Name Class Date

SECTION 1 GEOGRAPHY
GeoActivity

Use with Southwest Asia & North Africa Geography & History, Section 1.1, *in your textbook.*

Go to Interactive Whiteboard GeoActivities *at* **myNGconnect.com** *to complete this activity online.*

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1.1 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Analyze Effects of Desertification

Read about the Sahara's past and present and then fill in the Cause-and-Effect chart at right to show what you know about desertification.

The Sahara

The Sahara stretches across northern and western Africa and reaches far south to a semiarid area called the Sahel. The desert covers a total of more than three million square miles.

The Sahara is an active desert, meaning it continues to grow and change over time. About 10,500 years ago during a period of heavy monsoon rains, the Sahara almost entirely disappeared. The arrival of regular heavy rains transformed the region into lush grasslands, rivers, and pools. Humans and animals lived in the Sahara region. When the regular monsoon rains stopped sometime between 7,300 and 5,500 years ago, people began to leave the region. By 5300 B.C., the desert had reclaimed the drying land, and people migrated to the Nile Valley, where ancient Egyptian civilization began.

Today, the Sahara is changing again, but this time it is expanding south into the Sahel. Since the 1960s, growing human populations and natural processes in the Sahel have led to the increase of arid land. Droughts and wind-driven soil erosion cause deforestation and desertification. Humans add to the problem with increased farming and use of chemical fertilizers that weaken the soil. Livestock grazing and wood collecting also strip the land of vegetation. The combination of practices allows rainfall and wind to carry the topsoil away and helps the Sahara to creep slowly southward by as much as 60 miles in some years.

The Changing Sahara

Original Cause	First Effect	Second Effect
1. 10,500 years ago, monsoon rains fell on the Sahara.		
2. Between 7,300 and 5,500 years ago, regular monsoon rains stopped.		
3. Human activity and natural processes cause deforestation.		

4. **Make Generalizations** What do you think happens once a location has become too arid for people to farm or raise livestock?