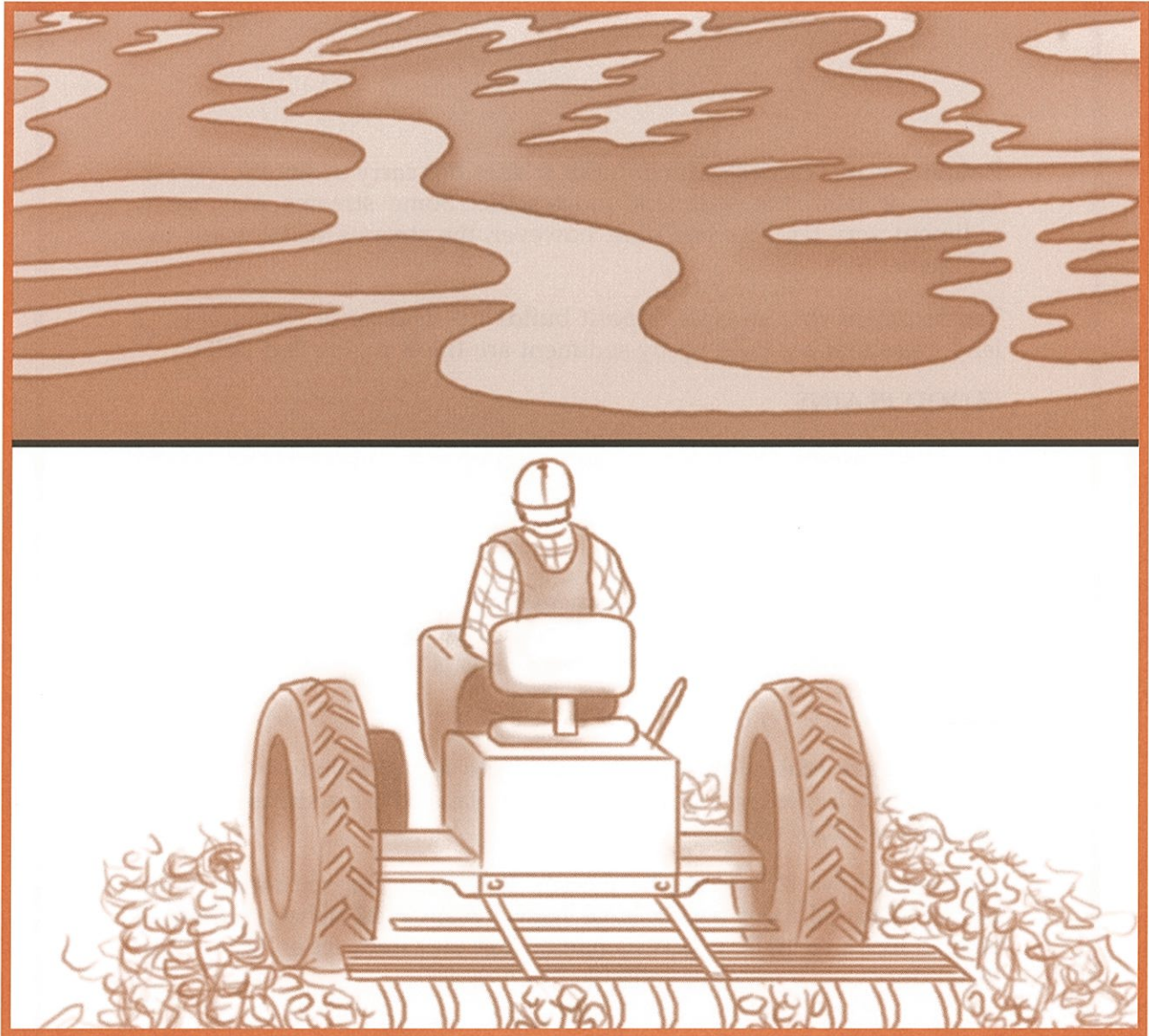


What are flood plains and deltas?



KEY TERMS

flood plain: flat area on the side of a river where sediments are deposited during floods

delta: triangular-shaped deposit of sediment located at the mouth of a river

LESSON 16

What are flood plains and deltas?

Running water carries sediment. But it does not carry sediment forever. Sooner or later, the sediment must settle. Some streams may carry sediment very far. At some time, however, the streams will deposit the sediment.

The sediment that streams deposit builds up land areas. Two kinds of land areas that are built up by sediment are **flood plains** and **deltas**.

