Mapping the Connections

Two ways to organize places into regions

WG.2.3 "Explain how the concept of "region" is used as a way of categorizing, interpreting, and ordering complex information about Earth. Give examples of how people create regions to understand Earth's complexity."

NAME _____ DATE _____

FORMAL REGION

People group places into a formal region because they share a characteristic, such as a crop or a climate condition. The characteristic tells a geographer which places belong.

Southern Spain's citrus-growing belt is grouped by a shared crop.

FUNCTIONAL REGION

People group places into a functional region because they are linked to a central place by travel, services, or communication. The links tell a geographer which places belong.

The broadcast range of a radio station in Nairobi is linked to that station.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle FORMAL or FUNCTIONAL for each item, then choose two items and explain the clues that guided your choices.

1.	Areas that receive more than 150 cm of rain per year	FORMAL FUNCTIONAL
2.	Countries where Portuguese is an official language	FORMAL FUNCTIONAL
3.	Area whose residents commute into Chicago for work	FORMAL FUNCTIONAL
4.	Terrain above 2,000 meters in the Himalayas	FORMAL FUNCTIONAL
5.	Neighborhoods served by one subway station in Tokyo	FORMAL FUNCTIONAL
6.	Towns supplied by one water treatment plant	FORMAL FUNCTIONAL
7.	U.S. counties where forests cover more than half the land	FORMAL FUNCTIONAL
8.	Places in northern Canada with average January temperatures below −20°C	FORMAL FUNCTIONAL

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new formal region and one new functional region, and tell what defines each.

FORMAL _____

FUNCTIONAL _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one sort item and describe how you could use the other category's rule to create a different region.

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PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Areas that receive more than 150 cm of rain per year	**FORMAL**	Each area meets the same rainfall condition.
2	Countries where Portuguese is an official language	**FORMAL**	Each country shares an official-language characteristic.
3	Area whose residents commute into Chicago for work	**FUNCTIONAL**	Commuting links residents to a central city.
4	Terrain above 2,000 meters in the Himalayas	**FORMAL**	The terrain meets the same elevation condition.
5	Neighborhoods served by one subway station in Tokyo	**FUNCTIONAL**	Transit service links the neighborhoods to one station.
6	Towns supplied by one water treatment plant	**FUNCTIONAL**	A shared service links the towns to one plant.
7	U.S. counties where forests cover more than half the land	**FORMAL**	Each county meets the same forest-cover condition.
8	Places in northern Canada with average January temperatures below −20°C	**FORMAL**	Each place meets the same temperature condition.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **FORMAL**: A region of farms growing rice in eastern China is formal because the farms share a crop.
- **FUNCTIONAL**: The delivery area of a post office in Dublin is functional because the addresses receive service from that office.

Challenge: For item 7, I could map towns served by one wildfire dispatch center instead of grouping counties by forest cover. The new region would be functional because the towns connect to one service center.

Part 2 models: Item 2 is formal because the countries share an official-language characteristic; item 6 is functional because the towns receive water from one plant. Accept other explanations that identify the shared characteristic or central link.