Name: _____ Date: _____

A River Drops Its Mud and Builds Land

Circle group

A river carries more than water. It picks up tiny bits of soil, sand, and clay. These bits are called sediment. A fast river can carry a lot of it. That is why a river after a storm looks brown.

When a river reaches the sea or a big lake, things change. The water spreads out and slows down. A slow river cannot hold as much sediment, so it drops it. The heavy bits fall first. The finest mud settles last.

Over many years, the sediment piles up and builds new land where the river meets the sea. This land is called a delta. Many deltas look a bit like a triangle. The river often splits into small streams that wander across the delta. The streams may change paths.

The soil in a delta is rich, so farmers grow crops there. Birds, fish, and plants that like wet ground live there too. A delta shows that moving water can build land as well as wear it away.

Questions

1. What is sediment?

_____

_____

2. Why does a river slow down at the sea?

_____

_____

3. What happens to sediment when the river slows?

_____

_____

4. What is a delta?

_____

_____

5. Why do farmers grow crops in a delta?

_____

_____

6. How does the passage show water can build and wear away land?

_____

_____

Words to know

sediment: tiny bits of soil, sand, or mud carried by water
delta: land built up where a river flows into the sea
settles: sinks slowly and comes to rest at the bottom
wander: to move along without a straight path

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

A River Drops Its Mud and Builds Land

Triangle group

A river carries more than water. As it rushes along, it picks up tiny bits of soil, sand, and clay. These bits are called sediment. A fast river can carry a lot of it, which is why a river after a storm often looks brown.

When a river reaches the sea or a big lake, something changes. The water spreads out and slows down. A slow river cannot hold as much sediment, so it drops it. The heavier bits fall first, and the finest mud settles last.

Over many years, the sediment piles up and builds new land where the river meets the sea. This land is called a delta. Many deltas are shaped a little like a triangle. The river often splits into several smaller streams that wander across the delta, and the streams may shift their paths from time to time.

The soil in a delta is rich, so farmers often grow crops there. Deltas are also homes for birds, fish, and many plants that like wet ground. A delta is proof that moving water can build land as well as wear it away.

Questions

1. What is sediment?

_____

_____

2. Why does a river slow down when it reaches the sea?

_____

_____

3. What happens to the sediment when the river slows down?

_____

_____

4. What is a delta?

_____

_____

5. Why do farmers like to grow crops in a delta?

_____

_____

6. How does the passage show that moving water can both build and wear away land?

_____

_____

Words to know

sediment: tiny bits of soil, sand, or mud carried by water
delta: land built up where a river flows into the sea
settles: sinks slowly and comes to rest at the bottom
wander: to move along without a straight path

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

A River Drops Its Mud and Builds Land

Square group

A river carries far more than water. As it rushes along, it picks up minuscule particles of soil, sand, and clay, which together are known as sediment. A swift river can transport an enormous amount of it, which is why a river often looks brown after a heavy storm.

When the river arrives at the sea or a large lake, conditions change. The water fans out and slows down, and a slower river is unable to hold as much sediment, so it deposits it. The heavier particles drop first, while the finest mud settles last of all.

Over many years, the sediment accumulates and builds new land at the place where the river meets the sea. This land is called a delta. Many deltas are shaped somewhat like a triangle. The river frequently divides into several smaller streams that meander across the delta, and these streams may gradually shift their courses.

The soil in a delta is rich, so farmers often grow crops there. Deltas also provide homes for birds, fish, and many plants that thrive in wet ground. A delta is proof that moving water can build land just as surely as it can wear land away.

Questions

1. What is sediment?

_____

_____

2. Why does a river slow down when it reaches the sea?

_____

_____

3. What does the river do with the sediment when it slows down?

_____

_____

4. What is a delta?

_____

_____

5. Why do farmers often grow crops in a delta?

_____

_____

6. How does a delta show that water can both build and wear away land?

_____

_____

Words to know

sediment: tiny bits of soil, sand, or mud carried by water
delta: land built up where a river flows into the sea
settles: sinks slowly and comes to rest at the bottom

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: A River Drops Its Mud and Builds Land

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: A River Drops Its Mud and Builds Land

Easier · 167 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.9

1. Tiny bits of soil, sand, and clay carried by a river.
2. The water spreads out.
3. The river drops it, and it settles.
4. New land built from sediment where a river meets the sea.
5. The soil there is rich.
6. The river carries soil from upstream, then builds new land when it drops the sediment.

Triangle: A River Drops Its Mud and Builds Land

This passage · 186 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.7

1. Tiny bits of soil, sand, and clay carried by a river.
2. The water spreads out.
3. The river drops it, and it settles to the bottom.
4. New land built from sediment where a river meets the sea.
5. The soil there is rich.
6. The river wears away soil upstream and carries it, then builds new land when it drops the sediment.

Square: A River Drops Its Mud and Builds Land

Harder · 198 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.2

1. Tiny particles of soil, sand, and clay carried by a river.
2. The water fans out.
3. It deposits it, and the particles settle.
4. New land built from sediment where a river meets the sea.
5. The soil there is rich.
6. The river wears soil away upstream and carries it, then builds new land by depositing it.