

Gift of the Nile

Contributed by: St. Philomena's School, Portsmouth, RI

RI – SS – GSEs:

- HP4 (7-8) – 1
- HP 4 (5-6) – 2
- E 2 (5-6) – 2

Recommended for **Grade 7**

Description:

Students create irrigation systems to irrigate crops in dry weather.

Objective:

To demonstrate how geographic factors impacted Mesopotamian adaptation and how innovation helped the civilization develop.

Green Animals Connector:

Students will study the papyrus growing in the garden to discuss ancient water systems and flooding.

Background Information:

“The annual Nile floods have historically been the most important natural event in Egypt by far. Every year the great flood gifts Northeast Africa the water and silt that brings life to the Sahara desert. Ancient Egypt would not have existed to build their ancient pyramids, temples and tombs were it not for the Nile River floods.

Eight countries feed into the Nile River upstream of Egypt. However, Ethiopia's Blue Nile accounts for more than 80% of the Nile's water that flows through Egypt. Since long before there were civilizations along the Nile, the Ethiopian Highlands would experience rain storms every year from June to mid-September. That rain washed the rich volcanic topsoil into the Blue Nile River, which was then carried thousands of Kilometers along the Nile through Sudan and Egypt and deposited along its banks in the über-fertile Nile Delta. For thousands of years the Nile River Valley civilizations relied on this silt to fertilize their crops and animal feed, and the Blue Nile floods to irrigate them.”

<http://marktanner.com/niletrip/importance-of-nile-river-floods.html>

“Making History – Irrigation” – YouTube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weqFW0xEh3g>

Procedure:

- Students brainstorm a way to demonstrate a flooding and drying out of an agricultural plot of land
- Students then create a proposal in Keynote or Powerpoint to potential landowners
 - Include positive and negative impacts on the land

- Demonstrate environmental research on possible effects on wildlife, aesthetic (visual impact) issues and reclamation (returning land to its former state)
- Students create an irrigation system similar to the ideas developed in River Valley civilization
- Discuss the ways the technologies of the ancient world influence our decisions today