Plains and Peaks

Locate and compare regions of Europe and the Americas

6.G.3 "Locate, describe, and compare major physical characteristics of regions (e.g., climate, plains) of Europe and the Americas."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words that tell where each region is, and circle words that describe its land or climate. Put a 1 beside two details you could use to compare the plains, and a 2 beside two details you could use to compare the mountain ranges.

Across Plains and Mountains

1 Imagine taking a train across the European Plain. This broad stretch of low land runs from northern France across Germany and Poland into western Russia. Farms, towns, and rivers fill much of the landscape. Winds from the Atlantic bring moisture to its western areas, where winters are often milder than farther east. Farther from the ocean, winters can be colder. The plain has few steep slopes, so roads and rail lines can cross many parts of it without climbing high mountains.

2 Now travel to the Great Plains of North America. They lie east of the Rocky Mountains and extend from southern Canada through the central United States to Texas. This wide region has grasslands and large farming areas. The ground generally slopes gently eastward, but much of it stands well above sea level. Compared with the European Plain, much of the Great Plains receives less rain and has larger changes in temperature between seasons. Dry spells can make farming difficult, even where the land is open and easy to cross.

3 Not every route across Europe or the Americas stays on a plain. The Alps rise south of the European Plain in central Europe. The Andes follow the western edge of South America. Both mountain ranges have steep slopes, and higher places are colder than nearby lower areas. Snow can block high passes, making travel harder than across many plains. Yet their climates are not identical: the Alps have snowy winters, while the Andes span a long distance north to south, with climates that vary by latitude as well as elevation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Where is the European Plain, and how does its land differ from the Alps?

2. Where are the Great Plains compared with the Rocky Mountains? Describe two features of their land.

3. How do rain and seasonal temperatures on much of the Great Plains compare with those on the European Plain?

4. How are the Alps and the Andes alike in their land, and where is each range located?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a field team will visit the Great Plains and the Andes. In four sentences, locate both regions, compare their land and climate, and explain one challenge the team might face in each place.

ANSWER KEY

Plains and Peaks

GRADE 6 · 6.G.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words that tell where each region is, and circle words that describe its land or climate. Put a 1 beside two details you could use to compare the plains, and a 2 beside two details you could use to compare the mountain ranges. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Where is the European Plain, and how does its land differ from the Alps?	**The European Plain runs from northern France into western Russia and is broad, low land. The Alps rise south of it in central Europe and have steep slopes.**
2	Where are the Great Plains compared with the Rocky Mountains? Describe two features of their land.	**The Great Plains lie east of the Rocky Mountains. They are a wide region with grasslands, and the ground generally slopes gently eastward.**
3	How do rain and seasonal temperatures on much of the Great Plains compare with those on the European Plain?	**Much of the Great Plains receives less rain and has larger temperature changes between seasons than the European Plain.**
4	How are the Alps and the Andes alike in their land, and where is each range located?	**Both ranges have steep slopes. The Alps are in central Europe, south of the European Plain, while the Andes follow the western edge of South America.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Great Plains stretch east of the Rockies from southern Canada to Texas, while the Andes run along western South America. The Great Plains have wide grasslands and generally gentle slopes, but the Andes have steep mountain slopes. Much of the Great Plains receives little rain and has large seasonal temperature changes, while climates in the Andes vary by latitude and elevation. The team might face a dry spell on the Great Plains and a snow-blocked high pass in the Andes.

Accept locations and comparisons stated accurately in the student's own words. Do not treat the Great Plains as a low-lying region; the passage says much of the region stands well above sea level.