Living With Water

How a coastal environment shaped Dutch life and history

8.P.2.3.C "Explain how the environment affects cultural patterns and historical events, providing opportunities and challenges for human development."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two environmental conditions or events, circle a human response to each, and write matching numbers beside each cause-and-response pair.

The Netherlands and the North Sea

1 Much of the Netherlands lies beside the North Sea, and some land is below sea level. Rivers such as the Rhine carry goods from inland Europe toward the coast. These waterways helped Dutch ports become busy centers of trade. But the same flat, watery landscape left farms and towns exposed to flooding. For centuries, people built dikes, raised barriers that hold back water, and drained low fields to make room for farming. The land offered trade routes and usable soil, but keeping homes and crops dry required constant work.

2 A dike protects more than one family's land, so neighbors had to plan and pay for repairs together. Local water boards developed to manage dikes and drainage. These groups made shared water decisions a lasting part of Dutch civic life. Even strong defenses could fail when high winds pushed seawater toward the shore. In 1953, a severe North Sea storm sent a surge of water over and through dikes. Floods killed more than 1,800 people in the Netherlands and damaged thousands of homes and farms.

3 After the disaster, the Dutch government began the Delta Works, a long project of dams and storm barriers to reduce flood risk in the southwest. One barrier across the Eastern Scheldt has gates that normally allow tides to move through and close when dangerous water rises. Designers chose this approach partly to protect the area's marine life and fishing. Stronger defenses have made communities safer, but building and maintaining them takes money and planning. The coast still brings both chances to earn a living and threats that demand cooperation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did rivers create an opportunity that shaped trade in the Netherlands?

2. Why did the need to maintain dikes help make shared decisions part of Dutch civic life?

3. How did the 1953 storm affect a later government decision about flood protection?

4. Why do the Eastern Scheldt barrier's gates usually stay open but close when dangerous water rises?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a community in a mountain valley with heavy winter snow and a short summer growing season. In 4 to 5 sentences, explain how these conditions could shape one cultural pattern and cause one event in the community's imagined history. Include both an opportunity and a challenge.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two environmental conditions or events, circle a human response to each, and write matching numbers beside each cause-and-response pair. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did rivers create an opportunity that shaped trade in the Netherlands?	**Rivers carried goods from inland Europe to the coast, helping Dutch ports become centers of trade.**
2	Why did the need to maintain dikes help make shared decisions part of Dutch civic life?	**Dikes protected multiple families, so neighbors planned and paid for repairs together. Water boards developed to manage this work.**
3	How did the 1953 storm affect a later government decision about flood protection?	**After the deadly storm surge flooded homes and farms, the government began the Delta Works to reduce flood risk.**
4	Why do the Eastern Scheldt barrier's gates usually stay open but close when dangerous water rises?	**Open gates allow tides to move through, helping protect marine life and fishing. Closed gates reduce the threat of flooding.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Winter snow could feed streams in spring, giving farmers water for crops during the short growing season. Families might develop a custom of sharing irrigation turns so each field receives water. One year, unusually rapid snowmelt could flood the valley and destroy its main bridge, delaying travel and trade. Residents might then build a higher bridge and organize a spring flood watch.

Accept other cause-and-effect explanations grounded in the passage. For the open task, look for a plausible cultural pattern and imagined event linked to the mountain conditions, with a clear opportunity and challenge.