

Canal Location Clues

Use geographic evidence to explain why a place matters.

6.20.A “answer geographic questions, including: Where is it located? Why is it there? What is significant about its location? How is its location related to the location of other people, places, and environments? Using latitude and longitude...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each named location, circle the latitude and longitude, and put a star beside sentences that explain why the canal is there or why its location matters.

The Panama Canal

- ① The Panama Canal is a waterway across the narrow country of Panama in Central America. Its main entrance on the Caribbean Sea is near Colón, and its Pacific entrance is near Panama City. A point near the canal is about 9° north latitude and 79° west longitude. This location places the canal between North and South America. It also connects ships traveling between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean without going around the southern tip of South America by sea.
- ② For centuries, sailors moving goods between the two oceans had to make a long trip around Cape Horn, at the southern end of South America. Engineers chose Panama because its land bridge is much narrower than other parts of the Americas. They built locks that raise ships to Gatun Lake, then lower them again. The lake and nearby forests provide water for the locks, so rainfall and careful water management affect how the canal operates safely today.
- ③ The canal's location is significant because it shortens many sea routes. A ship traveling from New York City to Los Angeles can use the canal instead of sailing around Cape Horn. This saves time and fuel, which can lower shipping costs. Ports near both oceans handle cargo and employ workers, connecting Panama's economy to places far away. At the same time, ships, tourism, and construction can affect forests, freshwater, and wildlife near the canal. Its location links human activities with a sensitive tropical environment.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Using latitude and longitude, where is a point near the Panama Canal located?

2 Why did engineers choose Panama for the canal?

3 How does the canal's location relate to travel between New York City and Los Angeles?

4 How is Gatun Lake related to the canal's operation?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a real port, park, city, or other place. Write four sentences that tell its latitude and longitude, where it is, why it is there, why its location is significant, and how it connects to people, places, or environments.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each named location, circle the latitude and longitude, and put a star beside sentences that explain why the canal is there or why its location matters. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Using latitude and longitude, where is a point near the Panama Canal located?	About 9° north latitude and 79° west longitude.
2	Why did engineers choose Panama for the canal?	Panama's land bridge is much narrower than other parts of the Americas.
3	How does the canal's location relate to travel between New York City and Los Angeles?	Ships can use the canal instead of sailing around Cape Horn, making the route shorter.
4	How is Gatun Lake related to the canal's operation?	Gatun Lake provides water for the locks that raise and lower ships.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Port of Houston is near 29.7° north latitude and 95.0° west longitude, along the Houston Ship Channel in Texas. It is there because Buffalo Bayou and Galveston Bay connect the area to the Gulf of Mexico. Its location is significant because ships can move cargo between Texas businesses and world markets. The port connects workers and cities to ocean routes, but shipping can also affect bay water and wildlife.

Accept equivalent wording for locations and relationships when it matches the passage. For the open response, accept any real place with a reasonable latitude and longitude and clear explanations of location, significance, and connections.