Follow the River

Use place clues to explain how land and water shape cities.

5.P.2.3.B "Analyze human and physical features of the nation by drawing conclusions and explaining spatial relationships of physical and human places from geographic representations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle Memphis, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans, then number them in the order you would reach them while traveling downstream. Underline two phrases that show how the river or low land affects something people build or do.

A River Route to the Gulf

1. Imagine traveling south through the United States along the Mississippi River. At Memphis, Tennessee, the river passes a large city far inland. Continue downstream to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and then to New Orleans, closer to the Gulf of Mexico. The river empties into the gulf beyond New Orleans. These place names and directions make a word map of a river route.

2. River water carries soil from places upstream toward the coast. Near New Orleans, the land is low and wet, and heavy rain can bring flooding. People built levees, raised walls along parts of the river, to help keep river water out of nearby neighborhoods. Levees do not stop every flood. Pumps also move rainwater out of low areas of the city.

3. Memphis, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans all have river ports, where boats load and unload goods. Barges can carry goods downriver from inland cities, while ships can reach New Orleans from the Gulf of Mexico. This connection helps explain why New Orleans has a busy port near the river's mouth. It also means that protecting nearby homes from floods matters to people who live and work there.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. A barge leaves Memphis and travels downstream to New Orleans. Which city does it pass on the way? Explain how you know.

2. Why can the port at New Orleans receive goods from both inland cities and the Gulf of Mexico?

3. How does the location of low land near New Orleans help explain why the city uses pumps?

4. Why might a neighborhood near the river still face flood danger even if it has a levee?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about where you would put a new neighborhood near New Orleans. Use the river and low land to explain your choice, and describe one way a human-made feature could help the homes.

ANSWER KEY

Follow the River

GRADE 5 · 5.P.2.3.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle Memphis, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans, then number them in the order you would reach them while traveling downstream. Underline two phrases that show how the river or low land affects something people build or do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	A barge leaves Memphis and travels downstream to New Orleans. Which city does it pass on the way? Explain how you know.	**It passes Baton Rouge because the passage places Baton Rouge downstream from Memphis but before New Orleans.**
2	Why can the port at New Orleans receive goods from both inland cities and the Gulf of Mexico?	**New Orleans is on the river near its mouth. Barges can travel downriver from inland cities, and ships can reach it from the Gulf.**
3	How does the location of low land near New Orleans help explain why the city uses pumps?	**Heavy rain can flood low areas, so pumps move rainwater out of those parts of the city.**
4	Why might a neighborhood near the river still face flood danger even if it has a levee?	**Levees help keep river water out, but they do not stop every flood.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would put the new homes farther from the river and away from low, wet land. This spot would face less danger from rising river water and heavy rain. Levees could help keep river water out, although they cannot stop every flood.

Accept other reasonable locations if students explain their choice using the river and low land. For the marking job, look for the downstream order Memphis, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and two links between physical conditions and people's actions.