When Rivers Rise

How river conditions shape choices past and present

4.P.2.3.C "Explain how environmental factors affected historical events and continue to impact contemporary human activities."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one rain, river, or flood condition in each paragraph and circle one human action it caused. Write P beside a circled action from the past and T beside a circled action people may take today.

The Mississippi River Changes Plans

1. In 1927, weeks of heavy rain fell across the land that drains into the Mississippi River. Water rushed into the river faster than it could flow away. The river rose and broke through levees, walls of earth meant to hold back water. Floodwater covered fields and streets in several states. Many families left their homes, and farmers lost crops they had planned to sell.

2. After the 1927 flood, leaders had to decide how to protect towns along the river. In 1928, Congress passed a law to build more flood barriers and floodways. Floodways are places where extra river water can be sent during a flood. Workers built these structures to reduce damage in some areas. The flood changed where people built barriers and how they planned for rising water.

3. High water still changes daily life along the Mississippi River. When heavy rain raises the river, farmers may delay planting in fields that are too wet. Boats carrying grain may have to slow down or stop if the current becomes dangerous. People in riverside towns watch flood warnings and move belongings to higher places when water may reach their homes. The river supports work, but its changing level also shapes people's choices.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did weeks of rain lead to families leaving their homes in 1927?

2. How did the 1927 flood change what leaders decided to build?

3. How can heavy rain change a farmer's plans along the river today?

4. How can high river water affect boats carrying grain today?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a long dry spell leaves your town's river too low to fill its water tanks. In three sentences, explain how this change could affect two activities people do and describe one choice people could make.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 4 · 4.P.2.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one rain, river, or flood condition in each paragraph and circle one human action it caused. Write P beside a circled action from the past and T beside a circled action people may take today. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did weeks of rain lead to families leaving their homes in 1927?	**Rain raised the river until it broke through levees. Floodwater covered streets, so many families left their homes.**
2	How did the 1927 flood change what leaders decided to build?	**Leaders decided to build more flood barriers and floodways to reduce damage from rising water.**
3	How can heavy rain change a farmer's plans along the river today?	**Heavy rain can raise the river and leave fields too wet, so a farmer may delay planting.**
4	How can high river water affect boats carrying grain today?	**High water can make the current dangerous, so boats may have to slow down or stop.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After weeks without rain, the river falls too low to refill the town's water tanks. Families might take shorter showers, and a car wash might close because both need water. Town leaders could ask people to save water until rain returns.

Accept answers that connect a condition in the passage to a human action. For Your Turn, look for two distinct activities affected by low water and one reasonable response.