Landforms Take Shape

Trace the forces behind six landforms in three world regions.

7.G.4 "Identify major physical characteristics of regions of Africa, Asia, and the Southwest Pacific, such as deserts, basins, plains, mountains, and rivers, and describe their formation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each named desert, basin, plain, or mountain range. Circle a clue about how each formed, then write matching numbers beside each landform and its clue.

A Journey Across Changing Land

1. At the edge of the Sahara, a traveler may cross bare rock, gravel, and fields of sand. The Sahara is a desert because dry air often sinks over northern Africa, making clouds and rain less likely. Farther south, the Congo Basin is a broad, low area drained by the Congo River and its branches. Over millions of years, the land in this area slowly sank, and rivers spread layers of sediment across it. The river network shows where water gathers in this great basin.

2. In Asia, a different force raised the Himalayas. The Indian plate pushed into the Eurasian plate, folding and lifting rock into towering mountains. Snow and rain feed rivers that flow down from these heights. The Ganges River carries bits of worn rock toward the low Ganges Plain. As the river slows on flatter land, it drops some of that sediment. Over a long time, deposited sediment helped build the plain. A mountain ridge and a flat river plain can be linked by moving water.

3. In the Southwest Pacific, New Zealand's Southern Alps rise in a long, steep chain. There, the Pacific and Australian plates push against each other, lifting rock while glaciers and streams wear it down. Across the Tasman Sea, Australia's Great Dividing Range runs along much of the eastern side of the continent. Ancient movements of Earth's crust raised parts of this range; erosion later rounded many peaks. These mountain ranges differ in age and shape, but both record forces that built high land and forces that wore it away.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What kind of landform is the Sahara, and why does it receive little rain?

2. How did plate movement shape the Himalayas, and how did river action help build the Ganges Plain?

3. What two processes shape New Zealand's Southern Alps, and what does each do?

4. How did sinking land and rivers help form the Congo Basin?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence field note about two landforms from different regions in the reading. In your first two sentences, describe what you would see and explain how each landform formed; in your third, compare their formation.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 7 · 7.G.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each named desert, basin, plain, or mountain range. Circle a clue about how each formed, then write matching numbers beside each landform and its clue. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What kind of landform is the Sahara, and why does it receive little rain?	**The Sahara is a desert. Sinking dry air makes clouds and rain less likely.**
2	How did plate movement shape the Himalayas, and how did river action help build the Ganges Plain?	**The Indian plate pushed into the Eurasian plate, folding and lifting rock into the Himalayas. The Ganges River dropped sediment that helped build the plain.**
3	What two processes shape New Zealand's Southern Alps, and what does each do?	**Pushing plates lift the rock. Glaciers and streams wear it down.**
4	How did sinking land and rivers help form the Congo Basin?	**The land slowly sank into a broad, low area, and rivers spread layers of sediment across it.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the Ganges Plain in Asia, I see flat land built from sediment dropped by the slowing Ganges River. At the Great Dividing Range in Australia, I see rounded peaks raised by ancient crust movements and later worn down by erosion. One place was built by deposited sediment, while the other was lifted and then eroded.

Accept any two landforms from different regions if the response describes each, accurately explains its formation, and compares the processes. For marking, accept any passage clue that correctly links a named landform to its formation.