A Narrow Crossroads

How one region connects distant economies

7.C.8 "Analyze the physical and human characteristics of regions which create uniqueness and influence people's perceptions of the Eastern Hemisphere..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two physical features and circle two human features in the passage. Number two places where a feature affects people's work, trade, or view of the region.

The Suez Canal Region

1. A ship leaving the Indian Ocean can reach Europe through the Red Sea and Egypt's Suez Canal instead of sailing around southern Africa. The canal joins the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt's canal zone is a region, an area identified by shared features, including a dry climate, a human-made waterway, and busy ports. The dry land makes farming difficult in many places, but the waterway attracts shipping jobs and trade. Someone watching only the desert might picture an empty place, while a port worker sees a crowded trade crossroads.

2. The canal opened in 1869, and shipping helped canal cities such as Port Said grow. As ships became larger, Egypt widened and deepened sections of the canal to handle more traffic. These human changes altered how the region was used, even though its dry climate remained. The canal links ports in Europe and Asia, but a delay there can disrupt factories and stores. In 2021, a grounded container ship blocked the canal for several days. Ships waited or took the longer route around Africa, showing how one narrow passage can shape trade across regions.

3. Trade through the canal also creates choices. Egypt earns fees from ships that pass, while countries in Europe and Asia rely on the route for goods and resources. When fuel prices rise, the shorter trip can save money, yet relying on one route makes trade vulnerable to a blockage. Some shipping companies may choose a longer route to avoid delays or fees. Cooperation keeps the route useful: Egypt manages the canal, and ships from many countries follow its traffic rules. The region connects economies, but the benefits and risks are not shared equally.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How might a person looking only at the desert and a port worker describe this region differently? Use a feature each person would notice.

2. Identify one feature of the region that remained the same and one that people changed. How did the change affect the region?

3. How does the canal connect regions, and how can that connection cause problems beyond Egypt?

4. Why might Egypt and a shipping company make different choices about using the canal?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a new rail line could link farming towns in East Africa to an Indian Ocean port, but the route must cross steep hills. In four sentences, explain how the hills and rail line could shape the region, including one benefit and one risk for people who use the route.

ANSWER KEY

A Narrow Crossroads

GRADE 7 · 7.C.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two physical features and circle two human features in the passage. Number two places where a feature affects people's work, trade, or view of the region. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How might a person looking only at the desert and a port worker describe this region differently? Use a feature each person would notice.	**A person looking only at the desert might see an empty, dry place. A port worker would notice busy ports and shipping jobs and see a trade crossroads.**
2	Identify one feature of the region that remained the same and one that people changed. How did the change affect the region?	**The dry climate remained, while Egypt widened and deepened sections of the canal. The changes allowed the canal to handle more ship traffic.**
3	How does the canal connect regions, and how can that connection cause problems beyond Egypt?	**The canal connects ports in Europe and Asia. A blockage can delay ships and disrupt factories and stores that depend on the route.**
4	Why might Egypt and a shipping company make different choices about using the canal?	**Egypt earns fees when ships use the canal. A shipping company might choose another route to avoid delays or fees, even though the canal offers a shorter trip.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The steep hills could make the rail line difficult and costly to build. If completed, the line could connect farming towns to the port and help farmers sell crops farther away. Towns near stations might grow as trade brings new jobs. Farmers could also become more dependent on the rail line, so a closure might delay their crops.

For the marking job, accept the Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea, desert, dry land, or dry climate as physical features, and the canal, ports, or canal cities as human features. Accept numbered passages that clearly connect a feature to work, trade, or a person's view.