FLOOD PLAINS

After a heavy rain, a stream carries more water than usual. This raises the water level. Sometimes the level gets so high that the water flows over its channel—the place it usually flows through. Then there is flooding.

The flood water deposits fine sediment on the banks, which is land next to the stream. Some streams flood often. The sediment builds up flat areas called flood plains. Soil on flood plains is very good for farming.

DELTA

Almost every stream empties its water into a larger body of water. It empties in a larger river or an ocean. The place where a stream empties its water is called the mouth.

A stream flows slowly at the mouth. It deposits its sediment at the mouth. The sediment builds large land areas, called deltas. A delta is shaped like a triangle. It gets its name from the Greek letter “delta” (Δ). What does the Greek delta look like?

FLOOD PLAINS AND DELTAS

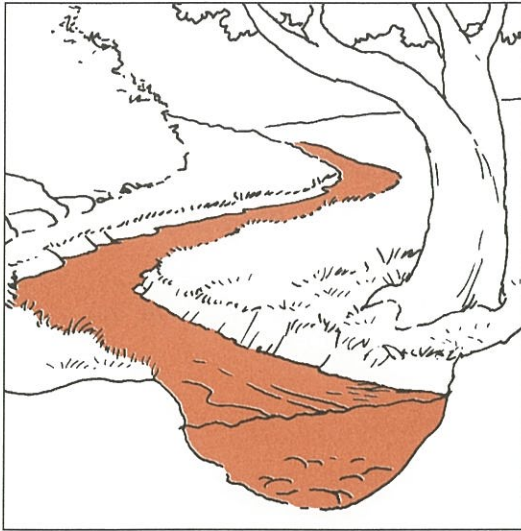


Figure A

Usually, stream water stays in the channel. It does not flow onto its banks.

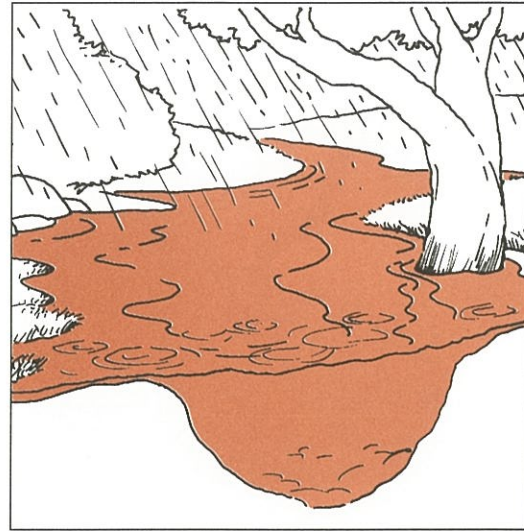


Figure B

In times of heavy rain, however, the water may flow over its channel.

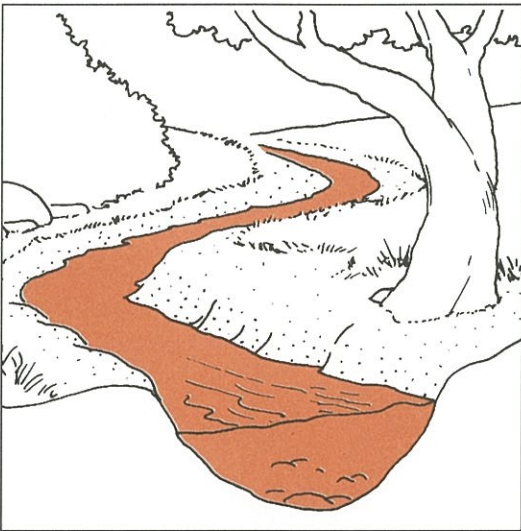


Figure C

Flood water deposits fine sediment on both banks of a stream. The sediment builds flood plains.

1. Flood plain soil is very fertile. There are many good farms on flood plains. *BUT* the farmers are taking a big chance. Why? _____

2. Would you want to live on a flood plain? _____

3. Explain why or why not. _____

HOW A DELTA GROWS

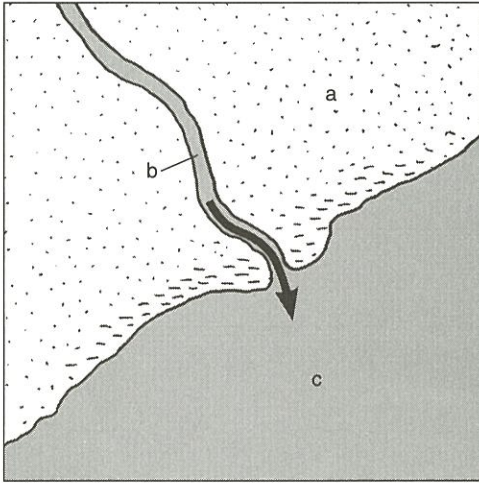


Figure D

Imagine yourself looking down from high in the sky.

