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9th Grade World History/Geography

Comparing Human Actions on the Mississippi and Nile Rivers

Standards:

North Carolina 9th Grade World History Standards

Competency Goal 2: Emerging Civilizations - The learner will analyze the development of early civilizations in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

Objectives **2.01** Trace the development and assess the achievements of early river civilizations, including but not limited to those around the Huang-He, Nile, Indus, and Tigris-Euphrates rivers.

National Council for Social Studies Standards:

Standard III: People, Places and Environments-describe the processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement; and to see how human actions modify the physical environment

Goals of the Lesson:

1. Students will explain the reasons why many human civilizations rose in river valleys.
2. Students will understand how human actions affect the environment in positive and negative ways.
3. Students will compare and contrast the effects of human actions on the Mississippi and Nile Rivers.

Resources and Background Information:

Barry, John M. *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997.

Reading about the Aswan High Dam-suggested source is Rosenberg, Matt. "Nile River: Aswan High Dam Controls the Nile River." *About.com: Geography*. The New York Times Company, 14 June 2010. Web. 14 July 2010.

Reading about the Mississippi Levee System-suggested source is Kemp, Katherine. *The Mississippi Levee System and the Old River Control Structure*. Tulane University, 6 Jan. 2000. Web. 14 July 2010.

Vocabulary terms used in the lesson:

Alluvium	Dam
Alluvial plain	Levee
Delta	

Procedure:

1. Anticipatory Set-Write the following question on the board and have the students answer it using the think-pair-share method. "Why do you think many human civilizations rose in river valleys?"
2. As a class, discuss the students' response to the questions. List their answers on the board. *Suggested responses: transportation, irrigation, drinking/cooking, cleaning/sanitation. Other benefits-fertile soil for agriculture from floods (alluvium)*
3. Divide the students into small groups and have them create their own definitions of the vocabulary terms for the lesson. After they have created their own definitions have the students to use dictionaries to check their definitions and make corrections.

Definitions:

Alluvium: clay, silt, sand, gravel, or similar detrital material deposited by running water. *

Alluvial plain: a level or gently sloping surface formed of sediments laid down by streams, generally during flooding. **

Delta: the alluvial deposit at the mouth of a river. *

Levee: an embankment for preventing flooding. *

Dam: a barrier preventing the flow of water; a barrier built across a watercourse for impounding water. *

* Source-www.merriam-webster.com

** Source-www. dictionary.com

4. Class discussion: What are the benefits of a river for agriculture? *Provides water for irrigation, flooding leaves behind alluvium, which is good for agriculture. Can rivers cause problems for human civilizations? Flooding can destroy crops and homes. How do humans try to control flooding? Build levees and dams—discuss what these are.*
5. Distribute copies of the reading about the Aswan High Dam to half of the students and the reading about the Mississippi River Levees to the other half of the students. Students will silently read their passage.
6. After students are finished reading their passages have the students form groups with other students who read their same reading identify advantages and

disadvantages of the human actions on the geography of the region they explored. Have a representative from each group share their responses with the class. Students should record the classes' responses in their notebook. *The students should have identified that the benefits were that there was less flooding in the region and in Egypt hydroelectric power was created. The disadvantages are that the fertility of the soil was affected by the lack of flooding and chemical fertilizers had to be used in agriculture and there were negative effects on wetlands.*

7. To conclude the lesson, show students a PowerPoint presentation with images of the river basins of the two rivers, the Mississippi River and its levees and the Nile River and the Aswan High Dam.

Assessment:

Grade students on their participation in the class discussions and check their notebooks for notes.