

When Nature Changed Places

Trace how earthquakes and floods changed land and people's lives.

SS.5.G.3.1 "Describe the impact that past natural events have had on human and physical environments in the United States through 1850."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline phrases that tell how land or water changed. Circle phrases that tell how people's homes, travel, or work changed, so you can trace each event's impact.

Earthquakes and Floods on the Mississippi

- ① During the winter of 1811 and 1812, a series of powerful earthquakes shook the central Mississippi Valley. The strongest shocks came near New Madrid, in what is now southeastern Missouri. People in frontier towns felt the ground roll and saw cracks open. The quakes changed parts of the land near the Mississippi River, raising some areas and lowering others.
- ② In some low places, land sank and water covered it. Changes in land height and drainage enlarged and reshaped Reelfoot Lake in present-day Tennessee. The earthquakes damaged cabins and chimneys, and frightened families moved away. River travel became harder because the shaking loosened banks and changed channels. A natural event had reshaped both the landscape and daily life.
- ③ In 1844, heavy spring rains and melting snow caused the Mississippi River to flood. Water spread over low farmland and into river towns from Missouri to Louisiana. Crops were ruined, homes and stores were damaged, and people moved goods to higher ground. As floodwater cut away soil in some places and left mud in others, it also changed riverbanks and fields.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What were two ways the New Madrid earthquakes changed the physical environment?

2 Why did river travel become harder after the earthquakes?

3 Name two ways the 1844 flood affected people in river towns or on farms.

4 How did the 1844 floodwater change the physical environment?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose either the New Madrid earthquakes or the 1844 flood. Write exactly three sentences that explain its physical impact, its impact on people, and how one change led to another.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline phrases that tell how land or water changed. Circle phrases that tell how people's homes, travel, or work changed, so you can trace each event's impact. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What were two ways the New Madrid earthquakes changed the physical environment?	They opened cracks in the ground and raised some areas while lowering others.
2	Why did river travel become harder after the earthquakes?	The shaking loosened riverbanks and changed river channels.
3	Name two ways the 1844 flood affected people in river towns or on farms.	It ruined crops and damaged homes and stores. People also moved goods to higher ground.
4	How did the 1844 floodwater change the physical environment?	It cut away soil in some places, left mud in others, and changed riverbanks and fields.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The New Madrid earthquakes changed the land near the Mississippi River. Changes in land height altered drainage, enlarging and reshaping Reelfoot Lake. Because the shaking damaged homes and changed river channels, families and river travelers had to adjust.

Accept equivalent descriptions of physical impacts and human impacts that are supported by the passage. For the open response, look for exactly three sentences that include both environments and a clear cause-and-effect connection.