Links and Barriers

How geography and human choices connect and separate regions

7.C.8.2 "Explain and summarize how common physical or human characteristics can link as well as divide regions (e.g., manmade canals linking European trading centers..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. In each paragraph, underline one detail showing a link between regions or groups, and circle one detail showing a division.

One Feature, Two Effects

1. At the edge of the Sahara, a trader loads a truck with dates and cloth. The desert stretches across North Africa, and its dry climate and vast distances make travel and farming difficult. For centuries, it limited regular contact between communities north and south of it. Yet the same desert also became a route. Traders once crossed it in camel caravans, exchanging salt from desert mines for gold and other goods from farther south. Today, roads and trucks carry some trade across it. The desert can separate regions while trade routes connect them.

2. Near Egypt's city of Port Said, ships enter the Suez Canal. This human-made waterway joins the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, giving ships a shorter route between European and Asian ports than the trip around Africa. That link helps goods move between regions. But the canal also cuts across Egyptian land and separates the Sinai Peninsula from the rest of Egypt. People and vehicles cannot simply drive across the water. Bridges and tunnels allow travel between the two sides, showing how people can reduce a barrier they created.

3. Jerusalem shows how a human characteristic can link and divide people. The city is sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. People of these faiths visit and feel connected to the city, though their beliefs differ. At the same time, Israelis and Palestinians both claim Jerusalem as important to their national future. Disagreements over who should govern parts of the city have added to conflict. Religion is not the only cause: land, safety, and political rights matter too. A shared city can bring people together while competing claims push them apart.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How has the Sahara both separated and connected regions north and south of it?

2. How does the Suez Canal link regions while also creating a barrier?

3. How can Jerusalem's importance connect people and also contribute to conflict?

4. Compare the Sahara and the Suez Canal area. How have people made travel possible across each barrier?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent two neighboring regions and choose one physical or human characteristic that could both link and divide them. In four sentences, name the characteristic, explain one link and one division, and tell how people could respond.

ANSWER KEY

Links and Barriers

GRADE 7 · 7.C.8.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. In each paragraph, underline one detail showing a link between regions or groups, and circle one detail showing a division. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How has the Sahara both separated and connected regions north and south of it?	**Its dry climate and vast distances limited contact, but caravan routes and later roads carried trade across it.**
2	How does the Suez Canal link regions while also creating a barrier?	**It gives ships a shorter route between European and Asian ports, but it separates the Sinai Peninsula from the rest of Egypt.**
3	How can Jerusalem's importance connect people and also contribute to conflict?	**Its importance to several faiths draws people to the city, while competing claims about its political future have added to conflict.**
4	Compare the Sahara and the Suez Canal area. How have people made travel possible across each barrier?	**People have crossed the Sahara by caravan and road. Bridges and tunnels allow travel across the Suez Canal.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Pine River runs between Eastbank and Westbank. Boats carry workers and food between the two regions, so the river links their markets. During heavy rains, high water makes crossing dangerous and separates the communities. The regions could build a raised bridge to keep travel open during floods.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of each link and division. For Part 3, accept a plausible invented characteristic if the response explains both effects and gives a response to the division.