

Battlefield Advantage

How armies used land and water at key Revolutionary War battles

SS4G2.a "Explain how each force (American and British) attempted to use the physical geography of each battle site (Lexington and Concord, Saratoga, and Yorktown) to its benefit."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the land or water feature in each sentence that describes a plan or action. In the margin, write A for an American-force plan or B for a British-force plan, including American plans made with allies.

Using the Battlefield

- ① At Lexington and Concord, British soldiers marched west from Boston on the main road, hoping the direct route would help them reach military supplies quickly. At Lexington, British troops used the open common as a place to line up. On the return trip, American militiamen used woods, hills, and stone walls beside the road as cover. They fired, moved, and struck the long British column again and again.
- ② At Saratoga, British General Burgoyne moved south through the Hudson River valley. He hoped the river corridor and nearby roads would keep his army linked to supplies from the north. American troops chose positions on Bemis Heights, overlooking the routes toward Albany. The high ground, thick woods, and steep ravines slowed British attacks and helped Americans defend their lines.
- ③ At Yorktown, British General Cornwallis built defenses on a peninsula between the York and James Rivers. British leaders expected the rivers and nearby Chesapeake Bay to protect their army and let ships bring help. American forces surrounded Yorktown by land and placed guns where they could fire on British defenses. American leaders used their alliance with French naval forces to block sea escape and resupply.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How did British troops try to use the main road and the Lexington common to their benefit?

2 How did American militiamen use the land beside the road from Concord?

3 At Saratoga, how did the British plan for the Hudson River valley differ from the American plan for Bemis Heights?

4 At Yorktown, how did water help the British plan, and how did the American plan stop that help?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Imagine two armies meet where a road crosses a river beside a wooded hill. Write exactly two sentences, one explaining how an American force could use the place and one explaining how a British force could use the place.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle the land or water feature in each sentence that describes a plan or action. In the margin, write A for an American-force plan or B for a British-force plan, including American plans made with allies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did British troops try to use the main road and the Lexington common to their benefit?	They used the main road to reach supplies quickly and the open common as a place to line up.
2	How did American militiamen use the land beside the road from Concord?	They used woods, hills, and stone walls as cover while firing on and moving against the British column.
3	At Saratoga, how did the British plan for the Hudson River valley differ from the American plan for Bemis Heights?	The British hoped the river corridor and roads would link them to supplies. Americans held Bemis Heights, using high ground, woods, and ravines to slow attacks and defend.
4	At Yorktown, how did water help the British plan, and how did the American plan stop that help?	The British expected the rivers and Chesapeake Bay to protect them and allow ships to bring help. Americans surrounded the town by land and used their French naval alliance to block sea escape and resupply.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The American force could hide on the wooded hill and watch the road, then attack from cover. The British force could control the bridge so its soldiers could cross the river and keep using the road.

Accept reasonable plans that name a physical feature and explain how it could help each force. For Part 2, accept equivalent wording when the response correctly connects geography to a military benefit.