

Cities by Water

Analyze how water and transportation shape major urban areas.

5.7.C “analyze the geographic factors that influence the location of the five largest urban areas in the United States and explain their distribution.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB In paragraph 2, underline the words that name water or transportation factors, then write 1 through 5 beside the clauses that give the locations of New York--Newark, Los Angeles--Long Beach--Anaheim, Chicago, Miami, and Houston so you can compare their distribution.

Why These Urban Areas Grew

- ① The five largest U.S. urban areas, based on 2020 Census urban-area population, are New York--Newark, Los Angeles--Long Beach--Anaheim, Chicago, Miami, and Houston. An urban area includes a city and nearby built-up places that connect to it. These five areas are not spread evenly across the country. Two sit on the Atlantic coast, one is on the Pacific coast, one is beside Lake Michigan, and one is near the Gulf of Mexico.
- ② Water helped each place grow. New York--Newark has a deep harbor on the Atlantic Ocean. Los Angeles--Long Beach--Anaheim has Pacific ports. Chicago grew beside Lake Michigan and became a transportation link for waterways, railroads, and roads. Miami lies on the Atlantic coast near warm waters, while Houston connects to Gulf ports and an inland network of rivers and railroads.
- ③ Coastal locations gave several areas access to trade, travel, and jobs. Chicago shows that a large urban area can also grow inland when a Great Lake and transportation routes connect it to many places. The pattern is mostly along major water bodies: the Atlantic has New York--Newark and Miami, while the Pacific, Great Lakes, and Gulf each have one. This distribution leaves large parts of the interior without one of these five areas.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** Sort the five named urban areas by their broad location: Atlantic coast, Pacific coast, Lake Michigan, or Gulf of Mexico.

- 2** Compare Chicago and Houston. What water location and transportation connections helped each area grow?

- 3** According to the passage, how can a coastal location help an urban area grow?

- 4** Explain the overall distribution of the five largest urban areas. Why are they not spread evenly across the country?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a sixth large urban area. In four sentences, give it a name, place it beside an ocean port, Great Lake, or Gulf port, explain two geographic factors that could help it grow, and tell how it would change the distribution of large urban areas.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In paragraph 2, underline the words that name water or transportation factors, then write 1 through 5 beside the clauses that give the locations of New York--Newark, Los Angeles--Long Beach--Anaheim, Chicago, Miami, and Houston so you can compare their distribution. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Sort the five named urban areas by their broad location: Atlantic coast, Pacific coast, Lake Michigan, or Gulf of Mexico.	Atlantic coast: New York--Newark and Miami. Pacific coast: Los Angeles--Long Beach--Anaheim. Lake Michigan: Chicago. Gulf of Mexico: Houston.
2	Compare Chicago and Houston. What water location and transportation connections helped each area grow?	Chicago grew beside Lake Michigan and links waterways, railroads, and roads. Houston connects to Gulf ports and to rivers and railroads inland.
3	According to the passage, how can a coastal location help an urban area grow?	A coastal location can provide access to trade, travel, and jobs.
4	Explain the overall distribution of the five largest urban areas. Why are they not spread evenly across the country?	They are mostly along major water bodies, including the Atlantic, Pacific, Great Lakes, and Gulf. Water access and transportation routes helped these places grow, so much of the interior has none of the five.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Harbor Plains could grow on the Pacific coast beside a protected port. Ships could bring goods and people, creating trade jobs. Railroads could carry goods from the port to inland towns. This new area would add another large urban area to the Pacific side of the country.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the listed water locations and transportation links. For the open response, accept any plausible invented location that explains two geographic factors and accurately describes a change in distribution.