

Routes Westward

How landforms and water routes shaped expansion.

SS4G2.b "Describe physical barriers that hindered and physical gateways that benefited territorial expansion from 1801 to 1861."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the words that name each physical barrier. Circle the words that name each physical gateway, then number your circles in the order they appear to show how routes helped expansion.

Moving Into New Lands

- ① From 1801 to 1861, the United States grew westward. Land purchases, treaties, and war added territory, but people still had to travel across the land. Physical features could slow movement. The Appalachian Mountains formed a steep barrier west of the original states. Narrow passes, including Cumberland Gap, gave settlers a gateway through the mountains into Kentucky and other western lands.
- ② Rivers also shaped expansion. Flatboats and steamboats carried people and goods on the Mississippi River, connecting farms west of the mountains to New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. This river was a gateway because it made travel and trade easier. In 1825, the Erie Canal linked the Hudson River to Lake Erie. It created a water route from eastern cities to the Great Lakes region.
- ③ Farther west, dry plains, wide deserts, and the Rocky Mountains made travel hard. Travelers needed water, supplies, and safe routes. South Pass, a lower crossing in the Rocky Mountains, served as a gateway on trails to Oregon and California. By using this pass, many migrants could move wagons across the mountains. Barriers did not always stop expansion, but gateways made it faster, safer, or less costly.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Appalachian Mountains hinder westward travel?

2 How did the Mississippi River benefit expansion?

3 Why was the Erie Canal a gateway? Include the two waterways it linked.

4 Name two physical barriers farther west. What did travelers need because of these barriers?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine you are guiding a wagon group west in 1850. Write three sentences that name one barrier, choose one gateway from the passage, and explain how the gateway would help your group.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the words that name each physical barrier. Circle the words that name each physical gateway, then number your circles in the order they appear to show how routes helped expansion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Appalachian Mountains hinder westward travel?	They formed a steep barrier that was difficult for settlers to cross.
2	How did the Mississippi River benefit expansion?	It carried people and goods between western farms and New Orleans, making travel and trade easier.
3	Why was the Erie Canal a gateway? Include the two waterways it linked.	It created a water route for travel and trade by linking the Hudson River and Lake Erie.
4	Name two physical barriers farther west. What did travelers need because of these barriers?	Any two: dry plains, wide deserts, or the Rocky Mountains. Travelers needed water, supplies, and safe routes.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our wagon group may face the Rocky Mountains, which are hard to cross. We will use South Pass as a lower crossing. This gateway helps us move our wagons toward Oregon.

Accept barrier and gateway explanations that match the passage. For the open response, accept any accurate scenario that identifies a barrier, names a passage gateway, and explains how it helps travel or trade.