Across the Lakes

How two countries work on a shared problem

5.SS.5.2 "Explain how countries try to resolve problems."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline why both countries must act, circle two ways they cooperate, and write 1 beside the step that helps them check their progress.

Working Together for Cleaner Lakes

1. The Great Lakes hold fresh water that both the United States and Canada use. Factories, farms, and towns can send pollution into the lakes. Dirty water does not stop at a border. By the 1960s, waste and too much phosphorus were harming parts of the lakes. Phosphorus is a nutrient that can cause thick algae growth. Neither country could protect the shared water alone.

2. In 1972, the two countries signed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. An agreement is a promise between governments. The countries set shared goals for cleaner water and planned ways to cut pollution. For example, they worked to reduce phosphorus from sewage. That meant improving how towns clean used water before it reaches the lakes. Working from the same plan helped them tackle a problem that crossed their border.

3. The agreement did not end the problem forever. The countries updated it in 2012 to address problems such as harmful algae blooms. Each country takes steps on its own side of the border, while the two share information about the lakes. The International Joint Commission, a group created by both countries, checks progress and gives advice. By comparing results, the countries can decide what needs more work.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why could neither country solve the lake pollution problem alone?

2. How did the 1972 agreement help the countries work on the problem together?

3. How could cleaning used water in towns help meet the countries' shared goal?

4. How can checking results and getting advice help the countries keep solving problems?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine two neighboring countries share a forest where wildfires threaten towns on both sides. In 3 or 4 sentences, explain two ways the countries could work together and why each way would help.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline why both countries must act, circle two ways they cooperate, and write 1 beside the step that helps them check their progress. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why could neither country solve the lake pollution problem alone?	**Both countries use the lakes, and polluted water crosses their border.**
2	How did the 1972 agreement help the countries work on the problem together?	**It gave them shared goals and a plan to cut pollution.**
3	How could cleaning used water in towns help meet the countries' shared goal?	**It could reduce the phosphorus entering the lakes from sewage.**
4	How can checking results and getting advice help the countries keep solving problems?	**The countries can see what still needs work and decide what steps to take next.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The countries could share fire reports so both can warn towns when flames move toward them. They could also agree to send trained firefighters across the border when needed. This would give crews more help before a fire spreads to both countries.

Accept other passage-based explanations of shared action and checking progress. For Part 3, accept two practical ways to cooperate if the response explains how each would help.