

Activity Book, page 22, exercises 8 and 9

8 Read about Ibn Bassal and complete the text with the missing phrases A–E. One phrase is not needed.

A founding father of farming

IbnBassal was a writer, a scientist and an engineer who lived in Al-Andalus in the eleventh century CE. He worked in the court of Al-Ma'mun, (1)..... His great passions were botany, (2)..... Although he was a great scholar, he was also a practical man and all of his writing came from his own 'hands-on' experience of working in the land.

One of the many things which IbnBassal achieved was A Book of Agriculture. The book consisted of sixteen chapters which explain how best to grow trees, fruit and vegetables, as well as herbs and sweet-smelling flowers; perhaps the most famous chapter of all was the one (3)..... IbnBassal also worked out how to irrigate the land by finding underground water and digging wells. He designed water pumps and irrigation systems. All of these things were passed on through his writing.

The influence of IbnBassal's book was enormous. As farmers down the generations followed his instructions and advice, the land became wonderfully fertile and produced more than enough food for the fast-growing population. The irrigation systems (4) are still in evidence in Spain. Although his name is not widely known, IbnBassal's legacy to the world has been great.

A that described how to treat different types of soil

B which is the study of plants

C that he and his followers put in place

D when the book was first written

E who was the King of Toledo

Answer

1. **E** 2. **B** 3. **A** 4. **C**

9 Read the text again and answer the questions.

1 Name two of Ibn Bassal's achievements.

2 Find a verb in the second paragraph that means 'Supply land with water'.

3 Guess the meaning of 'Fertile land' in the third paragraph. Which part of the text illustrates its meaning?

4 Guess the meaning of 'legacy' in the third paragraph. What does the author suggest is Ibn Bassal's legacy to the world?

5 Which paragraph suggests that Ibn Bassal was a polymath? Give examples of his areas of knowledge.

6 Why do you think the area around Toledo had a 'Fast-growing population'?

Answers

1 writing *A Book of Agriculture*; designing water pumps and irrigation systems

2 irrigate

3 agriculturally productive; 'produced more than enough food ...' (lines 28–29)

4 'Legacy' means what someone leaves to the world after their death. Ibn Bassal's legacy is his agricultural instructions and advice.

5 the first paragraph: writing, science, engineering, botany, agriculture

6 Suggested answer: I think that the area around Toledo had a fast-growing population for two reasons.

Firstly, I think that many people would want to live around Toledo, and Al-Andalus in general, at that time because Al-Andalus was a very prosperous place. Secondly, because the area was producing a lot of food

as a result of Ibn Bassal's irrigation systems, people would

be healthier and more able to provide for more children than they could before.