed Egypt's northern edge, and deserts lay to the east and west.
2	What geographic evidence shows that Mesopotamia had fewer natural barriers than Egypt?	Mesopotamia had broad plains that armies and traders could cross, while Egypt had difficult deserts around it.
3	According to the passage, what direction did the Indus River flow toward, and which mountain range was north of the valley?	The Indus River flowed toward the Arabian Sea, and the Himalayas were north of the valley.
4	Give one ancient civilization and modern country pairing that the passage says overlap.	Mesopotamia and modern Iraq. Accept: the Indus Valley civilization and modern Pakistan or northwest India.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

FEATURE	DIRECTION OR LOCATION	RESOURCE OR NATURAL EDGE?	EFFECT ON PEOPLE
Huang He	northern China	resource	Water supported farming.
Gobi Desert	north/northwest	natural barrier	Dry conditions made travel harder.
Pacific coast	east	natural edge	Coast separates land from sea.

Provide a dated historical-atlas map showing a particular ancient Chinese state or dynasty and the three physical features, with legend and readable political extent. Check actual learner locations and boundary tracing against that map. Accept direction relative to the mapped state and supported natural-feature effects. Natural barriers are not automatically exact political borders; extent changed over time. The sample table describes broad geography, not the boundaries of every dynasty. Require the map identity, period and observed distinction in addition to the table.