Where Settlers Lived

Compare land, climate, and settlement in the colonial regions

SS24.4.2 "Compare and contrast the physical geography of the Northern, Middle, and Southern colonies, including geographic features and differences in climate, and explain how geography impacted settlement."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each paragraph, underline one land or water feature and circle one climate clue. Write 1 beside a sentence that shows how geography shaped where people settled or what they did there.

Three Regions, Different Choices

1. In the Northern colonies, also called New England, many families settled near the coast. The land had rocky hills and thin soil, and winters were long and cold. Short summers gave farmers less time to grow crops. Some families kept small farms, while others built towns by harbors. From those harbors, people could fish, build ships, and trade with other places.

2. Farther south, the Middle colonies had broad river valleys and soil that was often good for farming. Winters were usually less harsh than in New England, so crops had more time to grow. Families raised wheat and other grains on farms. Rivers carried crops to ports, where people sold them. Towns grew near rivers and ports, while farms spread across the valleys.

3. In the Southern colonies, wide coastal plains offered large areas of farmland. The climate was warmer, with mild winters and a long growing season. Many settlers built farms and large plantations that grew crops such as tobacco and rice. Rivers helped move those crops to ports. Settlements were often spread out along rivers instead of gathered in towns. Like the other regions, the South used waterways for travel and trade.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the growing season in the Northern colonies differ from the one in the Middle colonies? How did that difference affect farming?

2. How did the land in the Northern and Middle colonies differ, and how did people use that land?

3. How did people in both the Middle and Southern colonies use rivers? What was different about where they settled?

4. Why were large plantations more common in the Southern colonies than in the Northern colonies? Use one land detail and one climate detail from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your family is choosing a place to settle in one of the three regions. Write 3 or 4 sentences explaining where you would settle, how two geographic details guide your choice, and one trade-off compared with another region.

ANSWER KEY

Where Settlers Lived

GRADE 4 · SS24.4.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

In each paragraph, underline one land or water feature and circle one climate clue. Write 1 beside a sentence that shows how geography shaped where people settled or what they did there. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the growing season in the Northern colonies differ from the one in the Middle colonies? How did that difference affect farming?	**Short summers gave Northern farmers less time to grow crops. Less harsh winters gave Middle colony farmers more time to grow crops such as wheat.**
2	How did the land in the Northern and Middle colonies differ, and how did people use that land?	**The North had rocky hills and thin soil, so many families had small farms or lived in harbor towns. The Middle colonies had fertile river valleys where farms spread out.**
3	How did people in both the Middle and Southern colonies use rivers? What was different about where they settled?	**Both used rivers to move crops to ports. In the Middle colonies, towns grew near rivers and ports, while Southern settlements were often spread out along rivers.**
4	Why were large plantations more common in the Southern colonies than in the Northern colonies? Use one land detail and one climate detail from the passage.	**The South had wide coastal plains and a long, warm growing season that supported large plantations. The North had rocky hills, thin soil, and short summers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would settle near a river in the Middle colonies. The river could help my family send grain to a port, and the fertile valley soil would help us grow wheat. The less harsh winters would give us more time to farm than in New England. Our river valley home would be far from New England's coastal fishing towns.

Accept other comparisons supported by the passage. For the open task, look for a settlement choice linked to two geographic details and a clear trade-off with another region.