

Why Cities Grow

Geographic features help shape where people settle.

5.7.B “explain the geographic factors that influence patterns of settlement and the distribution of population in the United States; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every geographic factor in the passage. Write a number beside each sentence that explains how a factor affects where people settle or how many people live there.

Land, Water, and Settlement

- ① People do not spread evenly across the United States. Many large cities grew near rivers, coasts, and natural harbors. Waterways gave early settlers drinking water, fish, and routes for travel and trade. New York City, for example, developed beside a deep harbor and the Hudson River. Today, the surrounding area remains densely populated because jobs, transportation, and services are available there.
- ② The Great Plains have wide, level land and rich soil in many places. These features attracted farmers, so towns formed where people could raise crops and ship them by railroad. However, some parts receive little rain and face droughts. Fewer people live in those dry areas because farming is harder and water is less reliable. Physical geography can draw settlers in or limit settlement.
- ③ Mountains, deserts, and climate also affect where people live. Steep mountain slopes can make building roads and homes difficult. In the hot, dry Southwest, cities often depend on rivers, reservoirs, or groundwater for water. Phoenix has grown quickly, but its location requires careful water planning. People may settle in challenging places when work is available, yet geographic limits still shape how many people can live there.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which geographic features helped New York City grow, and how did they help settlement?

2 Why do fewer people live in the dry parts of the Great Plains?

3 How can steep mountain slopes limit settlement?

4 Use two examples from the passage to explain why population is not spread evenly across the United States.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a new U.S. town in a place with at least two geographic features. Write three sentences that name the features and explain how they would affect where people settle and how large the town might become.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline every geographic factor in the passage. Write a number beside each sentence that explains how a factor affects where people settle or how many people live there. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which geographic features helped New York City grow, and how did they help settlement?	Its deep harbor and the Hudson River provided water and routes for travel and trade.
2	Why do fewer people live in the dry parts of the Great Plains?	Little rainfall and drought make farming harder and make water less reliable.
3	How can steep mountain slopes limit settlement?	Steep slopes make it difficult to build roads and homes.
4	Use two examples from the passage to explain why population is not spread evenly across the United States.	Waterways and rich, level soil can attract settlers, while drought, deserts, and steep mountains can make settlement more difficult.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Riverbend is built beside a river on flat land with rich soil. The river provides water and a route for travel, while the flat, fertile land supports farms and roads. These features could attract many families, so Riverbend might grow into a large town.

Accept any realistic U.S. setting that names at least two geographic factors and accurately explains their effects on settlement or population. Geographic factors may include water access, landforms, soil, climate, rainfall, or natural hazards.