

## WHAP Stimulus-Based Question Samples

### Unit 1: Technological and Environmental Transformations (to c. 600 BCE)

#### Comparing Ancient Primary Sources

##### Hymn to the Nile, c. 2100 BCE

Hail to thee, O Nile! Who manifests thyself over this land, and comes to give life to Egypt! Mysterious is thy issuing forth from the darkness, on this day whereon it is celebrated! Watering the orchards created by Re, to cause all the cattle to live, you give the earth to drink, inexhaustible one!

Lord of the fish, during the inundation, no bird alights on the crops. You create the grain, you bring forth the barley, assuring perpetuity to the temples. If you cease your toil and your work, then all that exists is in anguish.

Come (and) prosper! Come (and) prosper! Oh Nile, come (and) prosper! Oh you who make men to live through his flocks and his flocks through his orchards! Come (and) prosper, come, Oh Nile, come (and) prosper!

Source: Oliver J. Thatcher, ed., *The Library of Original Sources* (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907), Vol. I: *The Ancient World*, pp. 79-83.

##### Epic of Gilgamesh, c. 2100 BCE

There was a city called Shurruk On the bank of the Euphrates. It was very old, and so many were the gods Within it. They converged in their complex hearts On the idea of creating a great flood... Ea, who was present At their council, came to my house And, frightened by the violent winds that filled the air, Echoed all that they were planning and had said. Man of Shurruk, he said, tear down your house And build a ship. Abandon your possessions And the works that you find beautiful and crave, And save your life instead. Into the ship Bring the seed of all living creatures. I was overawed, perplexed, And finally downcast. I agreed to do As Ea said, but I protested: What shall I say To the city, the people, the leaders? Tell them, Ea said, you have learned that Enlil The war god despises you and will not Give you access to the city anymore. Tell them for this Ea will bring the rains...

His tone Of savage irony frightened Gilgamesh Yet gave him pleasure, being his friend... some came out to help me build the ship Of seven stories, each with nine chambers. The boat was cube in shape, and sound; it held The food and wine and precious minerals And seed of living animals we put In it. My family then moved inside, And all who wanted to be with us there: The game of the field, the goats of the steppe, The craftsmen of the city came, a navigator Came. And then Ea ordered me to close The door. The time of the great rains had come.

O there was ample warning, yes, my friend, But it was terrifying still. Buildings Blown by the winds for miles like desert brush. People clung to branches of trees until Roots gave way. New possessions, now debris, Floated on the water with their special Sterile vacancy. The riverbanks failed To hold the water back. Even the gods Cowered like dogs at what they had done. Old gods are terrible to look at when They weep, all bloated like spoiled fish. One wonders if they ever understand That they have caused their grief. When the seventh day Came, the flood subsided from its slaughter Like hair drawn slowly back From a tormented face. I looked at the earth and all was silence.

Bodies lay like alewives [a type of fish], dead And in the clay. I fell down On the ship's deck and wept. Why? Why did they Have to die? I couldn't understand. I asked Unanswerable questions a child asks When a parent dies—for nothing. Only slowly Did I make myself believe—or hope—they Might all be swept up in their fragments Together And made whole again By some compassionate hand. But my hand was too small To do the gathering... Then I received Enlil, for Ea had *chosen* me; The war god touched my forehead; he blessed My family and said: Before this you were just a man, but now You and your wife shall be like gods... I would grieve At all that may befall you still, If I did not know you must return And bury your own loss and build Your world anew with your own hands.

Source: Excerpt from *Gilgamesh*. Copyright © 1970 by Herbert Mason. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

1. For both documents, who is the intended audience?

- (A) Leaders of their respective civilizations
- (B) The gods themselves
- (C) The citizenry of their respective civilizations
- (D) Foreigners who may be interested in their culture

2. What was the intended purpose of both documents?

- (A) To show how Mesopotamians were better at flood control than the Egyptians
- (B) To express the nature of the relationship between the people and the gods
- (C) To express how benevolent the gods were
- (D) To show the sophistication of the civilizations

3. How is the point of view expressed in the *second* document:

- (A) There was no afterlife for the dead
- (B) Water brought life and prosperity
- (C) Mesopotamians developed an alphabet based on sounds
- (D) The gods could be terrifying in their power

4. What is a common historical situation for both civilizations depicted in the documents?

- (A) They had constructed extensive permanent settlements
- (B) They were situated along the same body of water
- (C) They were still hunting and gathering societies
- (D) They were the only major civilizations in the world