Living With Water

How the Mekong Delta shapes daily life

WG.C.3.3 "Analyze the role of the environment in influencing a region's culture."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three details about water or flooding, circle three related ways people live or work, and give each matching pair the same number to show how the environment shapes culture.

Water and Choice in the Mekong Delta

1 In southern Vietnam, the Mekong Delta is threaded with rivers and canals. During the rainy season, some low-lying areas flood, while the waterways also carry sediment that can enrich soil. For generations, farmers have grown rice in this wet landscape, often using dikes and canals to manage water in their fields. Fish from rivers and flooded fields also contribute to local meals and livelihoods. The environment does not dictate a single way to live, but it makes some choices practical. Water supports farming and fishing, while too much water can damage crops and disrupt daily routines.

2 Waterways have also shaped how people move and trade. In some parts of the delta, boats carry produce to riverside markets, where sellers can trade without first hauling goods along a road. At floating markets, vendors may display a sample of their produce on tall poles so buyers in passing boats can see what they sell. This trading practice developed around travel by water, not because everyone in the region prefers boats. Today, roads and bridges offer other routes. As truck transport expands, some floating markets have become smaller, even as others attract visitors.

3 Flooding affects buildings as well as work and trade. In flood-prone communities, some houses stand on raised foundations or stilts, which can keep living spaces above high water. People also use boats when nearby paths are submerged. These responses reflect local conditions, but they are not unchanging traditions: flood barriers, new roads, and different jobs can alter what residents need. A family might keep a boat for seasonal travel while using a motorbike on dry roads. Looking at both choices shows how a region's culture develops through interactions between its environment and people's decisions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the delta's waterways help shape both farming and local meals?

2. Why might a vendor at a floating market display produce on a tall pole?

3. How does the risk of flooding influence the design of some homes?

4. How can new roads and bridges change a trading practice shaped by waterways?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a highland region with steep slopes, cool winters, and short growing seasons. In five or six sentences, propose two ways people might adapt how they farm or build homes, explain the environmental reason for each, and describe how a new travel tunnel could change one of your proposed practices.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three details about water or flooding, circle three related ways people live or work, and give each matching pair the same number to show how the environment shapes culture. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the delta's waterways help shape both farming and local meals?	**Farmers use dikes and canals to manage water for rice fields, while fish from rivers and flooded fields contribute to meals.**
2	Why might a vendor at a floating market display produce on a tall pole?	**The pole lets buyers traveling by boat see what the vendor sells as they pass.**
3	How does the risk of flooding influence the design of some homes?	**Some homes have raised foundations or stilts to keep living spaces above high water.**
4	How can new roads and bridges change a trading practice shaped by waterways?	**Roads and bridges allow goods to travel by truck, so some floating markets have become smaller.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Farmers could cut terraces into steep slopes to create flatter plots for crops. Building and maintaining terraces would take work, but the slopes make flat fields scarce. Families could build insulated homes to stay warm during cool winters. If a tunnel made travel easier, builders could bring in more insulation materials. Homes might change, but the need to stay warm would remain.

Accept other passage-supported links between water and cultural practices. For Part 3, accept plausible proposals that explain two environmental links and a specific effect the tunnel could have on one practice.