

Desert City Changes

Analyze how population, land use, and water needs reshaped one U.S. region.

SS.8.G.2.3 "Use geographic terms and tools to analyze case studies of how selected regions of the United States have changed over time."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline geographic terms that describe the region. Number three details that show how the Las Vegas area changed over time, then use the marks to connect changes to their causes or effects.

Las Vegas Valley Grows

- ① Las Vegas lies in the Mojave Desert of southern Nevada, within the Las Vegas Valley. This arid basin receives little rain, so water has always shaped settlement. In 1990, the region's largest county, Clark County, had about 741,000 residents. By 2020, its population had grown past 2.2 million.

CLARK COUNTY POPULATION, U.S. CENSUS

Census year	Population
1990	741,459
2000	1,375,765
2010	1,951,269
2020	2,265,461

- ② Census counts, satellite images, and road maps show where this growth occurred. Neighborhoods and highways spread outward from the urban core across the valley floor. New suburbs replaced open desert near major roads. Resorts and jobs attracted newcomers, while the interstate connected Las Vegas to California and Arizona. This change is called urbanization, the growth of cities and built areas.
- ③ Growth also affected the Colorado River watershed. Much of southern Nevada's water supply comes from Lake Mead, a reservoir on the Colorado River. During long drought conditions, Lake Mead's water level fell, increasing pressure to conserve water. The region added dense housing, water-saving rules, and reuse systems, showing how environmental limits can shape an expanding metropolitan area.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Use the table. How many more people lived in Clark County in 2020 than in 1990?

2 Identify one physical geographic feature of the Las Vegas region. Explain how it affected settlement or growth.

3 Which two geographic tools could show that neighborhoods spread outward from the urban core? What change would those tools show?

4 Explain one way population growth created a water challenge and one response the region used.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a U.S. region other than Las Vegas that has changed over time. Complete all three rows, using at least three geographic terms across your entries and naming at least two tools or evidence sources.

U.S. REGION	GEOGRAPHIC TERM	TOOL OR EVIDENCE	CHANGE OVER TIME

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline geographic terms that describe the region. Number three details that show how the Las Vegas area changed over time, then use the marks to connect changes to their causes or effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Use the table. How many more people lived in Clark County in 2020 than in 1990?	1,524,002 more people lived in Clark County in 2020 than in 1990.
2	Identify one physical geographic feature of the Las Vegas region. Explain how it affected settlement or growth.	The region is an arid basin in the Mojave Desert. Because it receives little rain, water has always shaped settlement and growth.
3	Which two geographic tools could show that neighborhoods spread outward from the urban core? What change would those tools show?	Satellite images and road maps could show the change. They would show neighborhoods, highways, and suburbs spreading outward across the valley floor.
4	Explain one way population growth created a water challenge and one response the region used.	More people increased demand for water from Lake Mead during drought conditions. The region responded with dense housing, water-saving rules, and reuse systems.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

U.S. REGION	GEOGRAPHIC TERM	TOOL OR EVIDENCE	CHANGE OVER TIME
South Florida	coastal plain	historical aerial images	Development spread across formerly open land near Miami.
South Florida	wetlands	land-use maps	Canals and development changed parts of the Everglades edge.
South Florida	metropolitan area	census data	Population growth expanded the Miami urban area.

Accept accurate explanations that connect a geographic tool or evidence source to a specific regional change. For the open table, accept different U.S. regions when entries use appropriate geographic terms and plausible, supportable changes.