



The Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers

8

✓ **Lesson Objectives**

Core Content Objectives

Students will:

- ✓ Locate Asia, India, and China on a map or globe
- ✓ Explain the importance of mountains in the development of early Asian civilizations
- ✓ Describe the key components of a civilization
- ✓ Explain the importance of the Yellow and Yangtze rivers for the development of civilizations in ancient times
- ✓ Describe contributions of ancient China (i.e., paper, silk, writing, the Great Wall)

Language Arts Objectives

The following language arts objectives are addressed in this lesson. Objectives aligning with the Common Core State Standards are noted with the corresponding standard in parentheses. Refer to the Alignment Chart for additional standards addressed in all lessons in this domain.

Students will:

- ✓ Interpret information from a Civilizations Chart and connect it to information learned in “The Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers” (RI.2.7)
- ✓ Compare and contrast orally farming in ancient China with farming in ancient India (RI.2.9)
- ✓ Ask and answer *what* questions orally to gather information or deepen understanding of the information contained in “The Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers” (SL.2.3)
- ✓ Prior to listening to “The Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers,” identify orally what they know and have learned about ancient India

Core Vocabulary

plateaus, n. High, wide, flat ground

Example: On their vacation to the Grand Canyon, Mack took pictures of many natural bridges and plateaus.

Variation(s): plateau

silt, n. A mixture of soil, sand, and clay

Example: Jimmy caught a fish with silt all over its fins.

Variation(s): none

sorrow, n. Deep suffering or pain that results from a loss or misfortune

Example: Amy felt great sorrow after losing the ring her mother had given her.

Variation(s): sorrows

Yangtze River, n. The longest river in China


Example: The Yangtze River is the third-longest river in the world.

Variation(s): none

Yellow River, n. A river that flows through China's northeastern lands

Example: The Yellow River was the home of the first Chinese civilization.

Variation(s): none

At a Glance	Exercise	Materials	Minutes
Introducing the Read-Aloud	What Have We Already Learned?	Image Cards 1–6; map from Map Quest Extension; Civilizations Chart; world map or globe	10
	Essential Background Information or Terms	world map or globe	
	Purpose for Listening		
Presenting the Read-Aloud	The Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers	world map or globe	15
Discussing the Read-Aloud	Comprehension Questions	world map or globe	10
	Word Work: Sorrow		5
 Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day			
Extensions	Civilizations Chart	Image Cards 7, 8; Instructional Master 2B-1	20
	Map Quest	Instructional Master 1B-1; map from Map Quest Extension; yellow and blue construction paper cut into the shape of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers; world map or globe [This exercise requires advance preparation.]	
Take-Home Material	Family Letter	Instructional Master 8B-1	



The Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers

8A

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

What Have We Already Learned?

On the class map, a world map, or a globe, have students locate the Himalayas, the Indus River, and the Ganges River. Then use the Civilizations Chart and accompanying Image Cards to help students review what they have already learned about early Indian civilization. You may also wish to ask the following questions:

- What happened to the Indus River when snow from the Himalayas melted? (It flooded.) How was this flooding helpful and harmful? (It left fertile soil on the surrounding land, which made it easier to grow crops. It also flooded their houses and could destroy things in its path.)
- How do we know that a civilization developed in the Indus River Valley? (There was a city with large structures; there was writing; there were laws; people had certain jobs.)
- What religions started in early India? (Hinduism and Buddhism) Who started Buddhism? (Siddhartha Gautama/the Buddha)
- What river is sacred to Hindus? (the Ganges) Why? (They believe that it is the home of a river goddess.)

Essential Background Information or Terms

Tell students that over the next several days they will hear read-alouds about ancient China. Locate China on a world map or globe for students. Tell students that China has the largest population in the world: over one billion people, with even more people than India, which also has more than one billion people. Share with students that over the next several days they will hear about early Chinese civilization. Remind students that early civilization in ancient India began near a river, the Indus River. Tell students that today's read-aloud is about two important rivers, the

Yellow and the Yangtze (*YANG*-see). Locate these rivers on a world map or globe.

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully to find out why the Yellow and Yangtze rivers were so important.

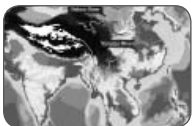


The Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers

◀ Show image 8A-1: Five rivers

The Tigris. The Euphrates. The Nile. The Indus. The Ganges. When you hear these names, what images do you see in your mind? ¹ Where have you heard these names before? ² What do they have in common? ³ Right! They are all rivers. And what is special about these five rivers? ⁴ That's right. These ancient rivers supplied the water needed for the world's very first civilizations. ⁵ Along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates in ancient Mesopotamia, people worked together to grow food, build cities, and develop a way of writing. Pyramids were built up and down the Nile River in Egypt. And in Asia, the Indus and the Ganges, snaking their way through India and Pakistan, have long been worshipped for their life-giving waters.

- 1 [Pause for student responses.]
- 2 [Pause for student responses.]
- 3 [Pause for student responses.]
- 4 [Pause again. If necessary, remind students who were in CKLA in Grade 1 to think back to when they studied *Early World Civilizations*.]
- 5 [Point to the location of the rivers on a world map as you read.]



