

Water Shapes Cities

Use geographic evidence to connect past choices, present conditions, and future planning.

SS.6.G.6 "Understand how to apply geography to interpret the past and present and plan for the future."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each detail about a geographic feature, water condition, or location. Write 1 beside a detail about the past, 2 beside a detail about the present, and 3 beside a detail about future planning.

New Orleans and Water

- ① New Orleans, Louisiana, grew beside the Mississippi River, about 100 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. In the 1700s, French leaders chose the site because the river connected farms and inland towns to sea trade. The city stood on a natural bend where ships could turn and unload goods. Yet much of the nearby land was low and wet. Settlers built levees, raised banks meant to hold back river water, so homes and businesses could spread across flood-prone ground over time near the river.
- ② Today, New Orleans uses pumps and drainage canals to move rainwater out of many neighborhoods. Its location still creates risk: heavy rain, river flooding, and hurricanes can push water toward low areas. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 showed how flooding can damage homes, roads, and services when protective systems fail. People also study the loss of coastal wetlands south of the city. Wetlands can slow storm surge, but canals, development, and rising seas have reduced some of this natural protection.
- ③ Geographers use these patterns to help plan New Orleans's future. They compare elevation, water routes, population locations, and past storm damage before suggesting action. Plans include restoring coastal wetlands, improving levees and pumps, and raising some buildings above expected flood levels. City leaders must also consider which neighborhoods need safe evacuation routes and reliable shelters. Geography does not predict every storm, but it helps people choose where to protect land, improve infrastructure, and prepare for hazards.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Mississippi River affect the French leaders' choice of a settlement site?

2 Identify two present-day geographic conditions that make New Orleans vulnerable to flooding.

3 How can information about Hurricane Katrina help geographers and city leaders plan for the future?

4 How would restoring wetlands and raising buildings respond to New Orleans's flood risk?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a place you know, such as a neighborhood near a creek, a town by a river, or an area on a hill. Write four sentences that name one geographic feature, explain how it affects the place now, and describe one plan that could help people prepare for the future.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each detail about a geographic feature, water condition, or location. Write 1 beside a detail about the past, 2 beside a detail about the present, and 3 beside a detail about future planning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Mississippi River affect the French leaders' choice of a settlement site?	The river connected farms and inland towns to sea trade, and its bend gave ships a place to turn and unload goods.
2	Identify two present-day geographic conditions that make New Orleans vulnerable to flooding.	Accept any two: low areas, heavy rain, river flooding, hurricanes, or its location near the Gulf of Mexico.
3	How can information about Hurricane Katrina help geographers and city leaders plan for the future?	It provides evidence of how flooding damaged homes, roads, and services when protective systems failed. Leaders can use past storm damage when planning protections and emergency needs.
4	How would restoring wetlands and raising buildings respond to New Orleans's flood risk?	Wetlands can slow storm surge, and raised buildings can keep living and working spaces above expected flood levels.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My neighborhood is near a small creek that carries rainwater downhill. During heavy storms, water can collect near the road beside the creek. In the future, the town could keep the creek bank planted with grasses and trees to slow runoff. It could also keep storm drains clear so water has a safer path away from homes.

Accept accurate geographic connections among a feature or location, a present effect or hazard, and a reasonable future plan. Student responses may use a real or imagined local place if all required parts are included.