**WATER**

As the importance of agriculture grew, it became necessary for early humans to settle near a reliable source of water. For this reason, many of the earliest civilizations arose around natural sources of water.

The Tigris River, Euphrates River, and Nile River were the heart of many of the earliest civilizations. These rivers flooded regularly each spring, enriching nearby soil for farming. The flat fertile areas this flooding created were ideal locations for agricultural societies to develop. Crops grew easily near the riverbanks, and as farmers learned more about irrigation, they could expand the usable farmland.

The rivers provided several other benefits. They were a source of freshwater for drinking, a source of food, and a method of transportation. But while these great rivers made it possible for civilizations to develop, an area’s geography could also present obstacles that threaten civilizations.

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