

Land and Power

How geography shaped expansion and interaction in classical civilizations

9.3a "Geographic factors encouraged and hindered a state's/empire's expansion and interactions."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline geographic features that helped interaction or settlement. Circle obstacles to travel or control. Label each example G (Greek), R (Roman), or M (Maya).

Geography and Classical Power

- ① Mountains divided the Greek peninsula into valleys and made overland travel difficult. These barriers helped communities develop separately, although geography alone did not create independent city-states. A long coastline, islands, and harbors supported sea travel. Greeks used Mediterranean and Black Sea routes to trade, exchange ideas, and establish colonies. Seas could connect communities, but travel also depended on ships, navigation, weather, and political relationships.
- ② Rome expanded from Italy around the Mediterranean Sea. Its central position on that sea helped Roman fleets move soldiers, grain, and messages among provinces. The Alps formed a high northern barrier to Italy, making invasion and travel difficult without preventing them. The sea offered routes outward. Rivers and paved roads also linked many conquered areas to Roman officials and armies. However, mountains, deserts, and long distances made some frontiers costly to supply. Roman power depended on controlling ports, roads, and river crossings that connected distant regions.
- ③ In Mesoamerica, Maya cities rose in varied environments, including the limestone lowlands of the Yucatan Peninsula. Seasonal rainfall supported farming, but many lowland areas had few permanent rivers. Maya communities collected rainwater in reservoirs and managed wetlands, which helped dense populations live there. Thick forests and uneven ground could slow travel and political control between cities. Instead of ruling one continuous empire like Rome, many Maya city-states formed alliances, traded goods, and sometimes fought rivals. Geography influenced these patterns alongside rivalries, resources, and political decisions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Which geographic features helped Greeks interact with other places? Explain how they helped.

2 How did the Alps both protect Rome and affect Roman expansion?

3 What water challenge did Maya communities face, and what did they do to respond?

4 Choose one geographic obstacle to Roman control. Why did it make control difficult?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write exactly three sentences comparing Greece and the Maya cities. Name one geographic factor that supported interaction or settlement in each place, then explain how one geographic obstacle limited political unity or control.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline geographic features that helped interaction or settlement. Circle obstacles to travel or control. Label each example G (Greek), R (Roman), or M (Maya). Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which geographic features helped Greeks interact with other places? Explain how they helped.	Greece's coastline, islands, harbors, and sea routes helped sailors travel, trade, exchange ideas, and establish colonies.
2	How did the Alps both protect Rome and affect Roman expansion?	The Alps limited easy invasion of Italy from the north, but they were also a barrier to easy travel and expansion in that direction.
3	What water challenge did Maya communities face, and what did they do to respond?	Many Maya lowland areas had few permanent rivers. Communities collected rainwater in reservoirs and managed wetlands.
4	Choose one geographic obstacle to Roman control. Why did it make control difficult?	Mountains, deserts, or long distances made frontiers costly to supply and harder for Rome to control.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Greece's coastline and harbors encouraged sailors to trade and establish colonies. In Maya lowlands, seasonal rainfall and reservoirs supported farming and dense populations. Greek mountains divided communities, while Maya forests and uneven ground slowed travel and made broad political control difficult.

Accept accurate comparisons supported by the passage, including Greek sea access and mountains, plus Maya rainfall management, forests, uneven ground, or few permanent rivers. For the Your Turn task, confirm that the response has exactly three sentences and addresses both civilizations.