Leaving the Dust

How climate shaped a journey west

6-9.WH.2.3 "Explain how climate affects human migration and settlement."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline climate conditions, circle choices people made about moving or settling, and draw arrows connecting each condition to a choice it helped shape.

From the Plains to California

1. In the 1930s, many families left farms on the southern Great Plains, including parts of Oklahoma and Texas. Years of drought brought too little rain for crops to grow well. Strong winds lifted dry, loose soil into huge dust storms. Some families watched fields lose their topsoil, the layer plants need to grow. Without healthy fields, they could not earn enough money from farming. The drought did not move people by itself. It damaged the land they depended on, making it harder for them to stay.

2. Some families drove west to California. They had heard that farms there needed workers to pick fruit and vegetables. In many California farming areas, a milder climate and access to water through irrigation made it possible to grow crops that needed many hands at harvest time. This gave migrants a reason to choose that destination rather than simply moving away from the dust. But families also needed money for the trip, and not everyone who faced drought could leave. Climate shaped their choices, but work and resources mattered too.

3. Arriving in California did not guarantee a secure home. Many newcomers competed for seasonal farm jobs, which ended when the harvest ended. Some lived in crowded camps because steady pay and housing were hard to find. A place where crops could grow was not automatically a place where every worker could settle comfortably. Still, some families remained and built new lives near farming towns. Their story shows two sides of climate's effect: dry conditions helped push people from one region, while growing conditions helped draw them to another.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did drought make it harder for farming families to stay on the southern Great Plains?

2. How did the climate and water supply in parts of California help draw migrants there?

3. Why did some families facing drought stay instead of moving west?

4. Why did California's growing conditions not guarantee that migrants could settle comfortably?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a community facing a climate problem other than drought. In four sentences, explain how the problem could cause people to move, why they might choose a new place, and one challenge to settling there.

ANSWER KEY

Leaving the Dust

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.2.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline climate conditions, circle choices people made about moving or settling, and draw arrows connecting each condition to a choice it helped shape. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did drought make it harder for farming families to stay on the southern Great Plains?	**Drought made crops harder to grow, and dry soil blew away in dust storms. Families could no longer earn enough from their fields.**
2	How did the climate and water supply in parts of California help draw migrants there?	**A milder climate and irrigation supported crops. Those farms needed workers at harvest time, offering migrants a chance to find work.**
3	Why did some families facing drought stay instead of moving west?	**Moving required money for the trip, which not every family had.**
4	Why did California's growing conditions not guarantee that migrants could settle comfortably?	**Farm jobs were seasonal and competitive, while steady pay and housing were hard to find.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In a coastal town, frequent storms flood homes. Some families move because repairs cost too much and roads keep closing. They choose a town farther inland, where homes are less likely to flood. Finding affordable housing there may still be difficult.

Accept answers that connect a climate condition to a reason for moving or choosing a place to settle. Responses should also recognize that money, work, or housing can affect whether people move and stay.