Plains Farm Plans

How settlers used and changed the land

3.C.2.3.D "Describe how early settlers to the region adapted to and modified their environment (e.g., sod houses, windmills, irrigation of cash crops)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways settlers used things they found on the plains. Circle two ways they changed the land to meet their needs.

Making a Home on the Plains

1. In the 1800s, some families settled on the Great Plains. Wide grasslands stretched around their farms, but trees for building were scarce. A family could cut thick blocks of sod, soil held together by grass roots. They stacked the blocks to make walls and laid more sod over wooden roof beams. Using the land's grass and soil helped them build a home where wood was hard to find.

2. Rain did not always fall when crops needed it. Some settlers dug wells and built windmills. The wind turned the windmill's blades, which powered a pump to lift water from underground. Families could use that water for people and animals. A windmill changed the farm, but it also put the wind on the plains to work.

3. Some settlers grew crops to sell, such as sugar beets. During dry spells, farmers led water from rivers or wells through ditches to their fields. This is called irrigation. It changed the land by bringing water to places where rain alone might not be enough. Settlers used what the plains offered and changed parts of the land to meet their needs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did settlers build homes with sod instead of using only wood?

2. How did a windmill use the plains environment to help a family?

3. How did irrigation change the land during dry spells?

4. Sod houses and irrigation helped settlers with different problems. What problem did each one solve?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine settlers on the plains want to keep strong wind from blowing soil off a new garden. Draw your own plan that uses something found on the plains and changes the land to protect the garden. Label two parts, then write one sentence explaining how your plan helps.

ANSWER KEY

Plains Farm Plans

GRADE 3 · 3.C.2.3.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways settlers used things they found on the plains. Circle two ways they changed the land to meet their needs. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did settlers build homes with sod instead of using only wood?	**Trees for wood were scarce, but settlers could cut sod from the grassland.**
2	How did a windmill use the plains environment to help a family?	**Wind turned its blades and powered a pump that lifted water from underground.**
3	How did irrigation change the land during dry spells?	**Ditches brought water from rivers or wells to fields that might not get enough rain.**
4	Sod houses and irrigation helped settlers with different problems. What problem did each one solve?	**Sod houses gave settlers a way to build where trees were scarce. Irrigation brought water to crops when rain was not enough.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sketch: A strip of prairie grass grows around a garden with rows of vegetables. Labels: prairie grass, garden. Sentence: The grass slows the wind, and its roots help hold the soil in place.

Accept other accurate ways to use a feature of the plains and change the land to protect the garden. For the marking job, accept sod or wind as resources used, and sod walls, a well, a windmill, or irrigation ditches as changes.