

Explore More—Location, Location, Location!

Directions: Listen to your teacher talk about the locations of human communities that populated the major regions of the world. You will learn how humans adapted to a variety of environments. Refer to the maps in your Explore Geography Picture Dictionary to locate the places your teacher mentions. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

Communities Develop around the World

By about 5000 B.C., civilizations had developed in several regions around the world.

Point to this date on the class time line.

These human communities included areas in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. The ancestors of the Maya developed communities in the rain forests and coastal plains in Mesoamerica. To the south, the ancestors of the Inca had settled in a valley on the banks of the Cuzco River in the Andes Mountains. Civilizations developed in West Africa and along the Nile River in northeastern Africa. Populations also developed along river valleys in Asia. One civilization began in the Huang He River Valley in China. Another began in an area called the Fertile Crescent, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Point to these areas on the world map.

Adapting to a Variety of Environments

Each early human society had to adapt to the environment, whether it was savannah, mountain, rain forest, plain, or river valley. However, each group had one thing in common—they learned how to farm the land. The settlement at Çatal Hüyük, which flourished from 6500-5700 B.C., is one of the earliest examples of a community beginning to farm.

Point to this date on the class time line.

The community of Çatal Hüyük was near a river, which provided plenty of water and fertile soil. Farmers grew many different crops, including wheat, barley, and peas. The people in South America built terraces in the mountainside to grow crops such as potatoes.

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The people in Mesoamerica grew corn in fields they specially prepared. They made the soil richer for farming by cutting down plants and trees, burning them, and using the ashes to help their crops grow. In China, the Huang He River overflowed its banks every year, bringing fertile yellow soil to the valley. This soil made the crops grow better. People in the Fertile Crescent and Nile River Valley also took advantage of the rich soil their environment provided. ❖

Questions for further discussion:

- What would you like to know more about in terms of the human communities that populated major regions of the world? Frame questions that you can answer by historical study and research. Conduct this research and discuss your findings.
- What role might chance have played in the development of each early human community around the world?
- How can the environment affect the economic performance of a civilization? How did the early civilizations you learned about benefit economically from their locations?