

# Mountain farming

Farmers living in mountains have to make use of land in valleys and on higher slopes. The higher slopes can be used only in summer.

**Q1.** Name two things about mountain weather that affect farmers.



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**Q2.** What are the fields in the valley used for in summer?



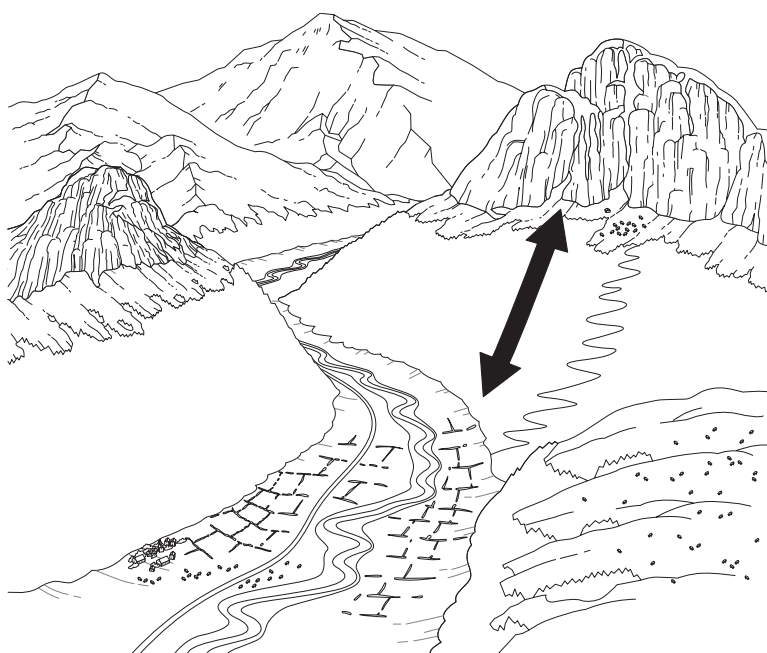
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**Q3.** What happens to the farm animals in summer?



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**Q4.** Write a word beside the arrow in the diagram that describes the way people move their animals to mountain pastures each spring and back each autumn.



**Q5.** Habib is a farmer in the Himalayas. He only has a small farm near his village in a valley. This is where he keeps his animals in the winter, when the mountain meadows are covered with snow. In the late spring, his children and his elderly father walk with their animals to a hut they have built on the high mountain pastures. This is 1500 m higher than the valley bottom, and three days' walk away. Write down what you think it might be like to herd the animals to the mountain pastures, and then what you might do (and might not be able to do) during the summer while you looked after the animals. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.



## Answers

1. In winter: cold, snow, the need to bring animals indoors.

In summer: high rainfall, short growing season.

2. For growing grass to make hay for winter feed.

3. They are moved to high mountain pastures.

4. Transhumance.

5. This is a topic that can form part of a literacy hour. Pictures 2 on page 37 of *The Mountain Book* show Habib's environment.

**ICT:** There are many pictures of his village on the web site under 'In-depth... for projects' or *The Mountain and Volcano Project CD*. To see them, click on Himalayas, then Map, and then select the location Naranag.

## Notes

*Note that question 5 requires another sheet of paper.*

*There are considerable differences between the farming solutions in mountains in different parts of the world. It might therefore be worth telling students which area to consider before they begin this worksheet, or running the worksheet twice, once for a UK mountain and once for a much higher contrasting mountain chain, such as the Alps or Himalayas.*

*In the case of the UK, the mountains are not high enough for transhumance to be a necessary option, but animals are brought down from the highest grazing lands each autumn, in part for their own protection, and in part because there would not be enough grazing for them. In this respect, therefore, there is common practice between those in the high mountains and those farming UK mountains. (In the past, farmers in UK mountains brought their animals down from the mountains in autumn. It was then traditional to have a livestock sale. Most animals in the sale were then slaughtered because farmers could not provide enough feed for all the stock through the winter.)*