◀ Show image 8A-2: Map showing the Yellow and Yangtze rivers

Today you are going to learn about the **Yellow River** and the **Yangtze River**, two more rivers that belong to this special group. ⁶ These two rivers, divided by the high, snowcapped Bayankala Mountains, are the two longest rivers in China. And they, too, are places where early civilizations began. More people live in the Yellow and Yangtze river valleys today than in any other region on the earth.

- 6 Say the names of the rivers with me: *Yellow* and *Yangtze*. Can you tell anything about either of these rivers from their names?



◀ Show image 8A-3: Yellow River with silt

High up in the mountains where the Yellow River begins, its waters are very clear, but as it travels its long route through the high **plateaus** ⁷ of the Bayankala Mountains, its color changes. Look at the picture and see if you can guess what makes the water turn yellow. ⁸ Rain and wind wash the **silt**—a fine mixture of soil, sand, and clay—from the mountains into the river, making it a muddy yellow. As this happens, the river bottom rises. And if the river bottom rises, what do you think happens to the water in

- 7 or high, wide, flat ground
- 8 What do you think makes the water turn yellow?

9 [Pause for student responses.]

10 [Pause again.]

11 Sorrow is a feeling of deep sadness caused by the loss of something or someone, or by some disappointment. The Yellow River often causes China's people sadness and pain when it floods.



12 The Yangtze River is named after an ancient place that was near the river.

13 or type of weather that is neither extremely hot nor extremely cold throughout the year

14 So the climate and fertile soil of the Yangtze River Valley make it perfect for growing which crop?



15 These inventions are still used today.



16 or people who have no set home and move often to find food

the river? It rises too! And then what happens?⁹ Right! The river overflows its banks, flooding the land on either side of it. Does this sound familiar? What other rivers have you learned about that flooded?¹⁰ Is this flooding good or bad? You have already learned the importance of flooding in creating fertile land for crops, but when large rivers like the Yellow River flood, they can also destroy whole cities. For this reason, the Chinese have given the Yellow River two nicknames: “Mother River,” and “China’s Great Sorrow.”¹¹

◀ **Show image 8A-4: Yangtze River and rice fields**

The Yangtze River, China’s longest river, lies to the south of the Yellow River. There the temperature is much warmer and flooding is less of a problem.¹² Its fertile valley is sometimes called “China’s rice bowl” because its temperate climate¹³ is perfect for growing rice.¹⁴ Wheat and millet, used in making bread and noodles, grow well along the Yellow River, but rice—the main crop of China—had its beginnings along the Yangtze. Together, these two river valleys form the country’s greatest food-producing region.

◀ **Show image 8A-5: Farming**

The Chinese have always been inventors. Many of their inventions changed the way people farmed, making the river valleys more and more productive. For example, the ancient Chinese invented seed planting. Instead of scattering seeds on top of the earth, they developed seed drills, used for planting seeds in ordered rows. They invented iron plows and harnesses so that horses or oxen could easily pull the plows. And to get water from low ground to the crops planted on higher ground, the Chinese invented a pump, to irrigate the fields.¹⁵

◀ **Show image 8A-6: Ancient Chinese city settlement**

Because they were inventive people, farming became easier. More and more nomadic people¹⁶ began to settle permanently along the banks of the two great rivers, where food was abundant.

Then, the same thing happened in China that happened in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India: cities emerged. Many separate cities and areas sprang up along the banks of the rivers, each led by a powerful king. The kings ruled over the people, much like the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. The people built walls, houses, and temples. They made tools and weapons of wood, stone, bronze, and iron. They also built boats. And, with the invention of copper coins, they began to trade with one another up and down both rivers. As they traded and farmed, the Chinese continued inventing new tools and systems. One of these was writing, which you will soon learn about, an important trademark of any civilization.

Discussing the Read-Aloud

15 minutes

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

1. *Literal* What two rivers did you hear about in today's read-aloud? (the Yellow and the Yangtze rivers) In which country are these rivers found? (China) On which continent? (Asia) [Have a student locate Asia and China on a world map or globe.]
2. *Inferential* What makes the Yellow River yellow? (It travels its long route through the high plateaus of the mountains; rain and wind wash the silt, a combination of soil, sand, and clay, from the mountains into the river, making it a muddy yellow.)
3. *Inferential* Why have the Chinese nicknamed the Yellow River "Mother River" and "China's Great Sorrow"? (The Yellow River creates fertile land for crops, but its flooding can also destroy surrounding cities and can cause the people there pain or sorrow.)
4. *Literal* What do the Chinese sometimes call the Yangtze River? (China's Rice Bowl) Why? (The fertile soil and climate are perfect for growing rice.)
5. *Evaluative* What special jobs do you think people might have had along the Yellow and Yangtze rivers? (Answers may vary, but may include builders, stonemasons, farmers, etc.)



