

Why Towns Grow

Read how land, water, travel, and jobs shape Texas settlements.

4.7 "Geography. The student understands the location and patterns of settlement and the geographic factors that influence where people live..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each phrase that names a natural feature or condition, such as water, soil, a coast, or dry land. Then write 1, 2, 3, and so on beside each sentence that explains why a community grew in a certain place.

Texas Places, Then and Now

- ① Long before Texas became a state, many Indigenous peoples lived near rivers, springs, and the Gulf Coast. Water supplied drinking water, fish, and ways to travel. Fertile soil along some rivers helped people grow crops. These settlements were not spread evenly across Texas. Dry areas with less dependable water usually supported fewer and smaller communities than wetter places.
- ② In the 1700s, Spanish missions and presidios were built where water and travel routes could support them. San Antonio grew near the San Antonio River and near mission settlements. El Paso developed beside the Rio Grande, where a route between Mexico and New Mexico crossed the river. Towns often formed at river crossings because travelers, trade, and water came together there.
- ③ Later, railroads changed where many Texas towns grew. Rail lines carried people, cattle, cotton, and supplies. Places with railroad stops could become trade centers, and some new towns appeared along the tracks. In the 1900s and today, many people have also moved to large cities such as Houston, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio. Jobs, roads, airports, and services attract people, while rivers, coasts, plains, and dry land still affect where Texans live.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which two geographic factors helped some early Texas communities grow larger than communities in dry areas?

2 Explain why San Antonio and El Paso each grew in useful locations.

3 How did railroads change the pattern of settlement in Texas?

4 Name one reason many people move to large Texas cities today. Then name one natural feature or condition that still affects where Texans live.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write four sentences comparing a place where a Texas town might have started in the 1700s with a place where a Texas city might grow today. Name one natural geographic factor for each place and explain why people would choose each location.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each phrase that names a natural feature or condition, such as water, soil, a coast, or dry land. Then write 1, 2, 3, and so on beside each sentence that explains why a community grew in a certain place. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two geographic factors helped some early Texas communities grow larger than communities in dry areas?	Dependable water and fertile soil helped communities grow larger.
2	Explain why San Antonio and El Paso each grew in useful locations.	San Antonio grew near the San Antonio River and mission settlements. El Paso developed beside the Rio Grande, where a route between Mexico and New Mexico crossed the river.
3	How did railroads change the pattern of settlement in Texas?	Railroad stops could become trade centers, and new towns appeared along railroad tracks.
4	Name one reason many people move to large Texas cities today. Then name one natural feature or condition that still affects where Texans live.	People move to large cities for jobs, roads, airports, or services. Rivers, coasts, plains, or dry land still affect where Texans live.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An early Texas town might be built beside a reliable river in central Texas. The river would provide water and a place for travelers to cross. Today, a city might grow near a major road in a less dry part of Texas. Jobs and transportation could bring people there, while dependable water would still matter.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect settlement locations to dependable water, fertile soil, river crossings, railroads, or modern jobs and transportation. In the open response, look for a comparison of two time periods and a clear reason tied to geography for each location.