

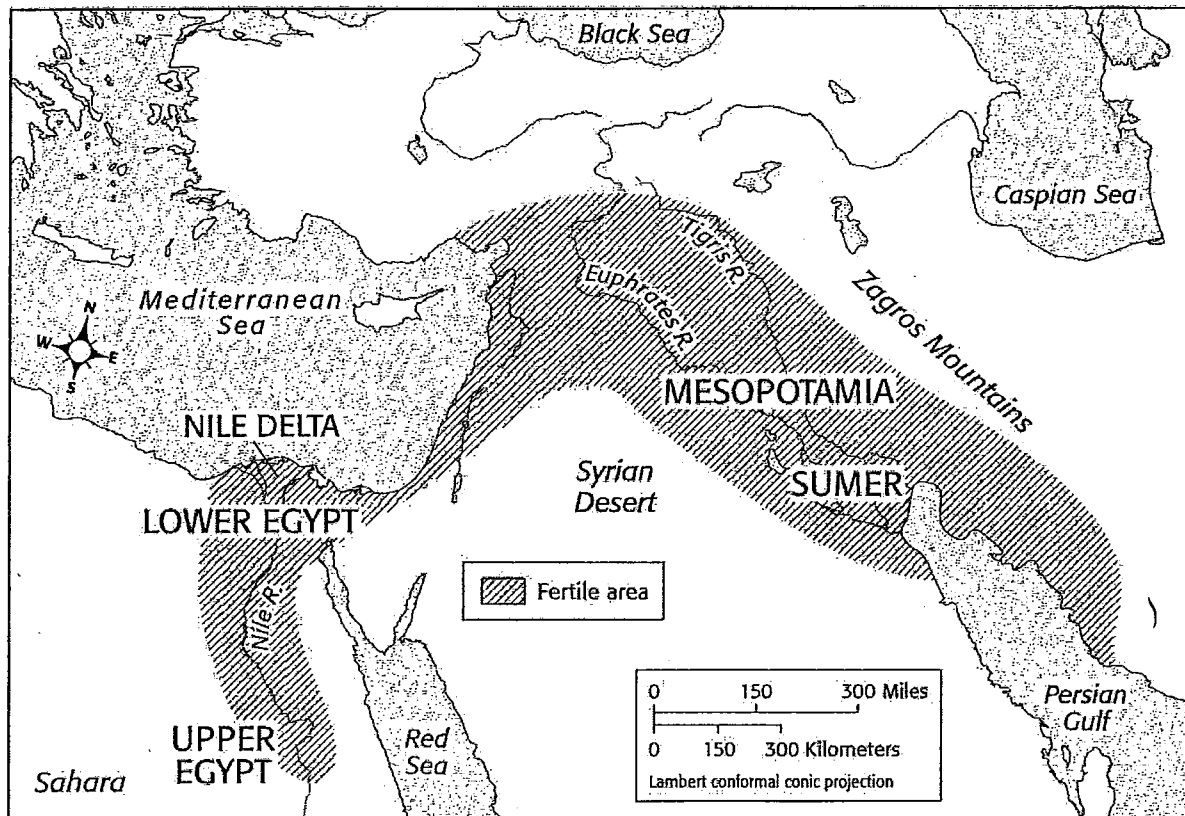
Mesopotamia: The Land Between the Rivers

The Tigris and Euphrates rivers are the most important physical features of the region sometimes known as Mesopotamia (mes-uh-puh-TAY-mee-uh). Mesopotamia means "between the rivers" in Greek. The region called Mesopotamia lies between Asia Minor and the Persian Gulf. The region is part of a larger area called the **Fertile Crescent**, a large arc of rich, or fertile, farm-land. The Fertile Crescent extends from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

In ancient times, Mesopotamia was actually made of two parts. Northern Mesopotamia was a plateau bordered on the north and the east by mountains. Southern Mesopotamia was a flat plain. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers flowed down from the hills into this low-lying plain.

Hunter-gatherer groups first settled in Mesopotamia more than 12,000 years ago. Over time, these people learned how to plant crops to grow their own food. Every year, floods on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers brought **silt**, a mixture of rich soil and tiny rocks, to the land. The fertile silt made the land ideal for farming. The first farm settlements formed in Mesopotamia as early as 7000 BC. The people of this early civilization depended on the rivers for water to use for drinking, cooking, farming, and transportation. Farmers grew wheat, barley, and other types of grain. Livestock, birds, and fish were also good sources of food. Plentiful food led to population growth, and villages formed. Eventually, these early villages developed into the world's first civilization.

