A Waterway West

How land and water shaped travel and trade

5.G.7 "Describe and analyze how specific physical features influenced historical events."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline physical features in the passage and circle the choices or changes they helped cause. Give each matching feature and effect the same number.

The Route of the Erie Canal

(1) In the early 1800s, sending goods from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic coast was slow and costly. The Appalachian Mountains made many eastward routes difficult. In New York, the Mohawk River valley offered a lower path through mountain country. The Mohawk River flowed east to the Hudson River, which led toward New York City and the Atlantic. Leaders chose this path for a canal that would link Lake Erie to the Hudson.

(2) Workers began digging the Erie Canal in 1817. They followed the Mohawk valley for part of its route, but the land was not level. To move boats up and down hills, workers built locks, small water chambers that raise or lower boats. The canal opened in 1825 and connected Lake Erie with the Hudson River. Boats could now carry heavy loads across New York without using steep mountain roads.

(3) Farmers near the Great Lakes shipped grain east on canal boats. Water carried heavy cargo more cheaply than wagons. Goods traveled through the canal to the Hudson River, then south to New York City, where the port grew as trade increased. At the western end, Buffalo stood beside Lake Erie and became a busy transfer point for goods and travelers. The linked lake, canal, and river changed where trade moved and where towns grew.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did leaders choose a route through the Mohawk River valley instead of a route over the mountains?

2. How did the uneven land affect the way workers built the canal?

3. How did Buffalo's location beside Lake Erie affect the city after the canal opened?

4. How did the Hudson River's path help New York City's port grow?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine an 1800s town beside a sheltered bay and a rocky coast. In three sentences, describe a believable event involving ships or trade, explain how both features shaped it, and include one difficulty.

ANSWER KEY

A Waterway West

GRADE 5 · 5.G.7

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline physical features in the passage and circle the choices or changes they helped cause. Give each matching feature and effect the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did leaders choose a route through the Mohawk River valley instead of a route over the mountains?	**The valley offered a lower path through mountain country, making the route easier than crossing the mountains.**
2	How did the uneven land affect the way workers built the canal?	**Workers built locks to raise and lower boats where the canal route changed height.**
3	How did Buffalo's location beside Lake Erie affect the city after the canal opened?	**Buffalo was at the canal's western end beside the lake, so it became a busy transfer point for goods and travelers.**
4	How did the Hudson River's path help New York City's port grow?	**The Hudson carried canal goods south to New York City, increasing trade at its port.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the 1800s, traders in my imagined town built a harbor in the sheltered bay so ships could unload safely. The rocky coast kept large ships from landing elsewhere, so trade gathered at the harbor. Sailors still had to steer carefully around rocks near shore.

Accept answers that link a named physical feature to a specific choice or change described in the passage. For Part 3, look for a believable event and clear effects of both the sheltered bay and rocky coast.