Borders Under Pressure

Trace how conflict, resources, and identity challenge political arrangements.

7.C.8.6 "Describe how political, economic, and cultural forces (e.g., civil wars, terrorism, genocide, ethnic separatism) have challenged political arrangements (e.g., political status of Taiwan to China, the division of Sudan and South Sudan)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three political, economic, or cultural forces in the passage. Circle the government, border, or political status each force challenges, then give each force and its match the same number.

Two Places, Different Pressures

1. In 2011, crowds in South Sudan celebrated a new country. For decades, southern groups had fought wars with Sudan's central government, which ruled from the north. Many southerners felt shut out of political power and feared that their languages and religions would not be respected. A 2005 peace agreement ended the second long civil war and promised a vote on independence. In that vote, an overwhelming majority chose separation. The political arrangement changed: the south became the independent country of South Sudan, rather than remaining part of Sudan.

2. Separation did not settle every problem. Much of the oil was in South Sudan, but pipelines needed to export it ran through Sudan. The two governments argued over fees and control of oil-rich border areas. Those economic disputes made cooperation between the new neighbors difficult. Within South Sudan, political rivalries helped spark another civil war in 2013, challenging its new government. These conflicts show that gaining independence can change a border without ending struggles over resources or who holds power inside a country.

3. Across the sea from mainland China, Taiwan faces a different challenge to political arrangements. After China's civil war, the losing side's government moved to Taiwan in 1949. Today, Taiwan governs itself and holds its own elections, while China's government claims Taiwan as part of its territory. Many people in Taiwan identify as Taiwanese, and views there differ on its future. China opposes Taiwan becoming formally independent. Trade connects the two sides, yet political disagreement over Taiwan's status remains. Other countries must decide how to deal with both governments.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did concerns about political power and cultural respect help change South Sudan's political status?

2. How did the location of oil and pipelines challenge cooperation between Sudan and South Sudan?

3. What political force challenged South Sudan's government after independence, and how?

4. How do Taiwan's self-government, people's views of identity, and China's claim create disagreement over Taiwan's status?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a fictional region within a country. In three sentences, describe its current political arrangement, a political, economic, or cultural force that challenges it, and a possible response, explaining how the force could lead to that response.

ANSWER KEY

Borders Under Pressure

GRADE 7 · 7.C.8.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three political, economic, or cultural forces in the passage. Circle the government, border, or political status each force challenges, then give each force and its match the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did concerns about political power and cultural respect help change South Sudan's political status?	**Many southerners felt excluded from power and feared their languages and religions would not be respected. After years of war, they voted for independence, and South Sudan separated from Sudan.**
2	How did the location of oil and pipelines challenge cooperation between Sudan and South Sudan?	**Much of the oil was in South Sudan, but export pipelines ran through Sudan. Disputes over fees and oil-rich border areas made cooperation difficult.**
3	What political force challenged South Sudan's government after independence, and how?	**Political rivalries helped spark a civil war in 2013, challenging South Sudan's new government.**
4	How do Taiwan's self-government, people's views of identity, and China's claim create disagreement over Taiwan's status?	**Taiwan governs itself, and many residents identify as Taiwanese, but China's government claims Taiwan as its territory and opposes formal independence. These different positions keep Taiwan's political status disputed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The fictional Harbor Region is governed by a national council that sets rules for its fishing ports. When the council raises port fees, fishers in the region say they can no longer afford to sell their catch. Their protests could lead the council to lower the fees or give regional leaders a say in setting them.

Accept answers that accurately connect a force in the passage to the political arrangement it challenges. For Part 3, look for a clear cause-and-effect link between an invented force and a plausible political response.