The Fertile Crescent



A) Identify Key Features on a Map

- 1) Is there a compass? Circle with a green pencil crayon.
- 2) Is there a legend? Circle with a brown pencil crayon.
- 3) Is there a title? Circle with a red pencil crayon.
- 4) Is there a scale? Circle with a yellow pencil crayon.

(* Note: when you create your map of your island, you will want to include a title, legend, compass, and scale).

B) Getting Information from a Map

- 1) Did you find the scale? Estimate the distance between the mouth of the Nile River and the Euphrates River: _____ km
- 2) Trace the Nile, Euphrates, and Tigris River in blue.
- 3) In what general direction do the Tigris and Euphrates River flow on their way to the Persian Gulf?
- 4) In what general direction does the Nile River flow on its way to the Mediterranean Sea?

C) Think

- 1) Why do you think early civilizations like Mesopotamia depended on the regions' great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates?

- 2) What do you think life was like outside of the Fertile Crescent?

- 3) Think about the island you will be creating. Will it have rivers or lakes? If yes, why? If no, why not?

- D) Extend:** Outline the border of modern-day Iraq over this map of Ancient Mesopotamia.

Landforms

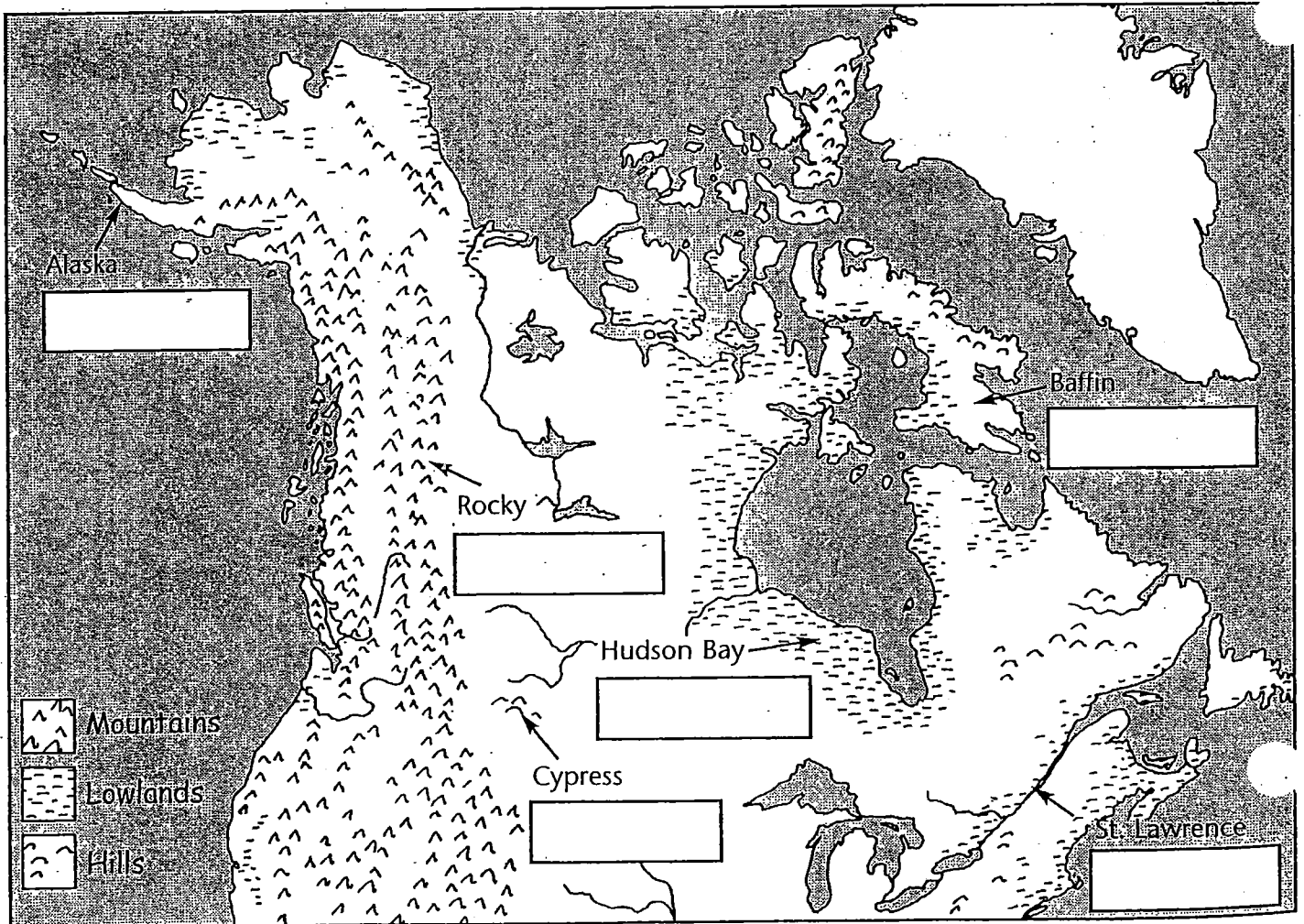
A **landform** is a natural part of the earth's surface.

