River Reimagined

How a city's views of its river shape the river itself

WG.2.2 "Analyze and provide examples of ways in which people's changing views of places and regions reflect cultural changes; explain how people's views of physical features influence and are influenced by human behavior."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three different views of the river, circle two physical conditions that influenced a view, and number two human actions taken in response to a view.

The Changing Los Angeles River

1 In 1938, a major flood on the Los Angeles River damaged homes, roads, and bridges. Many residents came to see the river's sudden surges as a threat to a growing city. To reduce flood damage, engineers later lined much of its channel with concrete and built walls to carry high water through the city. The hard-edged channel was a human response to a physical feature: flooding. As the city expanded, the channel became a place many people crossed on bridges rather than visited on foot. Their view of the river influenced what they built and how they used the area around it.

2 By the late twentieth century, freeways and warehouses bordered stretches of the river, and many residents thought of it mainly as a concrete ditch. That view fit an era when city leaders often valued roads and industry more than public access to urban waterways. Yet some sections, including the Glendale Narrows, kept a soft bottom, with trees and birds along the banks. Community groups organized river cleanups and called for paths and parks. As more people walked or biked near the river, they could picture its banks as places to spend time, not just barriers beside traffic.

3 In the twenty-first century, public plans have treated parts of the river as shared space, not simply flood-control equipment. In designated stretches, people can kayak when conditions and rules permit. Trails and riverside parks invite visits, while cleanups show that people value wildlife and public access. These activities can strengthen support for restoring habitat, which may change how future visitors see the river. Still, heavy rain can make the channel dangerous, and nearby communities may disagree about whose needs new projects serve. Calling the river a park does not erase its floods: changing views shape choices, and the river's conditions shape those views.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did flooding affect many residents' view of the river, and what did engineers build in response?

2. What city priorities did the “concrete ditch” view reflect, and what feature of the river challenged that view?

3. What did community groups do, and what later experience helped some people picture the banks as places to spend time?

4. How might today's activities affect future views of the river, and what physical condition still limits its use?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a physical feature other than a river, such as a mountain, coast, or desert. In four or five sentences, show how a cultural shift changes a community's view of it, how that view changes people's actions, and how a condition of the feature shapes their view.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three different views of the river, circle two physical conditions that influenced a view, and number two human actions taken in response to a view. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did flooding affect many residents' view of the river, and what did engineers build in response?	**Many residents viewed the river as a threat because of its sudden floods. Engineers lined much of the channel with concrete and built walls to carry high water through the city.**
2	What city priorities did the “concrete ditch” view reflect, and what feature of the river challenged that view?	**It reflected a preference for roads and industry over public access to waterways. The soft bottom, trees, and birds in sections such as the Glendale Narrows showed that the river was not only concrete.**
3	What did community groups do, and what later experience helped some people picture the banks as places to spend time?	**Groups organized cleanups and called for paths and parks. As more people walked or biked near the river, they could imagine spending time along its banks.**
4	How might today's activities affect future views of the river, and what physical condition still limits its use?	**Visits and cleanups can build support for habitat restoration, which may change future visitors' views. Heavy rain can still make the channel dangerous.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

For decades, a mountain town valued its snowy slopes mainly for ski tourism, so businesses built lifts and hotels. As residents began to value year-round outdoor access, they added hiking trails and protected nearby forest. Winters with less reliable snow made the mountain seem less dependable as a ski destination and strengthened interest in summer activities. The new trails brought more visitors, who increasingly saw the mountain as a place for hiking and wildlife, not only skiing.

Accept answers that connect a stated view to a physical condition and a human action. For question 3, the passage states a sequence, not that cleanups or proposed paths caused more people to walk or bike nearby.