

Land Shapes Life

Read how environments influence trade routes and settlement patterns.

SS7G3.a "Explain how the characteristics in the Sahara, Sahel, savanna, and tropical rain forest impact trade and affect where people live."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each environmental characteristic in the passage. Circle each effect on trade, and number each effect on where people live.

Four African Environments

- ① The Sahara is a vast desert with very little rainfall, intense heat, and long distances between reliable water sources. These conditions make farming difficult and keep most people from living across the open desert. Instead, settlements often grow near oases, wells, river valleys, and the desert's edges, where water is available. Trade has still crossed the Sahara for centuries. Camel caravans can carry salt, cloth, and other goods over dry routes, but journeys are slow, costly, and dangerous because travelers must plan carefully for water and shelter.
- ② South of the Sahara lies the Sahel, a semiarid belt with a short rainy season and frequent droughts. Rainfall can change greatly from year to year, so families may raise livestock or grow drought-tolerant crops where soil and water allow. Many people live near seasonal water, towns, and roads rather than in the driest areas. Herders may move cattle, goats, or camels to find pasture. Markets connect herders and farmers, but drought can reduce harvests, shrink grazing land, and make trade goods less available or more expensive.
- ③ Farther south, savannas have grasslands, scattered trees, and wet and dry seasons. Their rainfall supports more farming and grazing than the Sahel usually can, so villages and cities often develop near farmland, rivers, and transportation routes. Farmers can sell crops, and herders can trade animals in local and regional markets. Tropical rain forests receive heavy rainfall and have dense vegetation. Rivers can serve as travel routes for people and goods, but thick forests and few roads can slow land travel. People often settle along rivers, roads, or cleared areas where transportation and farming are easier.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How do the Sahara's dry conditions affect both settlement and trade?

2 Why might herders in the Sahel move their animals from place to place?

3 Explain why savannas can support more villages, cities, and market trade than the Sahel usually can.

4 What helps trade in tropical rain forests, and what makes land travel difficult there?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one environment from the passage. Write exactly three sentences that name one characteristic, explain one effect on trade, and explain one effect on where people live. Use the word because in one sentence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each environmental characteristic in the passage. Circle each effect on trade, and number each effect on 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 Sahara's dry conditions affect both settlement and trade?	People tend to settle near reliable water or at the desert's edges. Trade can cross the Sahara by camel, but trips are slow, costly, dangerous, and require planning for water and shelter.
2	Why might herders in the Sahel move their animals from place to place?	They move animals to find pasture because rainfall is unreliable, droughts are frequent, and grazing land can shrink.
3	Explain why savannas can support more villages, cities, and market trade than the Sahel usually can.	Savannas receive enough rainfall to support more farming and grazing. People can live near farmland and sell crops or trade animals in markets.
4	What helps trade in tropical rain forests, and what makes land travel difficult there?	Rivers help move people and goods. Dense vegetation and few roads can slow land travel.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Tropical rain forests have dense vegetation and heavy rainfall. Because thick forests and few roads can slow land travel, traders often use rivers to move goods. People commonly settle along rivers, roads, or cleared areas where travel and farming are easier.

Accept equivalent cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. For Part 3, check that the student accurately connects one environmental characteristic to both trade and settlement in exactly three sentences.