Put the name of each landform beside its correct meaning.

hill island lowland mountain peninsula valley

1. _____: land completely surrounded by water.
2. _____: a long, narrow part of land almost all surrounded by water.
3. _____: a raised part of land, not as high as a mountain.
4. _____: a long, low-lying area between higher land, often with a river flowing through it.
5. _____: a large, steeply raised part of land, much higher than the land around it.
6. _____: a low-lying, level part of the land.

Put the name of each landform in the correct box.



Water Bodies

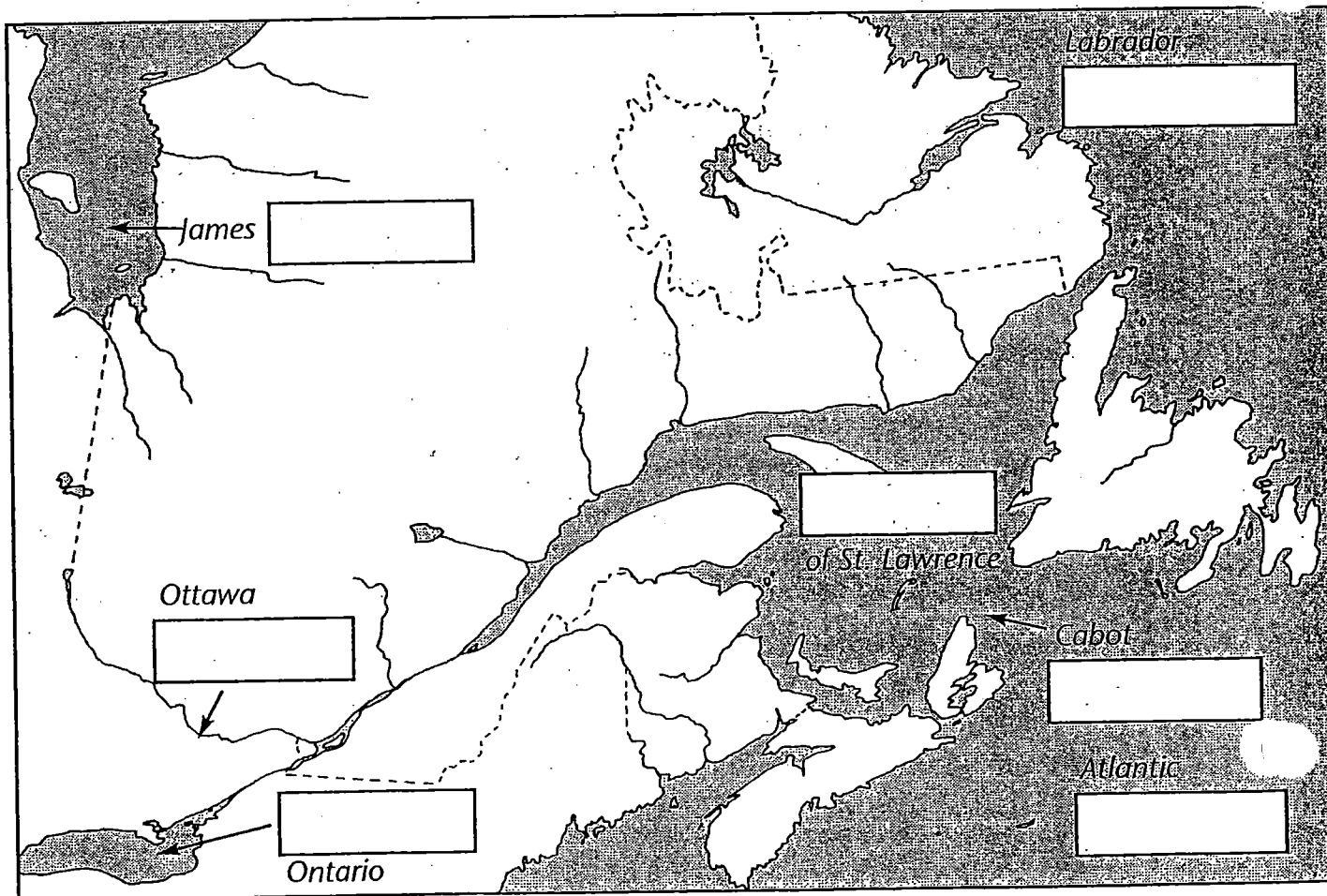
We give different names to different bodies of water.

