

Discussion 7

Why settle here?

Objectives: To acquaint pupils with ideas about how geography can affect settlement. To introduce pupils to basic features of the landscape of China and the region around the fertile valleys around the Yellow River.

Materials: Maps of China, Asia and the World

Class set-up: Teacher presentation / Class discussion

Vocabulary: natural resources, settle, fertile, landscape

Discussion: Begin a discussion by asking pupils to identify some of the basic necessities of life (i.e.: what they require from their environment at a fundamental level to ensure survival), such as food, water and shelter. Then discuss how the natural resources and landscape of a place can affect whether or not people settle there. Can people grow food there? Is there an adequate and sustainable water source?

Show pupils a map of Ancient China and ask them to describe the land. Is there a source of water? How much fertile land is there? How is it distributed?

Ask pupils to comment on how the nature of this landscape might affect the way that people settle and ultimately use the land. Where would they settle and why?

Explain some of the ways in which the people of Ancient China used the land, and compare their experience with other ancient people like the Egyptians. You could make a link with modern China and how recent major changes, including dams, war and population growth have affected the way that people use the land today.

Wrap up the discussion by emphasizing the impact of the land on the way all ancient people lived. It is also important to point out the role the climate has played in destroying or preserving materials and objects from Ancient China.

Background information:

Climate, Yellow River, Yangzi River