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i Think: World History

Ancient Egypt



by Sharon Coletti

** It is the goal of InspirEd Educators to create instructional materials that are interesting, engaging, and challenging. Our student-centered approach incorporates both content and skills, placing particular emphasis on reading, writing, vocabulary development, and critical and creative thinking in the content areas.

Edited by Kendra Corr

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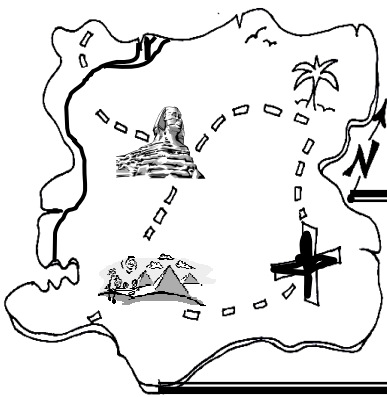
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Why There? Why Then?

Springboard:

Students should read “Starting from Scratch” and answer the questions. (*Answers will vary, but students should consider their long-term needs for food, water, shelter, etc.*)

Objective: The student will be able to explain the value of river valleys as places for ancient nomads to settle.

Materials:

Starting from Scratch (Springboard handout)
Ancient Civilizations (handout)
Hymn to the Nile (handout or transparency)

Terms to know:

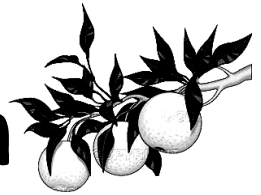
nomads - people with no fixed home
civilization - an advanced society with high levels of social and political organization, as well as many achievements (including writing)

Procedure:

- After discussion of the Springboard, explain that early people were nomads, traveling from place to place in search of food, water, and shelter. Have the student(s) speculate as to what development would have been ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY to allow people to settle down and end their constant travels. (*If farming and raising animals for food does not come up, suggest these.*) Have the student(s) explain why farming would allow them to settle. (*They would not have to constantly search for food; in fact they would NEED to settle in order to cultivate their crops.*)
- Distribute the “Ancient Civilizations” handout and review the instructions. The student(s) should then work individually or in pairs to complete the chart about the location of Egypt and the other ancient civilizations.
- Have the student(s) share their answers and discuss. (*Answers may vary and include:*
 - Rivers:** *Rivers provided fresh water to drink and water for crops and food: fish, animals that come to drink, and the crops they water. The regular flooding deposited silt, a natural fertilizer, on the land so the minerals in the soil were replenished. River valleys were ideal places to settle for long periods of time.*
 - Latitude:** *All of the ancient civilizations developed in areas with hot to mild temperatures that were good for crops. The climate in these areas was also easier for the people to withstand than extreme cold.*
- Hand out or display the “Hymn to the Nile.” Read the poem together or have the student(s) read it, noting or highlighting any words or lines that explain the importance of the river to the lives of the Ancient Egyptians. (*Answers may vary; most of the poem explains the river’s importance.*)



Starting from Scratch



DIRECTIONS: Imagine that you, your family, and friends had to choose a new place to live for many, many years **THAT IS NOT ALREADY SETTLED**. That means you could NOT choose a city, town, or any other place that already has houses, stores, restaurants, etc. Basically, you would be starting from scratch. Think about what you would need and the kind of place where your needs could be met. Then decide where, or what kind of place, would be the **BEST PLACE TO LIVE** and **WHY** to answer the questions below:

