

North America Shapes Life

Trace how place affects people, work, and cooperation.

SS.7.G.2.3 "Explain how major physical characteristics, natural resources, climate, and absolute and relative location have influenced settlement, economies, and inter-governmental relations in North America."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each detail about a physical characteristic, natural resource, climate, or location, then draw an arrow to nearby words that show how it affected settlement, the economy, or cooperation among governments.

How Geography Guides Decisions

- ① Along the Great Lakes, fresh water, fertile soil, forests, and routes linking the interior to the Atlantic encouraged settlement. Cities such as Chicago and Toronto grew where ships, canals, railroads, and later highways could move grain, timber, and manufactured goods. The lakes also sit on the United States-Canada border. Because ships cross shared waters, the two countries cooperate on navigation rules, fishing, invasive species, and pollution. This relative location makes decisions in one country matter to communities in the other.
- ② The Mississippi River and its tributaries gave many communities a low-cost transportation route through the continent. Farmers on the warm, seasonally wet central plains could grow corn and soybeans, while rich soil supported large farms. River ports connected these products to markets near the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. Flooding also shaped settlement. People built levees, raised buildings, and set rules about where to build. Since the river crosses or borders several states, states and the federal government work together on flood control and water quality.
- ③ North America's northern lands show how absolute location affects life. Much of northern Canada lies at high latitudes, where long, cold winters and permafrost make roads, farming, and building difficult. Settlements are smaller and often depend on air travel, seasonal shipping, fishing, mining, or energy resources. Melting sea ice is opening some Arctic shipping routes, but it also raises questions about environmental protection, Indigenous rights, and control of waters. Canada, the United States, and other Arctic nations negotiate and cooperate over these shared concerns.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Great Lakes' location on the United States-Canada border lead to cooperation between the two countries?

2 Explain how the climate and soil of the central plains supported an important economic activity.

3 What problem did flooding create along the Mississippi River, and how did people and governments respond?

4 How does northern Canada's absolute location affect settlement and transportation?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a North American place not named in the passage. In 3 or 4 sentences, identify one geographic feature, resource, climate condition, or location detail, explain how it affects settlement or an economy, and describe one reason governments may need to cooperate there.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each detail about a physical characteristic, natural resource, climate, or location, then draw an arrow to nearby words that show how it affected settlement, the economy, or cooperation among governments. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Great Lakes' location on the United States-Canada border lead to cooperation between the two countries?	Because the countries share the lakes and ships cross the border waters, they cooperate on navigation, fishing, invasive species, and pollution.
2	Explain how the climate and soil of the central plains supported an important economic activity.	Warm, seasonally wet conditions and rich soil allowed farmers to grow corn and soybeans on large farms.
3	What problem did flooding create along the Mississippi River, and how did people and governments respond?	Flooding affected where people could settle. People built levees and raised buildings, while states and the federal government worked together on flood control and water quality.
4	How does northern Canada's absolute location affect settlement and transportation?	Its high latitude brings long, cold winters and permafrost, making roads, farming, and building difficult. Settlements are smaller and often rely on air travel and seasonal shipping.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Colorado River flows through the dry southwestern United States and into Mexico. Its water supports cities, irrigation, and farms, so people and businesses concentrate near it. Drought can reduce water supplies. United States and Mexican governments must cooperate on sharing water and protecting water quality.

Accept accurate cause-and-effect explanations grounded in the passage for Questions 1 through 4. For Your Turn, accept any accurate North American example that connects a geographic factor to settlement or an economy and gives a reasonable need for cooperation among governments.