Land Shapes Life

How places shaped life on the Great Plains

3.C.2.3.C "Identify the ways in which physical geography influenced early American Indian cultures of the region (e.g., bison hunting, fur trading, farming)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one land or water feature in each paragraph. Circle a way people used each place, then write matching numbers beside each feature and use.

Life on the Great Plains

1. Across the Great Plains, wide grasslands stretched for miles. Large herds of bison ate the grass. Some American Indian nations, including the Lakota, followed the herds and hunted bison for food. They used hides for clothing and shelter, and they made tools from bones. On open land, people could see herds from far away. The grass that fed bison helped shape daily life.

2. Not every part of the Plains was open grass. Rivers ran through valleys where the soil was good for growing food. Pawnee families built villages near rivers and grew corn, beans, and squash. River water helped their crops when rain was scarce. The valleys also gave people places to live near fields. Farming was one way people used the land, while bison hunting was another.

3. Trees grew beside some rivers and streams. Beavers lived in these wet places, and people could trap them for fur. Some American Indian groups traded furs with other groups, and later with European traders. They exchanged furs for goods they needed. Without the streams and trees that gave beavers a home, this kind of trade would have been harder. Different places offered different chances to find food and useful goods.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the grasslands help make bison hunting possible?

2. Why did Pawnee families grow crops near rivers?

3. How did streams and trees help people trade furs?

4. Why might people in a river valley farm while people on open grassland hunt bison?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your village sits beside a rocky stream with berry bushes nearby. Write three sentences: explain one way people could use each place, then explain how one place might shape something they trade.

ANSWER KEY

Land Shapes Life

GRADE 3 · 3.C.2.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one land or water feature in each paragraph. Circle a way people used each place, then write matching numbers beside each feature and use. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the grasslands help make bison hunting possible?	**The grass fed large herds of bison, which people hunted for food.**
2	Why did Pawnee families grow crops near rivers?	**The river valleys had good soil, and river water helped crops when rain was scarce.**
3	How did streams and trees help people trade furs?	**Streams and trees gave beavers a place to live. People trapped beavers and traded their furs.**
4	Why might people in a river valley farm while people on open grassland hunt bison?	**River valleys had soil and water for crops. Open grasslands fed herds of bison that people could hunt.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our village could catch fish in the rocky stream for food. We could pick berries from nearby bushes and dry them to eat later. We might trade dried berries with another village because the bushes give us more than we need.

Accept other reasonable links between each named feature and how people could use it. The trade idea should connect to the stream or berry bushes.