When Weather Changes Plans

How environmental conditions shape people's choices

5.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 two environmental conditions that helped create the Dust Bowl. Then circle one way people responded in the 1930s and one way farmers respond today.

Dust, Drought, and Decisions

1 In the 1930s, many families on the Great Plains faced a long drought. Rain did not fall often enough for crops to grow well. Years of plowing had also removed much of the deep-rooted prairie grass that held soil in place. When strong winds swept across bare fields, loose soil blew into thick dust clouds. These storms became part of a period called the Dust Bowl.

2 Dust did more than darken the sky. It buried fields and got inside homes, making daily life difficult. When crops failed, many farming families lost their income. Some packed their belongings and left the Great Plains, hoping to find work elsewhere. Many traveled to California, where farm jobs were available, though finding steady work could still be hard. The dry weather and blowing soil helped drive this move.

3 Dry weather and strong winds still affect farms on the Great Plains today. Farmers may plant cover crops, such as rye, between main crops to help hold soil in place. Some leave stalks on fields after harvest so the ground is not bare. Irrigation can help crops during a drought, but it uses water from rivers or underground sources. When water is limited, farmers must decide how to use it carefully.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did drought and strong winds work together to create dust storms in the 1930s?

2. How did the Dust Bowl lead some families to leave the Great Plains?

3. How do cover crops help farmers respond to dry, windy conditions today?

4. Why must farmers think carefully before using irrigation during a drought?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your town now has heavy rain that floods a road each spring. In four sentences, explain how the rain could affect travel or work, propose a response, and compare this situation with how environmental conditions affected people during the Dust Bowl.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · 5.P.2.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two environmental conditions that helped create the Dust Bowl. Then circle one way people responded in the 1930s and one way farmers respond today. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did drought and strong winds work together to create dust storms in the 1930s?	**Drought left fields dry, and strong winds blew loose soil from bare fields into dust clouds.**
2	How did the Dust Bowl lead some families to leave the Great Plains?	**Blowing soil and dry weather damaged crops. Some families lost their income and left to look for work.**
3	How do cover crops help farmers respond to dry, windy conditions today?	**Cover crops help hold soil in place so wind is less likely to blow it away.**
4	Why must farmers think carefully before using irrigation during a drought?	**Irrigation helps crops, but it uses water from rivers or underground sources that may be limited.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Heavy spring rain could flood the road to the town market. Workers might arrive late, and deliveries could be delayed. The town could raise the road so people can travel when the water rises. During the Dust Bowl, dry weather and blowing soil harmed crops and pushed some families to leave, while heavy rain would change how people travel today.

For the marking job, accept drought or too little rain and strong winds as environmental conditions. Responses may vary, but each explanation should connect a condition to a specific effect on people.