River Valley Clues

Identify the features shared by early complex societies.

6.3b "Complex societies and civilizations share the common characteristics of religion, job specialization, cities, government, language/record keeping system, technology, and social hierarchy. People in Mesopotamia, the Yellow River valley..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence for seven traits. Label it: 1 cities, 2 government, 3 specialized jobs, 4 religion, 5 language or records, 6 technology, 7 social hierarchy.

Four River Valley Societies

1. Four early centers of civilization developed in Mesopotamia beside the Tigris and Euphrates, Egypt along the Nile, the Indus River valley, and China's Yellow River valley. Rivers supplied water for farming. These societies shared cities, government, specialized jobs, religion, language or record keeping, technology, and social hierarchy: unequal levels of power or wealth.

2. In Mesopotamia, walled cities such as Ur had rulers, officials, soldiers, merchants, farmers, and craftspeople. Kings and priests held high positions, while enslaved people had few rights. Temples were religious centers. Scribes pressed cuneiform signs into clay tablets to record goods, taxes, and laws. Canals carried river water to fields, and the wheel helped move goods. In Egypt, pharaohs governed a kingdom along the Nile. Priests served gods in temples, scribes wrote in hieroglyphs, and farmers, builders, and artisans performed specialized work.

3. Farther east, the Indus cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro had straight streets, brick buildings, wells, and covered drains. Their planned construction and standard weights suggest organized government and skilled workers. Seals carry a writing system that scholars have not yet read. Archaeologists have found objects that may show religious practices and homes of different sizes, evidence of social differences. In the Yellow River valley, rulers governed early Chinese states. Farmers, bronze workers, and scribes had different jobs. Oracle-bone writing recorded questions for ancestors, and bronze tools and weapons showed advanced technology.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Name the four river valley regions. How did river water help them?

2. Give Mesopotamian evidence of specialized jobs and social hierarchy.

3. How did Mesopotamia and the Yellow River valley keep records?

4. Explain three Indus Valley clues that suggest a complex society.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Design a river valley settlement. Give one realistic detail for each of the seven characteristics and explain its effect on life there.

CHARACTERISTIC	SETTLEMENT DETAIL	EFFECT ON LIFE

ANSWER KEY

River Valley Clues

GRADE 6 · 6.3b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline evidence for seven traits. Label it: 1 cities, 2 government, 3 specialized jobs, 4 religion, 5 language or records, 6 technology, 7 social hierarchy. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name the four river valley regions. How did river water help them?	**Mesopotamia, Nile, Indus, and Yellow River valleys. Water supported farming.**
2	Give Mesopotamian evidence of specialized jobs and social hierarchy.	**Specialized jobs: officials, merchants, farmers, and craftspeople. Hierarchy: kings and priests ranked above enslaved people.**
3	How did Mesopotamia and the Yellow River valley keep records?	**Mesopotamia: cuneiform clay tablets. Yellow River: oracle-bone writing recording questions for ancestors.**
4	Explain three Indus Valley clues that suggest a complex society.	**Any three explained clues: planned streets, brick buildings, wells, drains, standard weights, skilled workers, seal writing, possible religious objects, or unequal home sizes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

CHARACTERISTIC	SETTLEMENT DETAIL	EFFECT ON LIFE
Cities	A market city	People trade goods.
Government	A council sets laws.	Rules guide shared work.
Job specialization	Farmers and potters	Workers supply different goods.
Religion	Temple ceremonies	Shared beliefs create belonging.
Language or record keeping	Clay tax records	Leaders track supplies.
Technology	Irrigation canals	Water reaches fields.
Social hierarchy	Leaders outrank laborers.	Power is distributed unequally.

Accept equivalent evidence and realistic fictional examples for all seven traits.