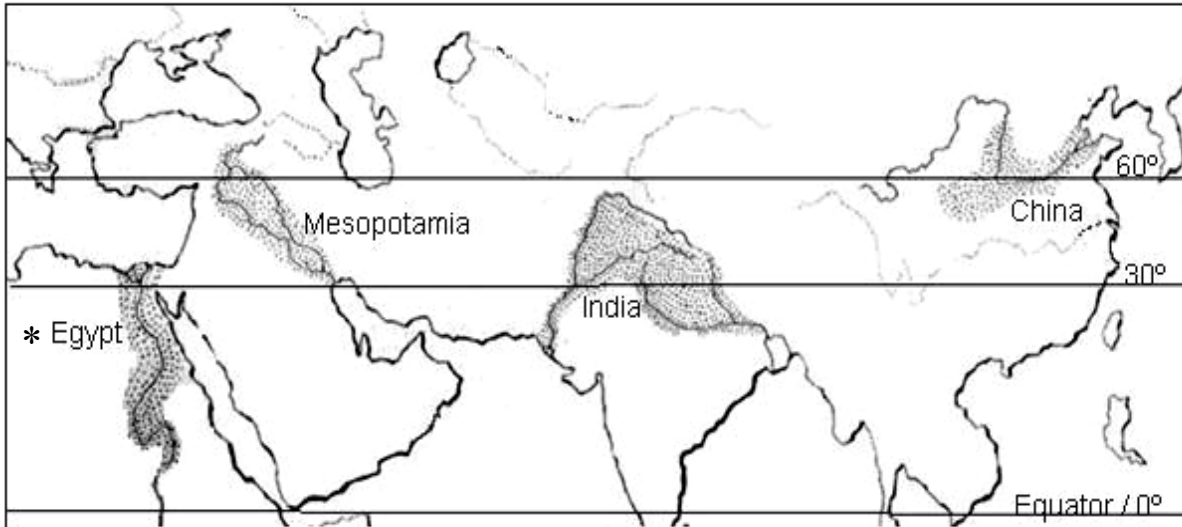
What needs must be considered in choosing a place to live? _____

What KINDS OF PLACES would fulfill those needs, and why? _____

Where would YOU choose to live and why? _____

How would you meet your needs if you had to stay in this place for a long time? _____

Ancient Civilizations



** Along the Nile River in Egypt*

DIRECTIONS: Study the map to figure out why Ancient Egypt and other early civilizations developed where they did. List as many reasons as you can to explain how each factor contributed to long-term settlement, allowing people to advance.

Rivers (Remember, they flooded!)	Latitude

Hymn to the Nile, c. 2100 BCE

Hail to thee, O Nile!
Who manifests thyself over this land,
And comes to give life to Egypt!
To cause all the cattle to live,
You give the earth to drink, inexhaustible one!
You create the grain,
You bring forth the barley.
If you cease your toil and your work,
Then all that exists is in anguish.
Then the faces of men waste away.

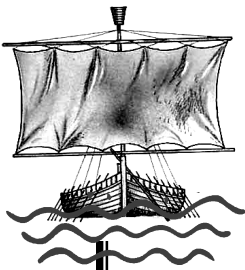
He is the creator of all good things,
As master of energy,
Full of sweetness in his choice.
If offerings are made it is thanks to Him.
He spreads himself over Egypt,
Filling the granaries,
Watching over the goods of the unhappy.
He is prosperous to the height of all desires,
Without fatiguing Himself therefore.

No dwelling may contain you!
None penetrates within your heart!
Stable are your decrees for Egypt!
Where misery existed,
Joy manifests itself;
He shines when He issues forth from the darkness,
To cause his flocks to prosper.
It is his force that gives existence to all things;
Nothing remains hidden for him.

Southern Egypt is seen in the same state as the North.
Each one is with his instruments of labor.
His night remains silent,
But all is changed by the inundation;
It is a healing-balm for all mankind.
Establisher of justice!
Mankind desires you,
Pleading to you to answer their prayers;
You answer them by the inundation!

When you shine in the royal city,
All that is produced is of the choicest;
All the plants exist for your children.
If you have refused to grant nourishment,
The dwelling is silent,
Devoid of all that is good,
The country falls exhausted.

Excerpted from www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/hymn-nile.html



Go With the Flow

Springboard:

Students should read “The Rivers Flow” and answer the questions.

Objective: The student will be able to describe the geography of Ancient Egypt.

Materials:

The Rivers Flow (Springboard handout)
Mapping History: The History (handout)
Mapping History: The Mapping (handout)
Colored pencils or crayons

Terms to know:

tributaries - smaller rivers that flow into larger ones
legend - a story handed down over time that has some basis in fact but also includes fictional details
pharaoh - a king of Ancient Egypt
Egyptologist - one who studies ancient Egyptian history, language, literature, religion, art, etc.
archaeology - the study of the past based on physical remains (tools, art, weapons, buildings, etc.)

