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NEH Landmarks Workshop  
The Most Southern Place on Earth

Lesson Plan

Subject--Ancient Civilizations: Egypt  
Grade 6

### **Essential Questions**

- How do the geographical features of a place influence human behavior: culture, politics, and economic structures?
- How were the Nile and Mississippi River similar in the ways they impacted people in the past (ancient Egypt and the Mississippi Delta in the 1800s and early 1900s)?
- How closely tied were the river and economic/cultural patterns of slavery and forced labor?

### **Specific Objectives**

- To make hypotheses about how the Nile and Mississippi Rivers affected human behavior patterns in the past.
- To research the Nile and Mississippi Rivers, applying the Five Themes of Geography, looking for data and information that support or disprove the hypotheses.
- To identify elements of the Five Themes of Geography (Location, Place, Human/Environment Interaction, Movement, and Regions)
- To examine the relationship between great rivers and their productivity and slavery.

### **Procedures**

- This lesson would be introduced after Chapter 7 in History Alive! (Geography and the Early Settlement of Egypt, Kush, and Canaan).
- Students will work in groups, with half of the class assigned to the Nile and the other half to the Mississippi. Each group will formulate hypotheses about how the river affected human behavior patterns in each of the following categories:
  - A. How did the river affect human settlement patterns? (place, movement, regions)
  - B. How did the river contribute to or hinder crop production? (place, human/environment interactions)
  - C. How did the river contribute to transportation and trade? (place, movement, human/environment interactions)

- D. How did the river influence social structures and hierarchies? (place, movement, regions)
  - E. How did the river influence culture (religion, the arts, food, clothing, etc.)? (place, movement, human/environment interactions, regions)
- Students will post their hypotheses near their work stations.
  - Students will research their rivers, using the guiding questions (attached)
  - **Egypt resources:** History Alive! materials (including experiential activities and online resources, Across the Centuries textbooks (Houghton Mifflin), [www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/world history/introancientegypt1.htm](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/world%20history/introancientegypt1.htm); [www.ancientnile.co.uk/nile.php](http://www.ancientnile.co.uk/nile.php); and other websites.
  - **Mississippi resources:** Barry, John. Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How it Changed America. New York: Touchstone. 1998. (excerpts); Cobb, James C. The Most Southern Place on Earth. Oxford University Press. 1994.; Film, The American Experience, Fatal Flood. (also on [www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/flood/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/flood/); Jung, John. Lives of Mississippi Delta Chinese Grocers. Yin and Yang Press. 2008.

### **Culmination**

- Students will compile their research findings in a presentation format: a booklet, a PowerPoint slide show, a bulletin board, or other format suitable for sharing with others.
- Students will discuss and decide whether or not their hypotheses were supported by their research.
- Students will compare their findings with other groups who researched the same river and will discuss both groups' hypotheses.
- Students will present highlights of their research and discuss their hypotheses in panels presented before their peers.
- Students will engage in a seminar (Socratic) discussing the role of slavery in relation to the ancient Nile and the Mississippi Delta in the 1800 and early 1900s.

### **Materials and resources**

- **See above**

### **Evaluation related to objectives**

1. To make hypotheses about how the Nile and Mississippi Rivers affected human behavior patterns in the past. **ASSESSMENT:** Hypotheses are written as statements related to suggested topics. Following research, students present written and oral analysis of their hypotheses.
  2. To research the Nile and Mississippi Rivers, applying the Five Themes of Geography, looking for data and information that support or disprove the hypotheses. **ASSESSMENT:** Students are each responsible for researching one or more Geographic Theme--information will be assessed for validity and thoroughness.
- To examine the relationship between great rivers and their productivity and slavery.

ASSESSMENT: Participation in Socratic Seminar and post-seminar essay.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Periods \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Humanities 6

## Guiding Questions for Research Using the Five Themes of Geography

Write the name of the river you are researching \_\_\_\_\_

### Each person in your group should do 1 and 2 (Location)

1. Location: Find your river on a map. Describe the relative location.
2. Location: On the outline map provided, color the river in blue and lightly shade in the delta.

### Each person in your group of three will research two topics from the list below.

3. Place, Human/Environment Interaction, Movement, Regions
  - A. Research crops produced near the river. Explain why these particular crops were cultivated and how the river contributed to the success or failure of these Crops. Which crops were used primarily for food and which for commercial Purposes?
  - B. Who worked on the crops? Were there social structures that provided laborers? Who gained most from crop production? Did the social structure Seem "fair"? What was life like for the workers? For the owners or people In higher positions of authority?
  - C. How did the river influence culture (religion, visual arts, music, clothing, Food)?
  - D. How did the river affect transportation and trade?
  - E. Describe the river itself so that someone can picture it. What would you see If you traveled down the river in a boat? What would you see from the banks?
  - F. Describe life on the land surrounding the rivers--what would you see if you Traveled throughout the land?
  - G. What did humans do to change or utilize the river? How did humans handle Flooding?

