# Landscapes in Contrast

Read and compare the physical features of three world regions.

**6-9.WG.2.8** "Describe major physical characteristics of regions throughout the world."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two land or water features in each region, and circle one detail about its climate. Use your marks to compare the regions.

### Three Very Different Landscapes

1. Traveling across the Andes in western South America means climbing through a changing landscape. This mountain chain runs along the continent's Pacific side and includes steep slopes, deep valleys, and high plateaus. Some peaks rise above 6,000 meters, where snow and ice can remain even when nearby lowlands are warm. Air gets cooler with height, so plants on a mountain slope change as you climb. Rainfall also differs from place to place: some slopes are wet, while parts of the high plateau are dry.

2. East of the Andes, the Amazon Basin spreads across a large part of northern South America. Its broad, mostly low-lying land is crossed by the Amazon River and many smaller rivers. Rain falls during much of the year in large parts of the basin, helping dense tropical forests grow. During wetter months, rivers can spill over their banks and flood nearby forest floors. From a boat, a traveler might see water winding between trees instead of a clear shoreline. This wet river basin looks very different from a high mountain plateau.

3. Across the Atlantic, the Sahara stretches across North Africa. It is the world's largest hot desert, but sand dunes cover only part of it. Wide stretches of bare rock and gravel, along with mountains and dry valleys, also shape the land. Rain is scarce, and temperatures can be very hot by day. At night, the ground can lose heat quickly, making the air much cooler. A traveler could cross stony ground for days without seeing a river that flows all year.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Describe two ways the landscape of the Andes can change as a traveler climbs.

2. Describe the Amazon Basin's land and waterways. What can happen to nearby forest floors in wetter months?

3. Why is it inaccurate to describe the Sahara as only sand dunes? Name two other surfaces or landforms there.

4. How do rainfall and rivers make the Amazon Basin different from the Sahara?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose one region from the passage and write four sentences proposing a spot for a field station there. Describe two of the region's physical characteristics and explain how each would affect your station's location or design.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WG.2.8

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two land or water features in each region, and circle one detail about its climate. Use your marks to compare the regions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Describe two ways the landscape of the Andes can change as a traveler climbs. | **The air gets cooler, and the plants change. At the highest elevations, a traveler may also find snow and ice.** |
| 2 | Describe the Amazon Basin's land and waterways. What can happen to nearby forest floors in wetter months? | **The basin is broad and mostly low-lying, with the Amazon River and many smaller rivers. Rivers can overflow and flood nearby forest floors.** |
| 3 | Why is it inaccurate to describe the Sahara as only sand dunes? Name two other surfaces or landforms there. | **Dunes cover only part of the Sahara. It also has bare rock and gravel, mountains, and dry valleys.** |
| 4 | How do rainfall and rivers make the Amazon Basin different from the Sahara? | **Much of the Amazon Basin gets rain during much of the year and has many rivers, some of which flood nearby forests. Rain is scarce in the Sahara, where a traveler may go days without seeing a year-round river.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would place a field station in the Amazon Basin near a river so boats could bring supplies. Because rivers can flood nearby land, I would build on higher ground. Dense tropical forests cover much of the basin, so I would clear only a small area for the station. This would leave more of the surrounding forest in place.

Accept other accurate features from the passage. For Part 3, look for a location or design choice connected to each of two physical characteristics.