

Land Shapes Power

Trace how geography influenced government in classical civilizations.

6.5a "Geographic factors influence the development of classical civilizations and their political structures."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each geographic factor in the passage. Number the nearby details that explain how each factor affected government or political organization.

Geography and Government

- ① In eastern China, the Qin and Han states grew along the Huang He and Chang Jiang river valleys. Rivers supplied water for crops and routes for travel. Mountains, deserts, and the Pacific Ocean formed difficult edges around much of China. These barriers did not stop all contact, but they made long-distance invasion harder. Qin rulers used roads and canals to link regions. Because travel across a large land area could be slow, they built a centralized government with officials who carried out orders from the capital.
- ② Across the Aegean Sea, Greek communities developed on rocky peninsulas, islands, and narrow valleys. The sea connected many settlements, so sailors traded and shared ideas. Yet mountains separated farming areas from one another. Instead of one early empire ruling all Greeks, many independent city-states, called poleis, formed. Athens used direct democracy for some male citizens, while Sparta had a strict military-focused government. Geography helped create both sea connections and political separation, so Greek city-states often made their own laws and alliances.
- ③ Rome began beside the Tiber River in Italy, where the river supported trade and travel. Italy's central position in the Mediterranean Sea helped Romans reach other coasts. As Rome conquered land around the sea, it needed ways to govern distant peoples and move armies quickly. Roman roads and sea routes supported this expansion. After its early kings, Rome had a republic, in which elected officials and the Senate shared power. Later, as territory and military power grew, emperors held greater control. Geographic position helped Rome build and manage a large empire.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did China's natural barriers and its transportation routes help Qin rulers govern their territory?

2 How did the Aegean Sea and mountains affect the political organization of Greek communities?

3 According to the passage, how did Rome's location and transportation routes support its expansion?

4 State one difference between the way geography influenced political structures in China and in Greece.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a classical-era settlement beside a river that crosses a wide desert. Write four sentences explaining its political structure and at least two ways its geography affects how it is governed.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each geographic factor in the passage. Number the nearby details that explain how each factor affected government or political organization. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did China's natural barriers and its transportation routes help Qin rulers govern their territory?	Mountains, deserts, and the Pacific Ocean made invasion more difficult. Roads and canals linked regions, allowing officials to carry orders from the capital across the large territory.
2	How did the Aegean Sea and mountains affect the political organization of Greek communities?	The sea connected settlements for trade and shared ideas, while mountains separated farming areas. Many independent city-states formed instead of one early Greek empire.
3	According to the passage, how did Rome's location and transportation routes support its expansion?	Italy's central Mediterranean position helped Romans reach other coasts. Roads and sea routes helped them move armies and govern distant peoples.
4	State one difference between the way geography influenced political structures in China and in Greece.	China's large land area and connected regions supported a centralized government, while Greece's mountains separated communities and supported many independent city-states.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sola lies beside a river that crosses a wide desert. Because farms depend on river water, the city has a central ruler who appoints officials to share water fairly. The desert makes travel difficult, so the ruler builds guarded roads to connect villages. These geographic features help the government control water and protect its people.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations from the passage for Parts 1 and 2. For Your Turn, accept any plausible political structure that is clearly linked to the river, desert, and government needs.