



# Cradles of civilization

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for World History

Target audience – World history learners

Time required – 15 minutes

## Activity

Explore the geographic similarities and differences of the locations of the early river valley civilizations.

## Standards

**C3: D2.His.14.9-12.** Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.  
**C3: D2.His.1.9-12.** Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place, as well as broader historical contexts.

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will compare and contrast geographic characteristics of early river valley civilizations.
- Students will identify the factors that contributed to habitation of early river valley civilizations.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/worldHistoryGeoInquiry2>

## Ask

### Where were the early civilizations located?

- Click the link above to launch the map.
- With the Details button depressed, click the button, Content.
- Click the latitude lines that bound the early river valley civilizations.
- ? What was the general geographic location of those civilizations? [15N – 45N]
- Make an inference about temperatures in this temperature zone. [Continental climate with warm to hot summers and cool to cold winters]

## Acquire

### What geographic factor was essential for the start of early civilizations?

- Click the checkbox to the left of the layer name, Major Rivers.
- ? What did each early civilization have in common? [At least one major river flows through the area, and land is relatively flat.]

## Explore

### What benefits did the rivers provide?

- Click each river valley civilization, and read the text and look at the photo. (Hint: You might need to click the arrow in the upper-right corner of the pop-up window.)
- ? What could be some possible effects of seasonal flooding for these river valley civilizations? [The floods deposited rich soil and provided water for irrigation.]

## Analyze

### What other geographic features were important?

- Turn on the layer, Arid and semi-arid lands.
- Click Bookmarks and select Nile.
- ? What geographic features do you observe near the Nile civilization? [*Hills and water to the east and vast desert surrounding it.*]
- Repeat the two previous steps for each of the other three river valley civilizations.
- ? What geographic features do you observe with the remaining three civilizations? [*All civilizations were bounded by vast deserts and mountains.*]
- ? Why did the river valley civilizations develop where they did and persist through time? [*Along with fresh water for drinking and food growth, the vast deserts and tall mountains formed geographic boundaries to keep adversaries away.*]

## Act

### How did population grow over time?

- Turn off layer, Arid and semi-arid lands.
- Turn on layer, World Population Density 2015.
- Using the bookmarks and the zoom and pan tools, observe the current population density patterns at each early civilization site.
- ? How does the population density today compare to the locations of the early river valley civilizations? [*There is generally high population today in the areas of the early river valley civilizations.*]

### TURN A MAP LAYER ON AND OFF

- Make sure that the Details pane is selected, and click Show Contents Of Map.
- To show individual map layers, select the check boxes next to the layer names.
- Hint: If a map layer name is light gray, zoom in or out on the map until the layer name is black. The layer can now be turned on.

### ZOOM TO A BOOKMARK

- Click Bookmarks.
- Click a bookmark name to zoom to a map location and scale.

## Next Steps

**DID YOU KNOW?** ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://www.esri.com/schools>.

**THEN TRY THIS...**

- Create a story map comparing similarities and differences of the early river valley civilizations, including research on art and culture.
- Using an ArcGIS Online organizational account for schools, use the Trace Downstream analysis tool. Ascertain which way the rivers are flowing, noting that geographic features influence direction of rivers, not cardinal directions.

### TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from these high school texts.

- *World History by Glencoe — Chapters 2 & 3*
- *World History by Prentice Hall — Chapter 1*
- *World History: Human Journey by Holt — Chapters 1–4*