

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Fertile Crescent

By Olivia Mendoza

**W**hen you think of land in places like Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Egypt, what do you picture? Is it green fields, or is it deserts? It's true that lots of land in the Middle East is

called silt. People soon found ways



## Preview

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Rivers and curves around the Arabian Desert. Then it curves down around the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea. Some say the curve stops in Sinai. Others say it keeps going. They say the western side of the curve goes down part of the Nile.

All the rivers and bodies of water made the land good for farming. Land good for farming is called fertile. The rivers also flooded each year. Floods left behind rich soil

the area made good crops. Wheat, barley, protein-filled chickpeas, and tasty figs were good to eat. They were also easier to grow than many plants. Animals good for farming, like pigs, sheep, and goats, lived there too. Desert cats also lived there. They helped keep mice and rats away.

All these factors together meant that farming started early in the Fertile Crescent. There are signs of domestication from around 11,000 years ago! Once people got

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the hang of farming, they began making cities. That's why places like Jericho date that far back too. That's also why the Fertile Crescent is sometimes called the "cradle of civilization." Just like a baby's cradle, it saw the birth of the first civilizations.

Today, the Fertile Crescent is drier than it used to be. There are also many more people living there.

Places like Egypt and Mesopotamia used to have a few million people at most. Those were huge numbers at the time! Now the numbers are in the tens and hundreds of millions total. That makes using the limited water in the area trickier. Modern farming and trade are needed to keep making the Not-so-Fertile Crescent a good place to live.



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1. What is the main idea of the text?
  - a. Some deserts have surprisingly fertile spots.
  - b. The Fertile Crescent isn't as fertile as it once was.
  - c. Civilization could only start in the Fertile Crescent.
  - d. Many factors made the Fertile Crescent ideal to start civilization.
2. Reread the following sentence from the article.

Floods left behind rich soil called silt.

Which of the following definitions of *rich* is being used?



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4. Which claim is supported by the text?
  - a. Chickpeas were the most important crop for early farmers.
  - b. Big populations can cause special problems for resource use.
  - c. Yearly floods are needed for productive farming.
  - d. The Fertile Crescent once had the most fertile land in the world.

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# The Fertile Crescent



Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. \_\_\_ i \_\_\_ \_\_\_ t e d \_\_\_\_\_

**clue:** having a set amount

2. m \_\_\_ \_\_\_ e r \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_



## Preview

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**clue:** good for growing things

6. i \_\_\_ r \_\_\_ g a \_\_\_ \_\_\_ n \_\_\_\_\_

**clue:** human-made ways to water land

7. c r \_\_\_ d \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

**clue:** kind of bed for a baby

8. \_\_\_ o \_\_\_ \_\_\_ s \_\_\_ i c a \_\_\_ \_\_\_ o n \_\_\_\_\_

**clue:** steps to tame plants or animals for human use

9. p \_\_\_ r \_\_\_ \_\_\_ n e \_\_\_ t \_\_\_\_\_

**clue:** lasting; without end

10. p \_\_\_ o t \_\_\_ \_\_\_ n \_\_\_\_\_

**clue:** nutrient good for growth and energy

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# The Fertile Crescent



In the article, "The Fertile Crescent," you read about lands between Africa, Europe, and Asia that can be called different things: the Middle East, the Fertile Crescent, and the cradle of civilization. Use facts from the article to tell why there are different names for the area. Do all of the names describe the exact same place? Do you think one name is better than another? Why or why not?

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## ANSWER KEY

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## ANSWER KEY

# The Fertile Crescent



Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. l i m i t e d

limited

**clue:** *having a set amount*



10. p r o t e i n

protein

**clue:** *nutrient good for growth and energy*