Across the Land

Locate and describe major U.S. landforms and waters

4.C.2.2.A "Identify the location and the physical characteristics of the major landforms and bodies of water in the United States of America."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the names of the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, Appalachian Mountains, Great Lakes, Mississippi River, and Gulf of Mexico, then circle a location clue and a physical trait for each.

A Trip Across the United States

1. Picture a trip across the United States from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. The Pacific borders the western coast. Not far inland, the Rocky Mountains rise through much of the western United States. Their tall peaks and steep slopes make travel difficult. East of the Rockies, the Great Plains stretch across the middle of the country. This broad region has mostly flat or gently rolling land.

2. In the eastern United States, the Appalachian Mountains form a long chain of rounded ridges and valleys. They are lower than the Rockies. Farther east, the Atlantic Ocean borders the coast. To the north, five Great Lakes lie along or near the border with Canada. These huge freshwater lakes are named Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario. Lake Michigan lies entirely within the United States.

3. Water also shapes the middle and southern parts of the country. The Mississippi River flows south through the central United States and empties into the Gulf of Mexico. It is a long river with many smaller rivers flowing into it. The Gulf of Mexico borders the southern coast of the United States. Its salty water connects to the Atlantic Ocean, unlike the fresh water of the Great Lakes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Where are the Rocky Mountains, and what are their slopes and peaks like?

2. Where are the Great Plains compared with the Rockies, and what is the land like there?

3. Where are the Great Lakes, and what kind of water do they hold?

4. Where does the Mississippi River flow, and what body of water does it empty into?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine traveling east from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. In four sentences, describe the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, and Appalachian Mountains in the order you would pass them, giving a location clue and a physical trait for each.

ANSWER KEY

Across the Land

GRADE 4 · 4.C.2.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the names of the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, Appalachian Mountains, Great Lakes, Mississippi River, and Gulf of Mexico, then circle a location clue and a physical trait for each. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Where are the Rocky Mountains, and what are their slopes and peaks like?	**The Rocky Mountains are in the western United States. They have tall peaks and steep slopes.**
2	Where are the Great Plains compared with the Rockies, and what is the land like there?	**The Great Plains are east of the Rockies, across the middle of the country. The land is mostly flat or gently rolling.**
3	Where are the Great Lakes, and what kind of water do they hold?	**The Great Lakes are in the north, along or near the border with Canada. They hold fresh water.**
4	Where does the Mississippi River flow, and what body of water does it empty into?	**The Mississippi River flows south through the central United States and empties into the Gulf of Mexico.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I start beside the Pacific Ocean on the western coast. Farther east, I cross the Rocky Mountains in the West, where tall peaks rise above steep slopes. Next, I travel across the mostly flat Great Plains east of the Rockies. In the East, I pass the Appalachian Mountains and their rounded ridges before reaching the Atlantic Ocean.

Accept location clues and physical traits stated in the passage, even if students use different wording. For Your Turn, check that the three landforms appear in west-to-east order and each has both kinds of detail.