Where Towns Grow

Explore how land, climate, and water shape communities.

4.C.2.2 "Identify major physical regions of the United States of America and their unique features. 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 two bodies of water that help people, circle three clues about climate or plants, and put a star beside one sentence that links geography to a job or a town.

Three Places to Settle

1. Picture three places where people might build a town: the Great Lakes region, the Great Plains, and Hawaii. In the Great Lakes region, five huge freshwater lakes sit along the northern United States. The region has a continental climate, with warm summers and cold winters. Forests grow where rain is plentiful. Lake water and shipping routes helped cities such as Chicago grow, while nearby farms supplied food.

2. West of the Mississippi River, the Great Plains stretch toward the Rocky Mountains. Much of this broad, mostly flat region has a continental climate, but it is drier than the Great Lakes region. Grasses grow more easily than thick forests. Rivers such as the Platte supply water for people and crops. Open grassland supports cattle ranching, while some areas grow wheat where water is available.

3. Far out in the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii's islands have steep volcanic mountains and a tropical climate. Many areas stay warm all year, but rainfall differs from place to place. Wet mountain slopes support thick forests; drier places have less dense plant growth. Coastal harbors help people trade with other places. Farmers choose crops that suit their local rainfall, and many towns grow near the coast where ships can dock.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Where are the Great Lakes, and how did they help Chicago grow?

2. How does the drier climate of the Great Plains affect its plants and one job people do there?

3. Why do some parts of Hawaii have thick forests while others have fewer plants?

4. Compare how water supports work on the Great Plains and in Hawaii.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a new town on an island with a dry shore, a rainy mountain slope, and a safe harbor. In three sentences, choose a place for the town and explain how the land, climate, plants, and water could shape two jobs there.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 4 · 4.C.2.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two bodies of water that help people, circle three clues about climate or plants, and put a star beside one sentence that links geography to a job or a town. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Where are the Great Lakes, and how did they help Chicago grow?	**The Great Lakes are along the northern United States. Their water and shipping routes helped Chicago grow.**
2	How does the drier climate of the Great Plains affect its plants and one job people do there?	**Grasses grow more easily than thick forests, and the open grassland supports cattle ranching.**
3	Why do some parts of Hawaii have thick forests while others have fewer plants?	**Rainfall differs across Hawaii. Wet mountain slopes support thick forests, while drier places have less dense plant growth.**
4	Compare how water supports work on the Great Plains and in Hawaii.	**On the Great Plains, rivers supply water for crops. In Hawaii, coastal harbors let people trade by ship.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would build the town near the safe harbor, where ships could bring supplies and carry goods to other places. The rainy mountain slope could support forests and farms, so some people might grow crops that need plenty of water. The dry shore would have fewer plants, so I would not put those farms there.

Accept other reasonable town sites and jobs if the student explains how the island's water, rainfall, land, and plants support the choices. For question 4, students may also mention that rivers supply water for people or that ships can dock near Hawaiian towns.