Unit 2: River Valley Civilizations

Illustrated Glossary
barge

a broad flat-bottomed boat
canal

artificial waterway for boats or for draining or irrigating land
carp

a large Asian freshwater fish often raised for food
cartouche

a carved tablet or drawing representing a scroll with rolled-up ends
civilization

the stage of human social development and organization that is considered most advanced
a collection of laws arranged in some orderly way
Egypt

a country in northeastern Africa
Fertile Crescent

a geographical area of fertile land in the Middle East stretching in a broad semicircle from the Nile to the Tigris and Euphrates
flooding

covering or filling with water
gender

the social and cultural differences between males or females
harpoon

a barbed spear used especially in hunting large fish
hieroglyphics

writing made up of pictorial symbols
Indus River Valley

major river valley in Asia which flows through what is today Pakistan
irrigation

supplying with water by artificial means
job specialization

an unwritten agreement within a community under which the members most suited perform that occupation
term ancient Egyptians used as the official name of their land
law

a rule of conduct or action laid down and enforced by the government
levees

a bank built along a river to prevent flooding
Mesopotamia

the land between two rivers (Tigris and Euphrates)
mummification

the process of preserving the bodies of the dead
nobles

belonging to a high class that has special social or political status
obelisk

a four-sided pillar that becomes narrower toward the top and ends in a pyramid
papyrus

a plant that is made into strips and pressed into material on which one can write
peasants

members of a social class of low rank who worked in the fields
perch

freshwater fish that is yellowish with dark green vertical stripes and is a popular food
Pharaoh

the ruler of ancient Egypt
polytheism

belief in many gods
pyramid

a massive structure that served as a tomb for the Egyptian Pharaoh and high officials
scribe

a class of scholars and copiers who were central to the functioning of government, the army and the priesthood
shaduf

hand-operated device for lifting water
Social Pyramid

shows the levels of each social class in terms of importance
sphinx

an ancient Egyptian image having the body of a lion and the head of a man, ram, or hawk
temple

a building for worship
tilapia

freshwater fish inhabiting shallow streams, ponds, rivers and lakes
vizier

a high official