Capital on the Move

Trace the reasons Alabama's capital changed locations.

SS24.4.10b "Outline political and geographic reasons for changing the location of Alabama's state capital."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about land or travel, and circle two details about what leaders wanted or decided so you can explain why the capital moved.

Why Did Alabama's Capital Move?

1. Imagine carrying the state's papers from town to town. When Alabama became a state in 1819, its lawmakers met in Huntsville for a short time. They had chosen Cahaba as the first permanent capital, and the government moved there in 1820. Cahaba sat where the Cahaba River joins the Alabama River. Riverboats could bring people and supplies to the young town.

2. Cahaba's rivers were useful, but floods made the low town a hard place to keep a government. As more settlers moved west, some leaders wanted a capital closer to them. Lawmakers voted to move the capital to Tuscaloosa, where they first met in 1826. Tuscaloosa stood on the Black Warrior River, another water route for travel and trade. The move answered both a land problem and people's changing needs.

3. By the 1840s, Alabama's population had grown in the east and south. Montgomery stood on the Alabama River, a useful travel route. Leaders from growing areas pushed for a capital closer to their voters, while other leaders wanted to keep Tuscaloosa. Towns competed, and lawmakers had to choose. In 1846, they voted to move the capital to Montgomery. State leaders began meeting there in 1847.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What geographic feature made Cahaba a useful place for the capital at first?

2. Give two reasons the capital moved from Cahaba to Tuscaloosa.

3. How did Alabama's changing population and Montgomery's location support another move?

4. What did leaders disagree about before the move to Montgomery, and how was the choice made?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are an Alabama lawmaker in 1846. Write a three-sentence speech supporting a move to Montgomery or a decision to stay in Tuscaloosa. Use one geographic detail and one political concern from the passage, then explain your choice.

ANSWER KEY

Capital on the Move

GRADE 4 · SS24.4.10b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about land or travel, and circle two details about what leaders wanted or decided so you can explain why the capital moved. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What geographic feature made Cahaba a useful place for the capital at first?	**Cahaba was where two rivers joined, so riverboats could bring people and supplies.**
2	Give two reasons the capital moved from Cahaba to Tuscaloosa.	**Floods made Cahaba a difficult place for government, and settlers moving west wanted a capital closer to them.**
3	How did Alabama's changing population and Montgomery's location support another move?	**The population had grown in the east and south, and Montgomery offered a travel route on the Alabama River.**
4	What did leaders disagree about before the move to Montgomery, and how was the choice made?	**Some leaders wanted a capital closer to their voters, while others wanted to keep Tuscaloosa. Lawmakers voted to move the capital.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Montgomery sits on the Alabama River, so people and supplies can travel there by boat. Leaders from growing areas want the capital closer to their voters. I would vote to move to Montgomery because its river route and location could help more people reach their government.

Accept answers that connect a location or travel feature to a reason for choosing a capital. For the speech, accept either choice if the three sentences use passage evidence for a geographic detail and a political concern.