Put the name of each water body beside its correct meaning.

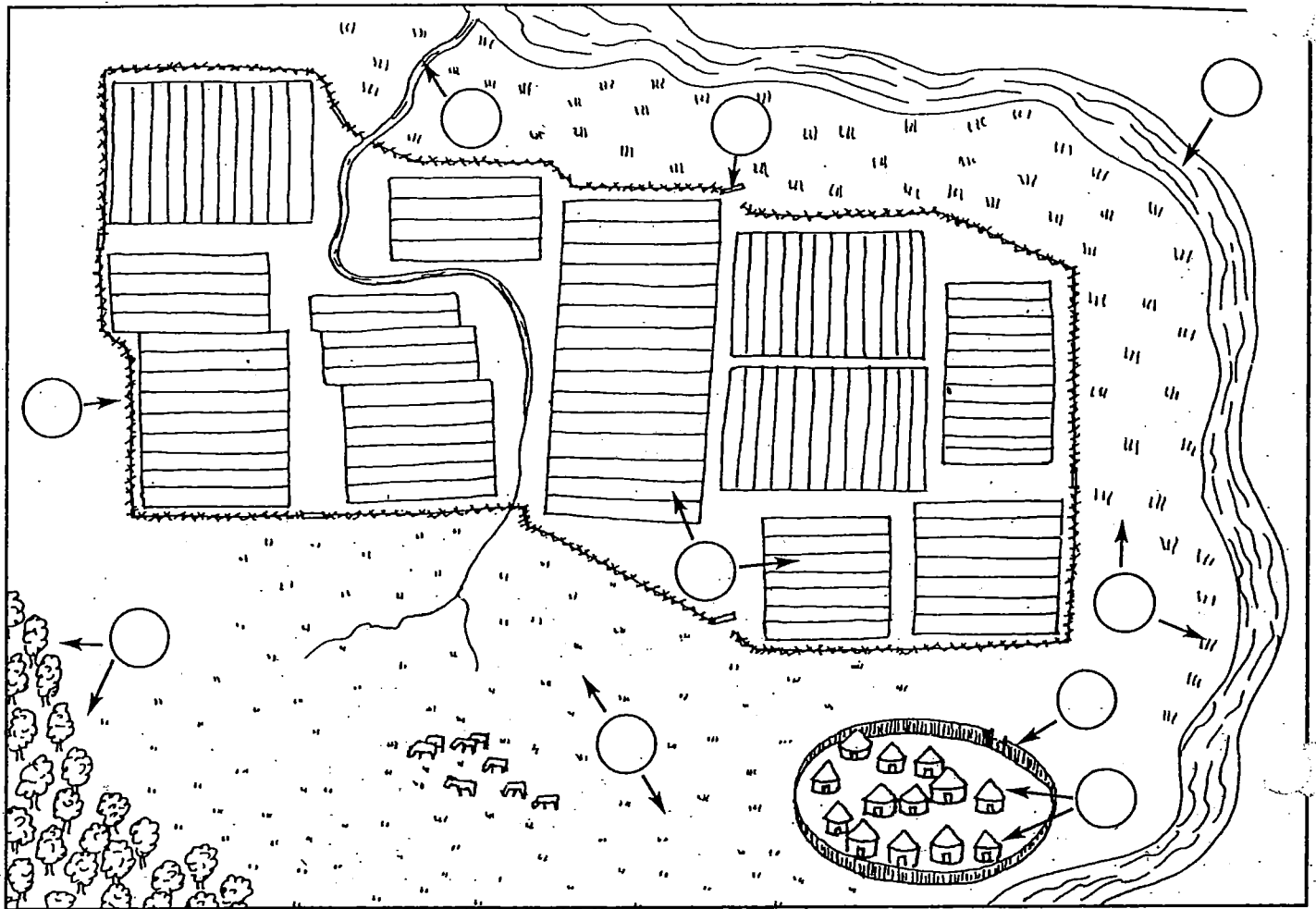
bay gulf lake ocean river sea strait

1. _____: a large, natural stream of fresh water flowing downward in a channel.
2. _____: a body of water, smaller than a sea and surrounded by land.
3. _____: a large, partly enclosed body of salt water.
4. _____: a very large body of salt water.
5. _____: a large, wide, deeply curved inlet along a coastline.
6. _____: part of an ocean or sea that is like a wide, large bay.
7. _____: a narrow passage of water joining two large bodies of water.

Put the name of each water body in the correct box.



Reading Map Symbols



The above map shows a farming village in Britain about 1,500 years ago. At that time, most farming families lived in small villages. The land used for pasture, for growing hay and for food crops was shared. The plowed land was divided into long, thin strips. Each farmer had strips in nearly all of the fields so everyone shared the most fertile land. This method of dividing the land was known as the "open field" system.

Put the correct number in each circle to explain the symbols.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 - river | 6 - cattle pasture |
| 2 - small stream | 7 - hay meadow |