"a" is land

"b" is a stream

"c" is a large body of water

The stream empties into the water.

The stream deposits its sediment at its mouth. The sediment builds up. All the sediment is under water.

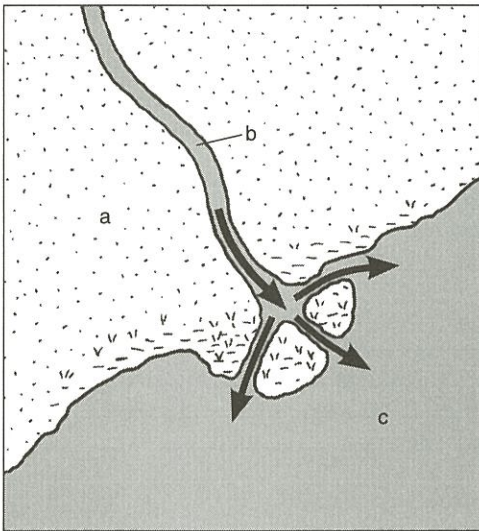


Figure E

The sediment builds up and up. Much of it reaches above the water level. Much is now even with the land. The sediment is now "new" land.

The stream has cut new channels across this new land.

How many new channels do you see? _____

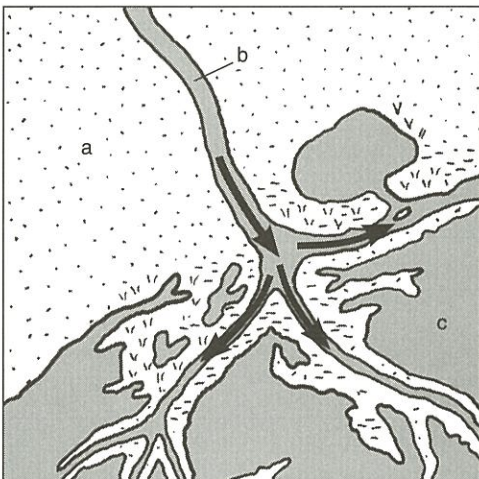


Figure F

The build-up continues. More sediment is deposited. More land builds up. The land grows outward in the shape of a delta (Δ). It will continue to grow.

Why will the delta keep growing? _____

FILL IN THE BLANK

Complete each statement using a term or terms from the list below. Write your answers in the spaces provided. Some words may be used more than once.

deposited	deltas	erosion
slowly	flooding	mouth
flood plains	delta	farming
channel		

1. The process by which parts of the earth's crust are carried away is called _____.
2. Material that is eroded eventually is _____.
3. Soil on flood plains is good for _____.
4. The part of a stream that the water flows through is called the _____.
5. Stream sediment builds land areas called _____ and _____.
6. When water overflows its channel, _____ takes place.
7. Fine sediment laid down during floods builds _____.
8. The place where a stream empties its water is called its _____.
9. The water at the mouth of a stream usually flows _____.
10. Sediment deposited at the mouth of a stream builds a _____.

MATCHING

Match each term in Column A with its description in Column B. Write the correct letter in the space provided.

	Column A	Column B
_____	1. flood plain	a) shape of a delta
_____	2. delta	b) built by flood sediment
_____	3. channel	c) built at mouth of stream
_____	4. triangle	d) stream's end
_____	5. mouth	e) place a stream usually flows through

TRUE OR FALSE

In the space provided, write "true" if the sentence is true. Write "false" if the sentence is false.

- _____ 1. Most streams empty into a larger body of water.
- _____ 2. All streams carry sediment.
- _____ 3. The slower a stream moves, the more sediment it carries.
- _____ 4. A stream deposits its sediment when it speeds up.
- _____ 5. Flood plains build up at the mouths of streams.
- _____ 6. A river bank is at the end of a river.
- _____ 7. Heavy sediment settles before fine sediment.
- _____ 8. A delta keeps growing.
- _____ 9. Heavy rain always causes flooding.
- _____ 10. A stream flows slowly at its mouth.

WORD SCRAMBLE

Below are several scrambled words you have used in this Lesson. Unscramble the words and write your answers in the spaces provided.

- 1. SDMNTIEE _____
- 2. FLDOPLNIAI _____
- 3. DLTAE _____
- 4. TRNGLAIE _____
- 5. MTHUO _____