Land Shapes Life

How physical features help shape cultural regions

6-9.WH.2.4 "Describe how physical features, such as mountain ranges, fertile plains, and rivers led to the development of cultural regions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each paragraph, underline a physical feature and circle a related way people lived. Label each matching pair 1, 2, or 3 to show the connection.

Three Regions of South Asia

(1) North of India's broad plains, the Himalayas rise in steep ridges. Snow and cold shorten the growing season, and high slopes make large fields difficult. In some mountain valleys, families have grown barley and kept yaks, animals that provide milk, wool, and help carrying loads. Narrow passes let traders move between valleys and neighboring lands, but long trips across the mountains were hard. Over time, mountain communities developed ways of farming, traveling, and trading that differed from life on the plains below.

(2) Farther south, the Ganges River crosses a wide, low plain. Seasonal rains and river floods bring water and deposit silt, which can renew soil, although floods can also damage homes. With land suited to fields, people in much of the plain have grown crops such as rice and wheat. Settlements and market towns grew near farms and river routes. Boats could carry goods between places along the river. Together, fertile land and transport links supported a farming and trading region unlike the steep mountain valleys.

(3) To the east, the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers spread into many channels before reaching the Bay of Bengal. This low delta has wet ground and frequent flooding. People there have used raised homes and boats to manage life around the water. Wet fields support rice growing, while rivers provide fish and travel routes. These daily practices helped shape a delta region distinct from the drier parts of the plain. Geography did not decide every custom, but it offered different resources and challenges in each place.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did steep Himalayan slopes help create a way of life different from life on the Ganges plain?

2. How did the Ganges River and its plain support both farming and trade?

3. How did the delta's many river channels help shape daily life there?

4. Why did people in the delta use raised homes while people in mountain valleys kept yaks? Connect each practice to a physical feature.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a region with a rocky coast, sheltered bays, and little flat farmland. In three or four sentences, explain two ways these features might shape people's work, travel, or settlements, and describe how the region might differ from the Ganges plain.

ANSWER KEY

Land Shapes Life

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.2.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

In each paragraph, underline a physical feature and circle a related way people lived. Label each matching pair 1, 2, or 3 to show the connection. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did steep Himalayan slopes help create a way of life different from life on the Ganges plain?	**Steep slopes made large fields difficult, so some mountain communities grew barley in valleys and kept yaks. The broad Ganges plain supported larger fields of rice and wheat.**
2	How did the Ganges River and its plain support both farming and trade?	**Water, silt, and level land supported crops. The river gave boats a route for carrying goods between settlements.**
3	How did the delta's many river channels help shape daily life there?	**People used boats for travel and rivers for fish. Wet fields supported rice growing, while frequent flooding led people to use raised homes.**
4	Why did people in the delta use raised homes while people in mountain valleys kept yaks? Connect each practice to a physical feature.	**Frequent flooding in the low delta made raised homes useful. In the cold, steep mountains, yaks provided milk, wool, and help carrying loads.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sheltered bays could support fishing boats and seaside markets, so settlements might grow beside the water. With little flat farmland, people might rely more on fish and trade than on large fields of grain. Compared with the Ganges plain, this coastal region might develop a stronger tradition of sea travel.

Accept other plausible links between the stated physical features and people's activities. For Part 3, look for two explained links and a comparison with the Ganges plain.