After the Storm

Trace how a cyclone and land-use choices can reshape a coastal region

SS24.WH.18a "Research major natural disasters and evaluate the effects of changes in weather, climate, and natural resource usage on regional identity."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two immediate effects of Cyclone Aila. Circle one longer-term climate pressure and two land-use choices, then number two statements that connect these factors to regional identity.

A Changing Coast in Bangladesh

1 In May 2009, Cyclone Aila hit the coasts of Bangladesh and India. In southwestern Bangladesh, storm surge broke river embankments built to keep salty tidal water off low fields. Water flooded homes, ponds, and rice land. For some families, the damage lasted far beyond the day of the storm: salt left in the soil made rice harder to grow, and broken embankments allowed tides to flood fields again. A cyclone is a short-term weather event, but its effects depend on where people live and how they use land. Records of damaged embankments and farmers' accounts help researchers trace those effects.

2 The southwest coast includes villages near the Sundarbans, a vast mangrove forest. Many residents have long earned a living by growing rice, catching fish, or gathering forest products where permitted. After Aila, some households sought work elsewhere when fields could not produce crops. Others raised shrimp in brackish ponds, a practice already present in the region before the cyclone. Shrimp can bring income, but poorly managed ponds can add salt to nearby soil and make rice farming more difficult. These choices can change how a village describes itself: as a rice-growing place, a shrimp-farming place, or both.

3 Aila alone does not explain every change along this coast. Rising sea levels can make salty flooding more likely over time, while a single cyclone cannot be blamed on climate change without specific evidence. Mangroves can weaken waves, so protecting them may reduce damage; removing coastal vegetation for development can increase exposure. Researchers can compare old and new land-use records, storm reports, and interviews to test which changes followed the disaster and which began earlier. Regional identity is not fixed: work, food traditions, and ties to the forest can shift as people respond to storms, longer-term climate pressures, and decisions about natural resources.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could Aila's damage to embankments change both farming and the way a village describes itself?

2. Why would it be inaccurate to say Aila started shrimp farming in the region? Explain one way shrimp ponds could still change the region.

3. Evaluate this claim: “Climate change caused Aila and, by itself, changed the region's identity.” What does the passage support, and what does it not establish?

4. Which records could a researcher compare to test whether a change in local work began before or after Aila? Why does the timing matter?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 5- to 6-sentence museum label about a proposed choice for this coast: protect mangroves and limit new shrimp ponds, or expand shrimp ponds into coastal vegetation. Use at least two facts from the passage to explain how a future cyclone and rising sea levels could affect work and regional identity, and identify one prediction that is uncertain.

ANSWER KEY

After the Storm

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.18a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two immediate effects of Cyclone Aila. Circle one longer-term climate pressure and two land-use choices, then number two statements that connect these factors to regional identity. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could Aila's damage to embankments change both farming and the way a village describes itself?	**Broken embankments let salty water flood rice fields, making rice harder to grow. If more families turn to shrimp farming, the village may describe itself as a shrimp-farming place rather than only a rice-growing place.**
2	Why would it be inaccurate to say Aila started shrimp farming in the region? Explain one way shrimp ponds could still change the region.	**Shrimp farming was present before Aila. After the storm, more households might raise shrimp, and poorly managed ponds could add salt to nearby soil, making rice farming harder.**
3	Evaluate this claim: "Climate change caused Aila and, by itself, changed the region's identity." What does the passage support, and what does it not establish?	**The passage supports that rising sea levels can increase salty flooding over time and that storm damage and land-use decisions can affect livelihoods and identity. It does not establish that climate change caused Aila or that climate change alone changed the region.**
4	Which records could a researcher compare to test whether a change in local work began before or after Aila? Why does the timing matter?	**A researcher could compare old and new land-use records with storm reports and interviews. Timing helps show whether a shift toward shrimp farming followed Aila or was already underway.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our village could protect mangroves and limit new shrimp ponds. Mangroves can weaken waves, so they may help shield homes during a future cyclone. Rising sea levels could still make salty flooding more likely. Limiting new ponds may help keep nearby soil suitable for rice, allowing families to maintain a rice-growing identity alongside fishing. We cannot know whether the next storm will breach an embankment or how many families will change jobs.

Accept other evidence-based connections between storm damage, rising sea levels, resource use, livelihoods, and identity. Students should distinguish what the passage documents from predictions or claims it cannot prove.