Procedure:

- After reviewing the Springboard, explain that *in this lesson the student(s) will learn specifically about the Nile River and the geography of the region in which it flows.*
- Distribute copies of “Mapping History: The History” and “Mapping History: The Mapping.” The student(s) should work individually or in pairs to read the history and fill in as much geographic information as they can find from the handout on the map.
- Have them share their map solutions and discuss. (*Answers should show most of the following: fertile land along the river; the kingdom of Nubia to the south; Upper Egypt labeled in the south and Lower Egypt in the north; desert lands to the east and west; and the then-capital of Memphis indicated with a star or other symbol.*) Include these questions in the discussion:
 - ? What was unusual about the location of Upper and Lower Egypt? (*We think of “upper” as being north on a map, but it was opposite in Egypt.*)
 - ? Explain the locations of Upper and Lower Egypt. (*The names are based on the flow of the Nile River, which flows from the uplands, or mountains, in the south to lowlands by the Mediterranean Sea in the north.*)
 - ? What do you think about the question about who united Egypt? (*Answers will vary.*)
 - ? What do you think it would take for Egyptologists and others to be certain about who deserves credit for establishing the great, unified civilization? (*Answers will vary.*)

The Rivers Flow



Rivers always flow downhill. They form from water moving downward, usually from mountains to the sea. The **source** of most rivers' water is the melt from winter snows. Some may also start from small springs where groundwater seeps to the surface and then runs downhill. On their way to the sea, small streams collect additional water from rain, underground streams that reach the surface along the way, and other streams and tributaries that "feed" it. As they move downhill, rivers grow as they fill with water and the topsoil or silt that flows in it.

On their course to the sea rivers can flow smoothly in slow, lazy streams or crash over rocks in noisy rapids. At times they may drop off a rock edge into a pool and continue down from there. These drop-offs, called cataracts, can be rough rapids or gigantic waterfalls.

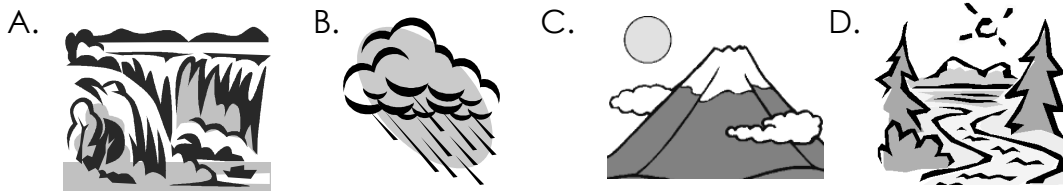
By the time the land over which rivers flow flattens into plains, rivers can be quite wide and deep. At times of heavy rainfall or a heavy spring melt, the river can become so full that it overflows its banks onto the plains. Water spills over onto the floodplain on either side and with it, the rich silt, which is deposited on the land. Silt serves to enrich the soil, keeping it fertile to grow crops year after year.

Rivers flow until they reach the sea. At this point, much of the silt remaining in the water drops to the bottom, forming fan-shaped areas of land called deltas. These can grow and change over time with the flow of water, waves, storms, and other forces.

Which definition of the word "source" **BEST FITS** its use in the first paragraph?

- A. that from which anything comes forth
- B. the rising from the ground or beginning
- C. document from which information is obtained
- D. anything that provides inspiration for a later work

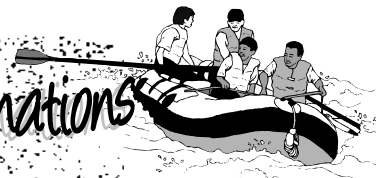
Which picture **MOST LIKELY** shows the source of a river?



Based on the passage, it could be concluded that the Nile River flows

- A. to the Mediterranean Sea.
- B. out of mountains to the sea.
- C. over several rugged cataracts.
- D. from a spring to the Indian Ocean.

