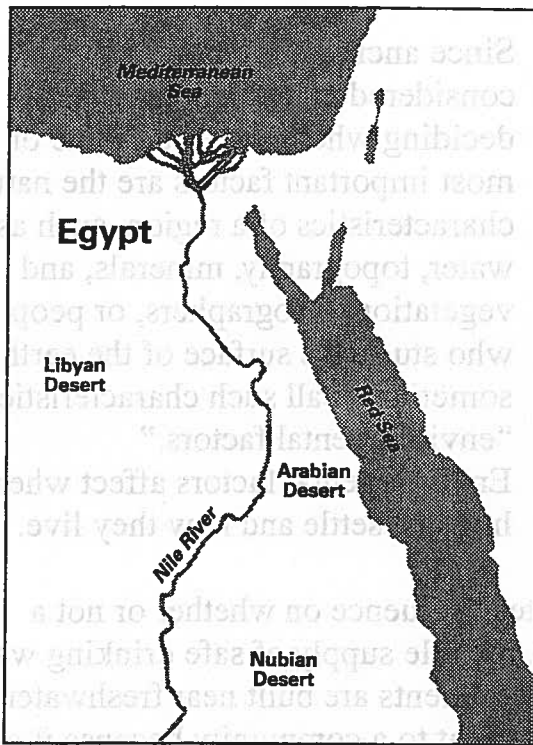


Information About Settlement in Egypt



Most people in ancient Egypt settled along the Nile River. The water and topography of the Nile encouraged settlement along its banks. Beginning in 5500 B.C.E., settlers came to Egypt from Canaan, the Arabian Desert, and the Nubian Desert in search of water supplies. As they settled along the banks of the Nile, they noticed that the river had a predictable cycle of flooding. Every July, floodwaters overflowed the Nile's banks and soaked the dry ground. The flood lasted several weeks and left behind a thin ribbon of rich soil ideal for farming. **On the map, shade in the areas along the Nile where annual flooding left rich soil.**

Besides soil and water, the Nile was also a rich source of animal life and vegetation. Fish, ducks, geese, and other edible waterbirds were found in the delta area. Papyrus, a reedlike plant, was

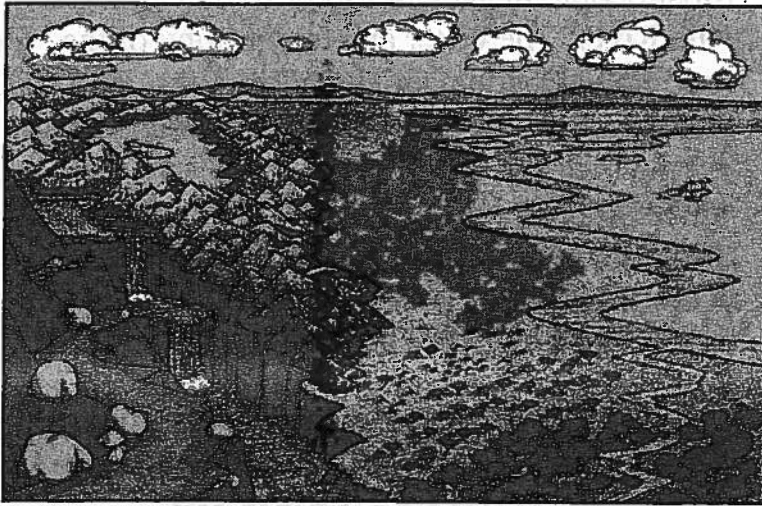
harvested and made into baskets, paper, and sandals. Referring to the many ways the Nile affected daily life, one ancient historian called the land of Egypt "the gift of the Nile."

On the map, draw visuals on one side of the Nile representing several resources that the river provided.

The Nile's regular flood cycle promoted stability and peace in ancient Egypt. After the flooding went down, Egyptian farmers used a device called a *shaduf* to raise water from the Nile to irrigate their fields. The shaduf consisted of a counterweighted bucket on a pole that could easily be operated by one person. By using freshwater from the Nile for irrigation, Egyptian farmers prevented salt from building up and destroying the fertility of their fields. This freed the Egyptians from continually having to search for new areas with fertile soil. As a result, Egyptian settlements were less likely to move and thereby set off boundary disputes like those in Mesopotamia. **On the map, draw a visual on one side of the Nile of a farmer using a shaduf to irrigate his field.**

Ancient Egypt's topography also promoted peace and stability. The Nile valley was protected by three deserts—the Libyan, Arabian, and Nubian. These deserts acted as natural barriers and made it difficult for foreign invaders to disrupt life along the Nile. Because the Egyptians did not have to worry about fighting enemies, they did not devote a lot of resources to developing military technology as did the Mesopotamians. **On the map, circle the names of the deserts that discouraged outsiders from attacking ancient Egypt.**

Information About Environmental Factors



Since ancient times, humans have considered many factors when deciding where to settle. Some of the most important factors are the natural characteristics of a region, such as water, topography, minerals, and vegetation. Geographers, or people who study the surface of the earth, sometimes call such characteristics “environmental factors.”

Environmental factors affect where humans settle and how they live.

Water is the environmental factor that has the greatest influence on whether or not a human settlement will thrive. Humans must have a reliable supply of safe drinking water to survive. To provide for this need, most human settlements are built near freshwater sources, such as lakes and rivers. Water is also important to a community because it can act as a source of food and transportation. Since prehistoric times, humans have included in their diet fish and waterfowl, such as ducks and geese. Many inland cities use rivers as “highways” to connect them with other cities located on seacoasts miles away.

Topography, or the natural shape of the land, is another environmental factor that greatly affects human settlement. For the most part, humans prefer to settle in flat, fertile (productive) areas, such as plains or valleys. This is because plains and valleys provide large open spaces for farming. Humans have settled in deserts and mountainous regions, but usually these landforms act as natural barriers that make travel difficult.

Minerals are sometimes called the “hidden” environmental factor, since they are often found below the earth’s surface. Minerals are natural substances that are usually found in mountainous regions. Some of the most well-known minerals are gold, silver, iron, copper, and tin. Humans use minerals to improve the quality of their lives. For example, minerals can be molded into coins or used to create tools and weapons.

In contrast to minerals, *vegetation* is a visible environmental factor. Humans use grasses, plants, and trees as sources of food, tools, and building materials. The variety of plant life can vary dramatically from region to region depending on the climate. For this reason, humans typically avoid settling in regions with harsh climates, such as deserts where plant life is scarce. Most human settlements are found in moderate climate regions where there is predictable rainfall and a variety of plant life.