Across the Ocean

Compare language, religion, and identity in two connected regions.

6-9.WG.2.10 "Compare and contrast cultural patterns in regions throughout the world, such as language, religion, and ethnicity."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two patterns the regions share. Circle one language detail and one religion detail for each region so you can compare their differences.

Connections Across the Indian Ocean

1 On the Swahili coast of East Africa, ports such as Mombasa grew beside the Indian Ocean. For centuries, people from nearby African communities traded with visitors from Arabia, Persia, and India. Their exchanges helped shape coastal towns, but they did not turn everyone into one people. Swahili, a Bantu language with words borrowed from Arabic, became widely used in trade and daily life. Other languages are spoken nearby, including languages of Mijikenda communities. The coast shows how a shared language can connect neighbors without replacing every local identity.

2 Across the Indian Ocean, the Indonesian islands also linked traders from many places. Indonesia uses Indonesian, a language based on Malay, as its national language. Yet many people also speak local languages, including Javanese and Balinese. Javanese and Balinese are also names of ethnic groups, whose members have their own histories and customs. On the Swahili coast, Swahili identity grew from African roots and centuries of exchange. In both regions, trade helped people connect, while different communities kept distinct ways of life.

3 Religion offers another comparison. Islam has a long history on the Swahili coast and is practiced by many coastal residents, but Christian communities live in coastal towns too. Islam is also the largest religion in Indonesia, while Hinduism is the main religion on Bali, one of its islands. Trade across the Indian Ocean helped spread religious ideas, yet local histories shaped where beliefs took hold. These patterns do not describe every person. Comparing regions means noticing both shared connections and differences within each region.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Swahili and Indonesian each connect people? What language difference does the passage describe?

2. What religious pattern do the regions share? Give one detail from each region that shows religious diversity.

3. How does the passage describe ethnic identity on the Swahili coast and in the Indonesian islands?

4. How did trade affect cultural patterns in both regions, and what did it not do?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A visitor claims, "Indian Ocean trade made the Swahili coast and the Indonesian islands culturally identical." Write a four-sentence museum label that challenges this claim with one similarity, one language difference, one religion difference, and an explanation of why trade did not erase local diversity.

ANSWER KEY

Across the Ocean

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WG.2.10

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two patterns the regions share. Circle one language detail and one religion detail for each region so you can compare their differences. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do Swahili and Indonesian each connect people? What language difference does the passage describe?	**Swahili is widely used on the East African coast, and Indonesian is Indonesia's national language. Swahili is a Bantu language with Arabic loanwords, while Indonesian is based on Malay. Other languages are spoken in both regions.**
2	What religious pattern do the regions share? Give one detail from each region that shows religious diversity.	**Islam is important in both regions. Christian communities live in Swahili coastal towns, and Hinduism is the main religion on Bali.**
3	How does the passage describe ethnic identity on the Swahili coast and in the Indonesian islands?	**Swahili identity grew from African roots and centuries of exchange. In Indonesia, Javanese and Balinese are distinct ethnic groups with their own histories and customs.**
4	How did trade affect cultural patterns in both regions, and what did it not do?	**Trade connected people and helped shape language, identity, and religious patterns. It did not erase distinct communities or ways of life in either region.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Trade connected the Swahili coast and the Indonesian islands, and Islam is important in both places. Swahili is a Bantu language with Arabic loanwords, while Indonesian is based on Malay. Christian communities live in Swahili coastal towns, while Hinduism is the main religion on Bali. These differences show that trade can link people without making their communities identical.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons. For the museum label, look for four sentences that include the requested similarity, both kinds of difference, and a clear response to the visitor's claim.