The North China Plain is a flat region of grassland in Inner China. This region is sometimes called the “Land of the Yellow Earth” because the ground is covered by yellow limestone silt. The silt comes from the Gobi Desert and is carried by the wind to the North China Plain. The river that runs through the plain is also full of yellow silt. As a result, the river is called the Huang He, which translates to mean "Yellow River."

The Huang He is one of the longest rivers in the world. The river starts in the high western mountains and winds its way down to the eastern plains. The yellow silt it carries helps fertilize the surrounding lands, making the North China Plain a good place to settle down and grow crops.

1. Where does the yellow silt come from?

2. Why is the Yellow River called the “Yellow River”?

3. How did the geography of the North China Plain influence the way people lived?
Inner China includes the southeastern part of present-day China. It is a land of rolling hills, river valleys, and plains. Rivers flow through this area, where the fertile land supported larger, more settled populations.

Inner China has two major regions with very different climates. The northern region is the North China Plain. The drier, cooler climate allowed farmers to grow wheat and millet. They raised cattle, sheep, oxen, pigs, and chickens. They herded cattle, water buffalo, and horses. Settlers built permanent homes out of rammed earth (soil tightly packed to make solid walls).

To the south are the low river plains of the Chang River Basin. Near the Chang Jiang, there was limited farmland and grazing areas for animals such as cattle. But rice thrived in this warm, rainy area. As early as 10,000 BCE, settlers were able to grow rice in the river valley. They also raised pigs and poultry. Nearby seas provided plentiful seafood. People built permanent houses so they could stay in one place and tend their animals and crops.

4. How did the geography of the Chang River Basin influence how people lived?

5. What is one similarity between the development of people in the North China Plain and the Chang River Basin?
6. What is one major difference between these two areas of Inner China?

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7. Which of the following is the best cause-and-effect sentence about the geography or climate of Inner China?

A. Since there were fertile river valleys in Inner China, farmers grew wheat, millet, and rice.

B. Due to the fact that Inner China had dry desert land, people became nomads.

C. Owing to the fact that Inner China's land was mountainous and rocky, people only farmed rice.

D. On account of the land being filled with natural barriers, people were unable to farm.

8. Read the passage below to write a cause-and-effect sentence explaining how the geography of Outer China influenced how people became herders there.

Outer China did not have good farmland. For example, the Tibetan Plateau was not suitable for growing crops because the climate is so cold due to the high elevation. However, herders could raise livestock, or farm animals, and especially yaks.

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