

CHAPTER

2

Section 2

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

Egypt and the Nile Delta

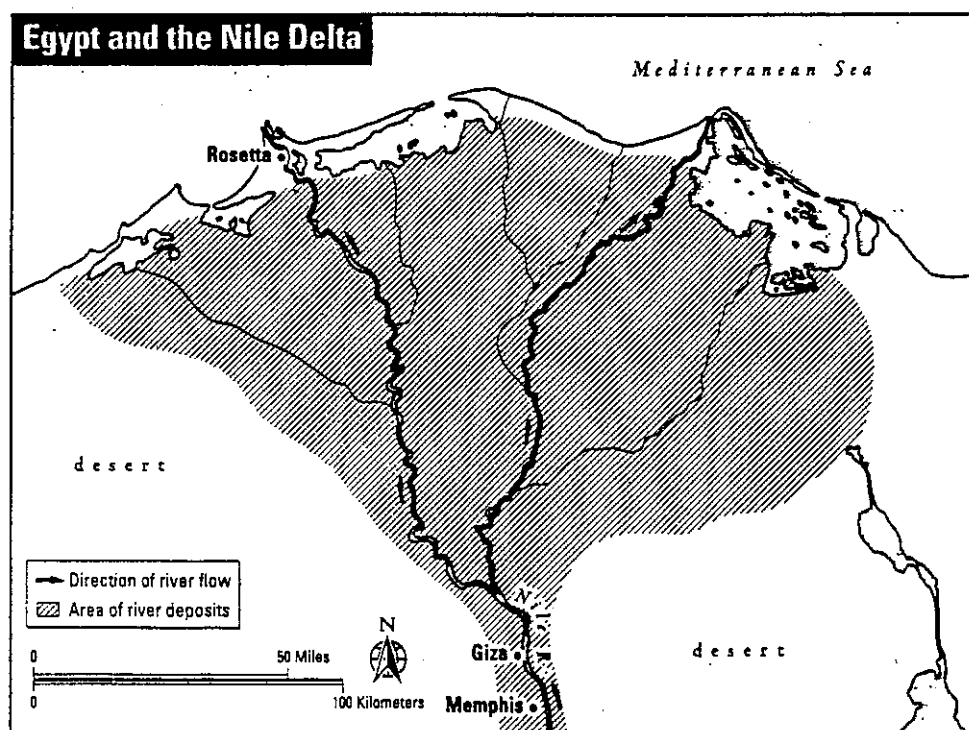
Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

A delta is a flat, triangular-shaped deposit of land found at the mouth of a river that empties into a normally still body of water. Deltas are formed when branches of a river carry soil downstream; the river's flow is slowed at the point of emptying, and soil is allowed to build up. Egypt's Nile River reaches its destination by first splitting into two main branches and then into numerous canals and streams, forming a delta out of an area that was once part of the Mediterranean Sea.

Egypt's famous Nile Delta is notable for more than being just the northern limit of the Nile River. The Delta is extremely fertile and thousands of years ago provided an environment for the formation of one of the world's first civilizations. The Nile Delta has long been considered an agricultural "fantasy"—containing more than one-half of Egypt's farmable land. Today the Delta is like a spider web of nearly 54,000 miles of canals. These

canals provide water for the approximately 15 million Egyptians who live in the Delta's thousands of villages. The people grow everything from food and flowers, to cotton.

However, the Nile Delta region is not without some problems. In contrast to Upper Egypt of the south, with its more durable building stones, little of the Delta's ancient past survives. The Delta's structures were built primarily with mud bricks. As a result, today almost all of its ancient sites have been reduced to mere piles of mud. Also, drainage problems have arisen. Salts are coming to the surface and the Delta's fertility is declining. Pollution from untreated waste is increasing. In addition, the polar ice cap is slowly melting, causing the level of the Mediterranean Sea to rise. This process threatens to some day "drown" the Delta. Concrete dikes are now being built to try to hold back the Mediterranean.



Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. Into what body of water does the Nile River empty? _____
2. In what direction does the Nile River flow? _____
3. The place where a river begins is known as its source. From Memphis, in which direction is the source of the Nile River? _____
4. How is the area of river deposits shown on the map? _____
5. What surrounds the Delta region? _____

6. About how many miles long is the Delta's shoreline with the Mediterranean? _____

About how deep into the desert does the delta extend? _____

7. Describe the importance of the Nile Delta to Egypt. _____

8. What problems does the Nile Delta region face? _____

