Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. The nilometer reading provided objective, documented evidence of low flood levels, which the Egyptian tax system recognized as justification for reduced assessments. So legally, his request followed established practice. But it was politically risky because the governor needed revenue to run the province and supply the central government — asking for a reduction acknowledged weakness in his district and created conflict with superiors who needed their budgets met.

2. If Amenhotep fails to secure a tax reduction and farmers are over-taxed during a famine, people go hungry, social order breaks down, and resentment builds against the pharaoh's representatives. The reading makes clear that a pharaoh who cannot feed Egypt has failed his divine duty — Amenhotep is the frontline representative of that divine responsibility in his district. Mishandling the crisis cascades upward, threatening political stability at every level.

Multiple Choice

1. C

2. D

3. A

Matching

1-B, 2-E, 3-A, 4-C, 5-D

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) Shemu, 2) Elephantine, 3) nomarchs

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: Most agricultural land degrades without soil amendments, crop rotation, and fallow periods, requiring constant management. Egypt's fields were renewed by natural silt deposition each year, essentially giving Egyptian farmers the equivalent of modern fertilizer for free. This dramatically reduced agricultural labor costs and allowed Egypt to sustain large populations without the constant risk of soil exhaustion that undermined other ancient agricultural economies.

Q2: The nilometer reading determined expected harvest yields, which determined tax assessments — connecting raw environmental measurement to government revenue policy. This shows that political power in ancient Egypt was fundamentally grounded in environmental management. A pharaoh's ability to predict, respond to,

and distribute the Nile's resources was the practical basis of his authority, not just divine right.

Q3: It means that keeping Egypt fed was part of what made a pharaoh's rule legitimate, not just a practical job. A pharaoh who could not feed Egypt had failed in his fundamental cosmic duty. During a famine, workers could not be paid, building projects stopped, and the military weakened. The reading connects the First Intermediate Period, when Egypt fragmented into competing regional powers, to severe drought and low floods.