The Rivers Flow - Answers & Explanations



Rivers always flow downhill. They form from water moving downward, usually from mountains to the sea. The **source** of most rivers' water is the melt from winter snows. Some may also start from small springs where groundwater seeps to the surface and then runs downhill. On their way to the sea, small streams collect additional water from rain, underground streams that reach the surface along the way, and other streams that "feed" it. As they move downhill, rivers grow as they fill with water and the topsoil or silt that flows in it.

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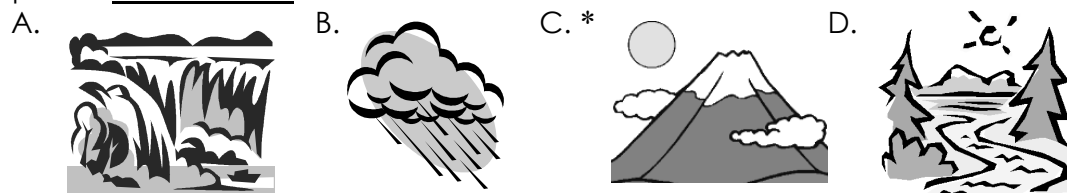
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Which definition of the word "source" **BEST FITS** its use in the first paragraph?

- A. that from which anything comes forth
- B. the rising from the ground or beginning *
- C. document from which information is obtained
- D. anything that provides inspiration for a later work

(Some students may argue that A would be correct. The "source" of the river is where it comes forth, but B is a better description of what happens with water.)

Which picture **MOST LIKELY** shows the source of a river?



(The first paragraph explains that most rivers start from mountain snows.)

Based on the passage, it could be concluded that the Nile River flows

- A. to the Mediterranean Sea.
- B. out of mountains to the sea. *
- C. over several rugged cataracts.
- D. from a spring to the Indian Ocean.

(While Choices A and C are true, that information cannot be determined from the passage. Only B is true, and is in fact the main idea of the passage.)

Mapping History: The History

The Ancient Egyptians settled mainly along the narrow flood plain of the Nile. Farms and villages developed along this 4000-mile-long river from Nubia in the south to the river's delta at the Mediterranean Sea in the north. To the west and the east of these settlements was desert.

For many years, though, Egypt was actually two different civilizations. Upper Egypt, located "up river," reached from the cataracts, or rapids, of the Nile to Memphis. Lower Egypt, or "down river," reached from Memphis around the tributaries of the Delta to the Mediterranean Sea.

There is some confusion over how the two kingdoms became one. The question is: who was the first person to unite Upper and Lower Egypt? History tells us that the first pharaoh to join the two lands was King Narmer of the first Dynasty in 3000 BC. Yet the story is often blended with that of another king, Menes. King Menes was a ruler in Egyptian legends, who may have been real. Therefore, both stories are told and considered.



In the first version, Narmer is the pharaoh credited with joining Upper and Lower Egypt. According to historians, the country was divided in two, but joined so the pharaoh became the "ruler of two lands" or "king of Upper and Lower Egypt." The Egyptian Museum in Cairo holds the famous Narmer Palette (left), a flat stone with pictures of that pharaoh engraved on both sides, which tends to support this story.

The second version is of King Menes, who was also possibly an Egyptian pharaoh of the First dynasty. Egyptian legend credits a pharaoh by this name with uniting Upper and Lower Egypt into one kingdom. In addition, 3rd century B.C. Egyptian history names the first pharaoh as Menes. It says he reigned 62 years and was killed by a hippopotamus. In the 5th century B.C., the Greek historian Herodotus called him Min. And two ancient king lists refer to him as Meni.

The discovery of the Narmer Palette in the late 19th century showing the pharaoh Narmer, wearing the symbols of both Upper and Lower Egypt tends to confuse many. Some Egyptologists think Narmer and Menes are one and the same; others believe Menes may have taken over an already-unified kingdom from Narmer; and still others think Menes completed the process of joining the two lands, started by Narmer.

Regardless, Menes is said to have built the capital city of Egypt (that they called Kemet) at Memphis, though there is no archaeological evidence of this. On the other hand, there have been finds, including the Narmer Palette, to support that version of the story.

Mapping History: The Mapping

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the map to illustrate as much information from the history reading as you can.

