

Region Detectives

Identify how geographers group places in the Western Hemisphere.

5.4b "The Western Hemisphere can be divided into regions. Regions are areas that share common, identifiable characteristics such as physical, political, economic, or cultural features..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each of the four regional names, circle each type of shared characteristic, and write 1 through 4 beside the first mention of each region.

Grouping the Western Hemisphere

- ① Geographers divide large places into regions to help people study them. A region is an area whose people or land share identifiable characteristics. These characteristics can be physical, such as landforms or climate. They can also be political, economic, or cultural, such as governments, jobs, languages, or traditions. One place can have more than one shared characteristic.
- ② This New York curriculum uses four regions to study the Western Hemisphere. North America, as used here, includes Canada and the United States. Mesoamerica includes Mexico and the countries of Central America. The Caribbean is a region of islands and nearby coastal areas around the Caribbean Sea. South America is the large land area south of Panama. Each name helps geographers organize information about places.
- ③ These regions are useful because patterns can be compared within and across them. For example, a physical pattern might include mountain ranges or tropical climates. A cultural pattern might include languages, foods, or celebrations. A political pattern can involve national borders and governments. Regional labels help people notice shared features, but they do not mean every place or person in a region is exactly alike.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What makes an area a region?

2 Name the four Western Hemisphere regions described in the passage.

3 How do North America and Mesoamerica differ in the places included in this passage?

4 Why does the passage say that people in one region are not all exactly alike?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose one Western Hemisphere region from the passage. Write three sentences that name the region, tell which places it includes, and describe one physical, political, economic, or cultural characteristic that could help geographers study it.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each of the four regional names, circle each type of shared characteristic, and write 1 through 4 beside the first mention of each region. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What makes an area a region?	A region is an area whose people or land share identifiable characteristics, such as physical, political, economic, or cultural features.
2	Name the four Western Hemisphere regions described in the passage.	North America, Mesoamerica, the Caribbean, and South America.
3	How do North America and Mesoamerica differ in the places included in this passage?	North America includes Canada and the United States. Mesoamerica includes Mexico and the countries of Central America.
4	Why does the passage say that people in one region are not all exactly alike?	A regional label identifies shared features or patterns, but not every place or person has all the same characteristics.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I chose North America. It includes Canada and the United States. A political characteristic is that both are independent countries with national governments.

Accept any of the four named regions with accurate included places from the passage. The final sentence should identify a reasonable type of shared characteristic and give an accurate example or explanation.