Coastal Cultural Roots

Read how heritage and place shape cultural traits.

6.C.3.2.A "Identify and describe cultural traits (e.g., language, ethnic heritage, religion, traditions, the arts) which are unique to a people and region."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three cultural traits of Gullah Geechee communities, and circle words near each trait that connect it to the people's heritage or coastal region.

Gullah Geechee Life Along the Coast

1 Along the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Florida, Gullah Geechee communities have deep roots. Many members descend from West and Central Africans who were enslaved and forced to work on coastal plantations. After slavery ended, families continued to build lives on the Sea Islands and nearby mainland. Water separated some island communities from large towns, which helped people keep parts of their cultural heritage. Today, Gullah Geechee people live in many places, but this coastal region remains an important home for their history and traditions.

2 At a gathering, you might hear Gullah Geechee spoken alongside English. Gullah Geechee is a creole language shaped by English and West and Central African languages. Its expressions carry generations of community history. In coastal South Carolina, some artisans make coiled baskets from sweetgrass and other local plants. Their skills connect to West African basket-making traditions, while the materials come from the nearby coast. A basket is more than a useful object. Its careful coils show how knowledge can travel and take root in a new place.

3 Food also tells part of this story. In some Gullah Geechee homes, cooks prepare red rice with tomatoes and seasonings. Rice reflects both the region's history of rice farming and cooking knowledge brought by enslaved Africans. Today, families and artists share recipes, stories, music, and crafts at gatherings and festivals. These practices are not identical in every household, and they change over time. Looking at a language, a basket, or a dish can help you describe how a people's heritage and coastal surroundings shape their cultural traits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the location of some Gullah Geechee communities help people keep parts of their cultural heritage?

2. What is one language trait of Gullah Geechee communities, and what heritage helped shape it?

3. How do sweetgrass baskets connect Gullah Geechee artisans to both West African heritage and the coastal region?

4. How does red rice connect a Gullah Geechee food tradition to the region's history and African heritage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a different real people and region you know about. In three or four sentences, name two specific cultural traits and describe how each connects to that people and region.

ANSWER KEY

Coastal Cultural Roots

GRADE 6 · 6.C.3.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three cultural traits of Gullah Geechee communities, and circle words near each trait that connect it to the people's heritage or coastal region. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the location of some Gullah Geechee communities help people keep parts of their cultural heritage?	**Water separated some Sea Island communities from large towns, which helped people keep parts of their cultural heritage.**
2	What is one language trait of Gullah Geechee communities, and what heritage helped shape it?	**Gullah Geechee is a creole language shaped by English and West and Central African languages.**
3	How do sweetgrass baskets connect Gullah Geechee artisans to both West African heritage and the coastal region?	**The weaving skills connect to West African basket-making traditions, and artisans use sweetgrass and other plants from the nearby coast.**
4	How does red rice connect a Gullah Geechee food tradition to the region's history and African heritage?	**Rice connects the dish to the coastal region's history of rice farming and to cooking knowledge brought by enslaved Africans.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Many Diné people live in the Navajo Nation in the U.S. Southwest. Diné Bizaad is a language spoken by some Diné people there and passed down through generations. Some Diné artists weave wool rugs, drawing on weaving traditions developed in this region.

Accept accurate examples from any real people and region other than the Gullah Geechee. Look for two specific traits, with a clear connection between each trait, the people, and the region.