← **Show image 8A-5: Farming**

6. *Literal* What are some of the inventions the Chinese developed in order to make farming easier? (seed drills, iron plows and harnesses, water pumps)

[Please continue to model the *Question? Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

7. *Evaluative What? Pair Share:* Asking questions after a read-aloud is one way to see how much everyone has learned. Think of a question you can ask your neighbor about the read-aloud that starts with the word *what*. For example, you could ask, “What rivers did you learn about in today’s read-aloud?” Turn to your neighbor and ask your *what* question. Listen to your neighbor’s response. Then your neighbor will ask a new *what* question, and you will get a chance to respond. I will call on several of you to share your questions with the class.
8. After hearing today’s read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these questions.]

Word Work: Sorrow

5 minutes

1. The read-aloud says that the Yellow River is nicknamed “China’s Great *Sorrow*.”
2. Say the word *sorrow* with me.
3. Sorrow is pain or suffering caused by a loss or misfortune.
4. Alex felt deep sorrow when his little kitten was missing for three days.
5. How can someone express sorrow? Try to use the word *sorrow* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students’ responses: “When someone experiences sorrow, s/he may . . .”]
6. What’s the word we’ve been talking about?

Use a *Sharing* activity for follow-up. Directions: I am going to read several situations in which someone is expressing sorrow. I would like you to share how you might help the person experiencing sorrow. Try to use the word *sorrow* in your answer, and answer in complete sentences. For example, you might say, “To help _____ when s/he is experiencing sorrow, I would . . .” (Answers may vary for all.)

1. Lucy’s little brother, who is learning to walk, stumbles and falls and starts to cry.
2. Your best friend lost her favorite toy in the park.
3. There is a new student in your class who just moved to the area and is missing his old friends.



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



The Yellow and the Yangtze Rivers

8_B

Extensions

20 minutes

Civilizations Chart (Instructional Master 2B-1)

Show students Image Card 7 (Farming Along the Yangtze). Talk about the Image Card, and have students share what they learned from the read-aloud about farming along the Yellow and Yangtze rivers. Ask students to describe how this is similar to farming in early India. (They both had rivers that flooded and left nutrient-rich soil, good for farming.) Ask students how this is different. (The Yangtze does not flood as much as the Indus or Yellow rivers. The early Chinese farmed along the Yangtze and Yellow rivers, whereas the early Indians farmed along the Indus.) Tell students that you are going to place the Image Card on the chart in the *Early Chinese Civilization* row, in the *Farming* column, to help them remember that people in early China farmed near the Yangtze and Yellow rivers.

Show students Image Card 8 (Ancient Chinese City). Talk about the Image Card, and explain that it shows an ancient Chinese city. Have students share what they learned from the read-aloud about the development of cities in China. Tell students that you are going to place the Image Card on the chart, in the *Cities* column, to remind them that there were cities in early China.

You may wish to write *Yangtze River* and *Yellow River* on the board. Have students write this content-specific vocabulary in the corresponding boxes on Instructional Master 2B-1.

Map Quest (Instructional Master 1B-1)

Note: You may wish to make preparations in advance for this extension. You will need to prepare a piece of blue construction paper cut into the shape of the Yangtze River and a piece of yellow construction paper cut into the shape of the Yellow River.

Remind students that they have already learned about two important rivers during their studies of ancient India, the Indus and

the Ganges, and that today they learned about two more rivers as they began their studies of ancient China. Tell students that to help them learn and remember these two new rivers, they are going to continue their map quest. On this new map quest they will label the country they have learned about, as well as draw and label the new rivers. Share with students that you will label a class map along with them as they fill out their own maps.

Using Instructional Master 1B-1 from previous lessons, ask students to color in brown the border of China on their own map and label this area “China.” Mark this area on your class map and label it.

Now ask students to locate the series of caret marks in China on their map, and have them color these marks in brown. Tell students that these marks represent the Bayankala Mountains; have students label this feature “Bayankala Mountains.” Draw a matching series of brown caret marks on the class map and label it.

Tell students that when they first drew on their map, they labeled the Indus and Ganges rivers. Share with students that today they are going to label the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, which run through China. Then tape your cutout of the Yellow River beginning in the Bayankala Mountains and flowing east toward the Yellow Sea. Have students draw and label a matching line in yellow on their maps to represent the Yellow River. Remind students that rain and wind wash silt from the mountains into the river turning it yellow, and that excess rain and silt also raise the river bed, causing the river to flood.

Follow the same procedure for the Yangtze River, farther in the south. Have students draw and label a matching line in blue on their maps to represent the Yangtze River. Remind students that flooding is less of a problem in the area around the Yangtze River because of the warmer climate or type of weather. Ask students to share which crop grows very easily in this warm climate. (rice)

Finally, have students locate the dot on the map (next to the Indus River), and remind them that it represents the city of Mohenjo-daro that they heard about during their studies of ancient India. Tell students that in today’s read-aloud, they learned that the same thing happened in China: many separate cities sprang up

along the banks of the Yellow and Yangtze rivers. Ask students to add several dots in red along these rivers to represent the ancient cities that formed.

If time allows, have students compare and contrast what they just learned about the Yellow and Yangtze rivers to what they know about the Indus and Ganges. You may also wish to remind students that cities around these rivers were able to form because of the rich soil the floodwaters left behind.

Take-Home Material

Family Letter

Send home Instructional Master 8B-1.