| 3 - forest | 8 - wall around village |
| 4 - plowed land | 9 - gate to fields |
| 5 - fence around fields | 10 - houses |

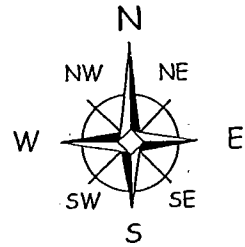
Using a Compass Rose

The symbol on the right is called a compass rose.

Find the letters **NW**. They stand for _____.

Which two letters stand for north-east? _____

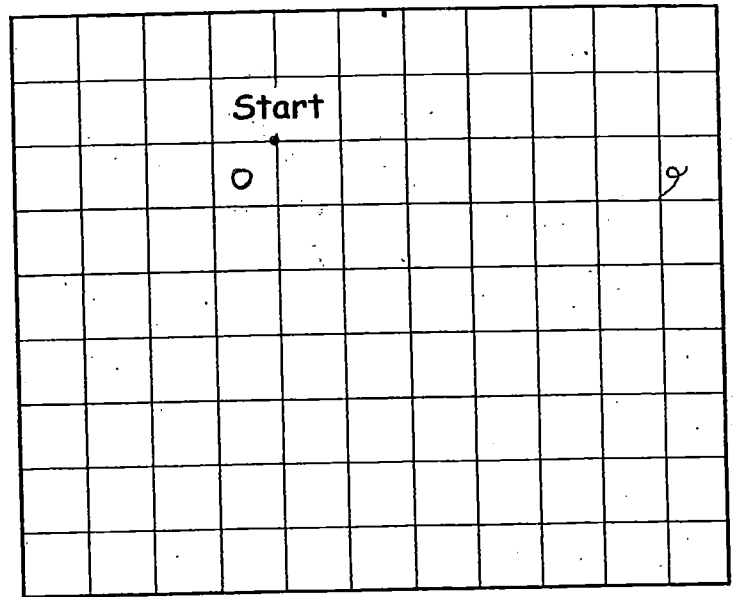
South-west (**SW**) is between _____ and _____.



A. Follow the directions to find out who is hiding.

Go only along the edges of the squares or across from corner to corner. Begin at start.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. East 5 spaces | 11. W 1 space |
| 2. SE 1 space | 12. N 1 space |
| 3. S 4 spaces | 13. E 1 space |
| 4. SW 1 space | 14. NE 1 space |
| 5. N 1 space | 15. N 1 space |
| 6. NW 1 space | 16. SE 1 space |
| 7. W 2 spaces | |
| 8. SW 2 spaces | |
| 9. N 2 spaces | |
| 10. NW 2 spaces | |



B. Something _____ Y!

Cross each direction off your list as you complete it.

Begin at start.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. S 2 spaces | 10. NE 2 spaces |
| 2. E 2 spaces | 11. NW 2 spaces |
| 3. SE 3 spaces | 12. NE 2 spaces |
| 4. NE 2 spaces | |
| 5. S 6 spaces | |
| 6. NW 2 spaces | Complete |
| 7. SW 3 spaces | the title. |
| 8. W 2 spaces | |
| 9. NW 2 spaces | |

