

Routes and Roots

How physical features shape trade and settlement in Southern and Eastern Asia

SS7G11.a "Describe how the mountain, desert, and water features of Southern and Eastern Asia impact trade and affect where people live."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each named mountain, desert, river, sea, or coastal feature, then circle a nearby phrase that tells how it affects trade or where people live.

Land and Water Shape Choices

- ① Across Southern Asia, the Himalayas rise between India and the Tibetan Plateau. Their steep, snowy slopes make travel difficult, so few roads and rail lines cross the highest passes. The mountains also block moist summer winds. Heavy rain falls on the southern side, feeding rivers and farms in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. On the colder, drier northern side, fewer people can grow crops. Communities often cluster in valleys and on lower slopes, where water, soil, and travel routes are easier to find.
- ② Deserts create another barrier. The Gobi Desert in northern China and Mongolia has little rainfall, scarce vegetation, and large stretches of dry land. Travelers crossing it needed planning and supplies, so trade routes followed oases and the desert's edges when possible. In western China, the Taklamakan Desert pushed merchants around its northern and southern rims. People settled most densely near rivers, oases, and irrigated farmland because these places provided dependable water for homes, animals, and crops.
- ③ Water features connected many places, but they also shaped settlement. The Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers carry water and rich sediment across crowded plains in Southern Asia. Their floodplains support farming, yet seasonal floods can damage homes and fields. In Eastern Asia, China's Huang He and Chang Jiang have supported farming, cities, and river travel for centuries. Coastal ports such as Shanghai link inland goods to sea routes. Japan's islands depend on nearby seas for fishing and shipping, while mountains leave limited flat land for large settlements.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How do the Himalayas affect both trade and where people live?

2 How did the Gobi and Taklamakan deserts shape trade routes and settlement?

3 What is one benefit and one challenge of living on the Ganges and Brahmaputra floodplains?

4 How do coastal water and mountains affect trade and settlement in the passage's examples of Shanghai and Japan?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine a new region with a high mountain range, a dry desert, and a navigable river that reaches the coast. Write four sentences explaining where people would most likely settle and how traders would most likely move goods. Use at least two physical features as evidence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each named mountain, desert, river, sea, or coastal feature, then circle a nearby phrase that tells how it affects trade or where people live. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the Himalayas affect both trade and where people live?	Their steep slopes make roads and rail lines difficult, limiting travel and trade across high passes. People often live in valleys and on lower slopes where water, soil, and routes are easier to find.
2	How did the Gobi and Taklamakan deserts shape trade routes and settlement?	Merchants traveled along desert edges, rims, and oases when possible. People settled near rivers, oases, and irrigated farmland because water was dependable there.
3	What is one benefit and one challenge of living on the Ganges and Brahmaputra floodplains?	The floodplains provide water and rich sediment for farming. Seasonal floods can damage homes and fields.
4	How do coastal water and mountains affect trade and settlement in the passage's examples of Shanghai and Japan?	Shanghai's coastal port links inland goods to sea routes. In Japan, nearby seas support fishing and shipping, while mountains leave limited flat land for large settlements.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Most people would settle beside the river because it provides water for homes and crops. Farmers could use the river valley's soil to grow food. Traders would carry goods by boat down the navigable river to the coast. They would avoid crossing the dry desert and use lower mountain passes when land travel was necessary.

Accept answers that accurately connect a named physical feature to trade, settlement, or both. For the open response, accept logical predictions supported by at least two features, even if students choose different routes or settlement locations.