Name: _____ Date: _____

The Lake in Cambodia That Swells and Shrinks

Circle group

In Cambodia, a lake called Tonle Sap changes size every year. In the dry season, from about November to May, the lake is small and shallow. Water flows out of it along the Tonle Sap River. The river goes southeast to the great Mekong River.

Then the rainy season comes. Heavy rains fill the Mekong until it rises higher than the lake. The Mekong's water pushes up the Tonle Sap River. The river runs backward and pours into the lake. The lake gets several times bigger. It spreads over the forests and fields around it. When the rains end, the Mekong falls. The water flows back out, and the lake shrinks.

The yearly flood is a gift for the fish. They swim into the flooded forest to feed and lay eggs. Later, fishing families gather their catch. Fish from the lake is an important food for people in Cambodia.

Some villagers live on the lake. They have floating homes or houses on tall stilts. The floating houses rise and fall with the water. A few villages even move their boats and buildings closer to the shore or farther away. These families have learned to live with the lake.

Questions

1. Where is Tonle Sap?

_____

_____

2. Which way does the Tonle Sap River flow in the dry season?

_____

_____

3. What happens to the river when the Mekong rises higher than the lake?

_____

_____

4. Why is the flood a gift for the fish?

_____

_____

5. What makes the lake shrink again?

_____

_____

6. Why do floating houses suit life on this lake?

_____

_____

Words to know

shallow: not deep from top to bottom
stilts: tall posts that hold a house above the water
flooded: covered with water that rose over the land

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: _____

The Lake in Cambodia That Swells and Shrinks

Triangle group

In Cambodia, a lake called Tonle Sap changes its size every year. During the dry season, which lasts from about November to May, the lake is fairly small and shallow. Water flows out of it along the Tonle Sap River, southeast toward the great Mekong River.

Then the rainy season arrives. Heavy rains fill the Mekong until it rises higher than the lake. The Mekong's water pushes up the Tonle Sap River, so the river runs backward and pours into the lake. The lake swells to several times its dry season size and spreads across the forests and fields around it. When the rains end and the Mekong falls, the water flows back out again, and the lake shrinks.

This yearly flood is a gift for the fish. They swim into the flooded forest to feed and lay their eggs among the trees. Later, many fishing families gather their catch, and fish from the lake is an important food for people in Cambodia.

Some villagers live right on the lake in floating homes or in houses built high on stilts. As the water level rises and falls, the floating houses rise and fall with it, and a few villages even move their boats and buildings closer to the shore or farther away. The families have adapted to the rhythm of the lake.

Questions

1. Where is Tonle Sap located?

_____

_____

2. In which direction does the Tonle Sap River flow during the dry season?

_____

_____

3. What happens to the river when the Mekong rises higher than the lake?

_____

_____

4. Why is the flood a gift for the fish?

_____

_____

5. What causes the lake to shrink again?

_____

_____

6. Why do floating houses suit life on this lake?

_____

_____

Words to know

shallow: not deep from top to bottom
swells: grows bigger and fuller
stilts: tall posts that hold a house above the water
flooded: covered with water that rose over the land
adapted: changed ways of living to fit new conditions

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: _____

The Lake in Cambodia That Swells and Shrinks

Square group

In Cambodia, a lake called Tonle Sap alters its size dramatically every year. During the dry season, which stretches from roughly November to May, the lake is fairly small and shallow, and water drains out of it along the Tonle Sap River, heading southeast toward the enormous Mekong River.

Then the rainy season arrives. Torrential rains fill the Mekong until its level rises higher than that of the lake, and the Mekong's water surges up the Tonle Sap River, which therefore runs backward and empties into the lake. The lake swells to several times its dry season size and spreads across the forests and fields that surround it. Once the rains end and the Mekong falls, the water flows back out again, and the lake gradually shrinks.

This annual flood is a tremendous gift for the fish. They swim into the flooded forest to feed and to lay their eggs among the trees. Afterward, many fishing families gather their catch, and fish from the lake is an essential source of food for people throughout Cambodia.

Some villagers live directly on the lake, in floating homes or in houses perched high on stilts. As the water level climbs and drops, the floating houses rise and fall along with it, and a few villages even relocate their boats and buildings closer to the shore or farther away. These families have adapted to the rhythm of the lake.

Questions

1. In which country is Tonle Sap located?

_____

_____

2. In which direction does the Tonle Sap River flow during the dry season?

_____

_____

3. What happens to the river when the Mekong rises higher than the lake?

_____

_____

4. Why is the annual flood a gift for the fish?

_____

_____

5. What causes the lake to gradually shrink again?

_____

_____

6. Why are floating homes well suited to life on this lake?

_____

_____

Words to know

shallow: not deep from top to bottom
swells: grows bigger and fuller
stilts: tall posts that hold a house above the water
flooded: covered with water that rose over the land
adapted: changed ways of living to fit new conditions

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: The Lake in Cambodia That Swells and Shrinks

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

Circle: The Lake in Cambodia That Swells and Shrinks

Easier · 198 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.4

1. In Cambodia.
2. Out of the lake, southeast to the Mekong River.
3. It runs backward and pours into the lake.
4. They swim into the flooded forest to feed and lay eggs.
5. The rains end and the Mekong falls, so the water flows back out.
6. They rise and fall with the water.

Triangle: The Lake in Cambodia That Swells and Shrinks

This passage · 222 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.9

1. In Cambodia.
2. Out of the lake, southeast toward the Mekong River.
3. The river runs backward and pours into the lake.
4. They swim into the flooded forest to feed and lay eggs.
5. The rains end and the Mekong falls, so water flows back out.
6. They rise and fall with the changing water level.

Square: The Lake in Cambodia That Swells and Shrinks

Harder · 235 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.4

1. In Cambodia.
2. Out of the lake, southeast toward the Mekong River.
3. The river runs backward and empties into the lake.
4. They swim into the flooded forest to feed and lay eggs among the trees.
5. The rains end and the Mekong falls, so the water flows back out.
6. They rise and fall along with the changing water level.