

Regions Take Shape

Use physical characteristics to describe United States regions.

5.6.B “describe regions in the United States based on physical characteristics such as landform, climate, and vegetation;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each landform description, circle each climate clue, and write a small number beside each vegetation clue. These details show why areas can be described as different regions.

Three Regions, Different Features

- ① Across the center of the United States, the Great Plains stretch from Texas north toward Canada. Much of this region is broad, flat, or gently rolling grassland. Rain falls mostly in spring and summer, but amounts decrease from east to west. Grasses cover much of the land, while trees grow mainly near rivers. Farmers raise wheat and cattle where soil and water allow.
- ② The Southwest includes dry areas such as Arizona and New Mexico. Its landforms include deserts, high plateaus, mesas, and canyons. This region receives much less rain than the Great Plains, and summers are often very hot. Cacti, shrubs, and tough grasses can survive with little water. Mountains in some places are cooler and may have forests.
- ③ Along the Pacific coast, the Pacific Northwest has mountain ranges, valleys, and a rocky shoreline. Moist air from the ocean brings frequent rain, especially west of the mountains. Thick evergreen forests grow where rainfall is high. East of the mountains, the land is drier and has more grasslands and shrubs. Physical features such as these help people describe each area as a region.

2

ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1

What landforms and vegetation describe the Great Plains?

2

How is rainfall in the Great Plains different from rainfall in the Southwest?

3

Which region has frequent rain west of its mountains and thick evergreen forests?

4

Describe two physical characteristics that distinguish the Southwest from the Pacific Northwest.

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose two regions from the passage. Complete the chart to compare their landforms, climate, and vegetation.

REGION	LANDFORMS	CLIMATE	VEGETATION

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each landform description, circle each climate clue, and write a small number beside each vegetation clue. These details show why areas can be described as different regions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What landforms and vegetation describe the Great Plains?	The Great Plains are broad, flat, or gently rolling grassland. Grasses cover much of the land, and trees grow mainly near rivers.
2	How is rainfall in the Great Plains different from rainfall in the Southwest?	The Great Plains get rain mostly in spring and summer, while the Southwest gets much less rain.
3	Which region has frequent rain west of its mountains and thick evergreen forests?	The Pacific Northwest.
4	Describe two physical characteristics that distinguish the Southwest from the Pacific Northwest.	The Southwest has deserts, plateaus, mesas, and canyons, while the Pacific Northwest has mountain ranges, valleys, and a rocky shoreline. The Southwest is much drier and has cacti and shrubs, while the wetter Pacific Northwest has thick evergreen forests.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

REGION	LANDFORMS	CLIMATE	VEGETATION
Great Plains	broad, flat, or gently rolling grassland	Rain falls mostly in spring and summer and decreases from east to west.	Grasses cover much of the land, and trees grow mainly near rivers.
Southwest	deserts, high plateaus, mesas, and canyons	It receives much less rain than the Great Plains, and summers are often very hot.	Cacti, shrubs, and tough grasses grow there.

Accept accurate characteristics from the passage for any two regions in the chart. Students may use different correct details for landforms, climate, or vegetation.