Westward Landscapes

Connect physical features with climate and vegetation

7.C.2.1 "Identify on a physical map the major landforms and bodies of water of each region and compare climatic conditions, vegetation, and biomes using thematic maps and other geographic tools."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Box each region name, underline its landforms, and circle its bodies of water. Use your marks to connect each place with its climate and plants.

Three Regions of the West

1. Picture a trip across the western United States, starting on California's central Pacific Coast. On a physical map, the Pacific Ocean borders this region, and the Coast Ranges rise just inland. A climate map would show mild temperatures, with most rain falling in winter and summers often dry. A vegetation map would show coastal scrub and chaparral on many slopes, though plants vary from place to place. In this region's chaparral biome, many shrubs can survive long dry seasons. Conditions change as you travel inland.

2. Travel east across the Sierra Nevada into the Great Basin. This region has wide basin valleys between mountain ranges. In its northern part, the Great Salt Lake collects water that does not flow to the ocean. The mountains to the west block some rain, so much of the Great Basin is dry. Summers can be hot, while winters can be cold. A vegetation map would show sagebrush across many valleys. A biome map would place much of this region in a desert biome.

3. The Colorado Plateau lies southeast of the Great Basin. On a physical map, look for broad, high areas called mesas and deep canyons cut by rivers, including the Colorado River. Both regions are dry overall, but summer rain reaches many parts of the plateau. Its higher elevations can also be cooler than its lower areas. Vegetation changes with elevation: desert shrubs grow in lower places, while pinyon pines and junipers grow higher up. A biome map may show desert and woodland in different parts of the plateau.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Where would you place the Coast Ranges in relation to the Pacific Ocean on a physical map? What biome would you connect to this region?

2. Traveling east across the Sierra Nevada, which region and named body of water would you reach? What plant covers many of its valleys?

3. In which direction from the Great Basin is the Colorado Plateau? Name two landforms and one body of water you would label there.

4. Compare the central California coast and the Great Basin using one climate difference and one vegetation or biome difference.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Draw a simple physical map using the location clues in the passage. Label one landform and one body of water in each region, add a north arrow, then write two sentences comparing the climate and vegetation or biomes of two regions.

ANSWER KEY

Westward Landscapes

GRADE 7 · 7.C.2.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Box each region name, underline its landforms, and circle its bodies of water. Use your marks to connect each place with its climate and plants. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Where would you place the Coast Ranges in relation to the Pacific Ocean on a physical map? What biome would you connect to this region?	**The Coast Ranges are just inland from the Pacific Ocean. The region has a chaparral biome.**
2	Traveling east across the Sierra Nevada, which region and named body of water would you reach? What plant covers many of its valleys?	**You would reach the Great Basin, which contains the Great Salt Lake in its northern part. Sagebrush covers many valleys.**
3	In which direction from the Great Basin is the Colorado Plateau? Name two landforms and one body of water you would label there.	**It is southeast of the Great Basin. Label mesas, canyons, and the Colorado River.**
4	Compare the central California coast and the Great Basin using one climate difference and one vegetation or biome difference.	**The coast is mild with winter rain and often dry summers, while much of the Great Basin is dry with hot summers and cold winters. Chaparral grows on many coastal slopes, while sagebrush grows across many Great Basin valleys.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sketch: A north arrow points up. The Pacific Coast is on the left, with the Coast Ranges just inland from the Pacific Ocean. The Great Basin is east of the Sierra Nevada, with basin valleys and the Great Salt Lake. The Colorado Plateau is southeast of the Great Basin, with mesas and the Colorado River. Writing: The central California coast is mild and gets most of its rain in winter, while the Great Basin is drier and has hot summers and cold winters. Chaparral grows on many coastal slopes, but sagebrush grows across many Great Basin valleys.

For the sketch task, accept other correctly placed landforms named in the passage, such as canyons on the Colorado Plateau. Comparisons should accurately connect each chosen region to both its climate and its vegetation or biome.