

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade 2018 Summer Packet

### Task:

Read documents 1, 2a, and 2b and answer the questions that follow. Then you are going to write a 1 paragraph essay based on the following inquiry question.

**To what extent did the geography of China influence its culture and society?**

**Source:** From *The Great Wall* by Elizabeth Mann. Mikaya Press, 1997, pg 9.

**Context:** Read this excerpt from a book by author Elizabeth Mann about ancient China. It describes daily life for the Chinese people long ago, and how Chinese culture developed during that time period.

DOCUMENT

1

In China people stayed in one place. Generation after generation, farm families lived in the same houses and worked the same fertile fields. They planted and harvested and carefully stored grain for the winter months. Thanks to the happy combination of rich soil and plentiful rainfall, China prospered and Chinese culture flourished.

Chinese artists produced magnificent paintings, sculptures, and ceramics. Poets and philosophers wrote important and beautiful works that have endured to this day. Remarkable inventions, from the compass to fireworks to the wheelbarrow to printing and paper, were developed in China.

The emperor was believed to be the Son of Heaven, almost a god. He not only kept order in the society, he maintained harmony between the people and the gods. When an emperor died one of his sons, usually the eldest, would take his place. Some ruling families, or dynasties, stayed in power for centuries, peacefully passing the title of emperor from generation to generation.

Order, harmony, and stability were important to the Chinese.



*Most Chinese were farmers. They lived by the endlessly repeating rhythms of planting, cultivating, and harvesting.*



**Source:** From Ducksters Education Site, “History for Kids: Ancient China,” [http://www.ducksters.com/history/china/geography\\_of\\_ancient\\_china.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/china/geography_of_ancient_china.php). Accessed June 13, 2017.

**Context:** Read this document from an educational website about the geography of China.

DOCUMENT **2a**

### **Rivers**

Perhaps the two most important geographical features of Ancient China were the two major rivers that flowed through central China: the Yellow River to the north and the Yangtze River to the south. These major rivers were a great source of fresh water, food, fertile soil, and transportation. They also were the subjects of Chinese poetry, art, literature, and folklore.

### **Yellow River**

The Yellow River is often called the “cradle of Chinese civilization.” It was along the banks of the Yellow River where the Chinese civilization first formed. The Yellow River is 3,395 miles long making it the sixth longest river in the world. It is also called the Huang He River.

Early Chinese farmers built small villages along the Yellow River. The rich yellow colored soil was good for growing a grain called millet. The farmers of this area also raised sheep and cattle.

### **Yangtze River**

The Yangtze River is south of the Yellow River and flows in the same direction (west to east). It is 3,988 miles long and is the third longest river in the world. Just like the Yellow River, the Yangtze played an important role in the development of the culture and civilization of Ancient China.

Farmers that lived along the Yangtze River took advantage of the warm climate and rainy weather to grow rice. Eventually the land along the Yangtze became some of the most important and wealthy land in all of Ancient China.

The Yangtze also served as a boundary between northern and southern China. It is very wide and difficult to cross. The famous Battle of Red Cliffs [large battle fought in 208 CE between warlords from northern and southern lands] took place along the river.

### **Mountains**

To the south and southeast of China are the Himalaya Mountains. These are the highest mountains in the world. They provided a nearly impassable border for Ancient China, keeping the area isolated from many other civilizations. They were also important to Chinese religion and were considered sacred.

### **Deserts**

To the north and west of Ancient China were two of the world’s largest deserts: the Gobi Desert and the Taklamakan Desert. These deserts also provided borders that kept the Chinese isolated from the rest of the world. The Mongols, however, lived in the Gobi Desert and were constantly raiding cities of northern China. This is why the Great Wall of China was built to protect the Chinese from these northern invaders.





