

Water, Place, Choices

Use geographic evidence to connect a city's past, present, and future.

SS.7.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 one geographic feature or condition that shaped New Orleans in the past, circle one action people use to respond today, and number one future planning choice. Your marks should show how place affects decisions over time.

New Orleans and Water

- ① For centuries, people built New Orleans beside the Mississippi River, near the Gulf of Mexico. The river gave traders a route to move cotton, sugar, and other goods. Its location helped the city grow into an important port. Yet much of the city lies at or below sea level, between the river and Lake Pontchartrain. Wetlands once slowed storm water and waves along the coast. Draining some wetlands and building on low land increased the difficulty of managing floods.
- ② In 2005, Hurricane Katrina showed how these geographic conditions could combine. A powerful storm pushed water toward the coast, and floodwalls and levees failed in several places. Flooding covered large areas, causing deaths, displacement, and severe damage. After the storm, engineers strengthened parts of the hurricane protection system, while communities restored some wetlands and improved evacuation planning. These actions use geographic knowledge: water moves across low land, coastal wetlands can reduce wave energy, and roads shape how people leave danger.
- ③ Planning for New Orleans requires choices about the future. City leaders can study elevation, flood history, rainfall, and the location of homes, hospitals, and roads before deciding where to invest. They may raise buildings, maintain pumps and levees, protect wetlands, or limit new construction in places with frequent flooding. No single action removes all risk. By comparing places and predicting how water may affect them, planners can protect lives while keeping the port and neighborhoods functioning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Mississippi River help New Orleans grow in the past?

2 How did low land and wetland loss make flooding harder to manage?

3 Name two actions taken after Hurricane Katrina. What geographic idea does each action use?

4 What information should city leaders study before deciding where to invest, and why?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a real community you know or invent a community near a river, coast, or steep slope. In 4 or 5 sentences, explain how one geographic feature affects the community now or affected it in the past, then propose one future plan that uses geographic information to reduce a problem.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one geographic feature or condition that shaped New Orleans in the past, circle one action people use to respond today, and number one future planning choice. Your marks should show how place affects decisions over time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Mississippi River help New Orleans grow in the past?	The river gave traders a route to move goods, helping New Orleans grow into an important port.
2	How did low land and wetland loss make flooding harder to manage?	Much of the city is at or below sea level, so water can spread across low land. Wetlands slowed storm water and waves, so draining some wetlands increased flood-management difficulty.
3	Name two actions taken after Hurricane Katrina. What geographic idea does each action use?	Answers may include strengthening hurricane protection, which responds to storm flooding; restoring wetlands, which can reduce wave energy; or improving evacuation planning, which uses roads to help people leave danger.
4	What information should city leaders study before deciding where to invest, and why?	They should study elevation, flood history, rainfall, and the locations of homes, hospitals, and roads. This information helps them predict where water may cause danger or damage.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Pine River grew beside a wide river because boats could carry farm goods to markets. Today, spring floods reach homes built on the flat floodplain. The town should keep new homes on higher ground and turn part of the floodplain into a park that can safely flood. This plan uses the land's shape to reduce damage while preserving access to the river.

Accept answers that accurately connect geographic conditions to historical or present effects and to a future decision. For the open response, accept varied locations and plans if the student explains how geographic evidence supports the plan.