

Strait Shapes Politics

Geographic factors can shape cooperation, trade, and competition.

6.4.B “identify geographic factors such as location, physical features, transportation corridors and barriers, and distribution of natural resources that influence a society’s political relationships.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each geographic factor and circle the political relationship or government action it influences.

The Strait of Malacca

- ① The Strait of Malacca is a narrow waterway between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It links the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea, so ships carrying oil, food, and manufactured goods use it to reach ports across Asia. Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore sit near this route. Their location gives them a shared interest in keeping the waterway open and safe for trade. Each government watches events there closely each day.
- ② Physical features shape the countries' choices. The strait is much narrower than the open ocean, which makes it an efficient transportation corridor but also a possible bottleneck. A crash, storm, or pirate attack can slow many ships. The nearby coasts and islands give Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore places to patrol. Because trouble in one small area can affect trade for many nations, the three countries cooperate on sea security and navigation rules for ships using it.
- ③ Natural resources also affect political relationships. Tankers carry oil and liquefied natural gas through the strait to countries that need fuel. Singapore has little land for natural resources, but its busy port provides repair, storage, and shipping services. Indonesia and Malaysia produce some oil and gas. These differences encourage regional trade agreements, yet they can also lead governments to compete for port business and influence over shipping rules in the region, especially when business is busiest.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the location of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore near the strait create a shared political interest?

2 Why is the Strait of Malacca both a transportation corridor and a possible barrier to trade?

3 What resource or economic-service difference encourages trade between the countries near the strait?

4 Name one way the countries cooperate and one way they may compete because of the strait.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a coastal society and one neighboring society. Write four sentences that explain how location, a physical transportation corridor or barrier, and the distribution of a natural resource influence a political relationship between them.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each geographic factor and circle the political relationship or government action it influences. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the location of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore near the strait create a shared political interest?	Their location near a major trade route gives all three countries an interest in keeping the strait open and safe for trade.
2	Why is the Strait of Malacca both a transportation corridor and a possible barrier to trade?	Its narrow waterway helps ships travel efficiently, but a crash, storm, or pirate attack can slow many ships and disrupt trade.
3	What resource or economic-service difference encourages trade between the countries near the strait?	Indonesia and Malaysia produce some oil and gas, while Singapore provides port, repair, storage, and shipping services.
4	Name one way the countries cooperate and one way they may compete because of the strait.	They cooperate on sea security and navigation rules. They may compete for port business and influence over shipping rules.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Harboria lies at the mouth of a river that connects inland farms to the sea. The deep river channel is a transportation corridor, so Harboria and its inland neighbor agree to keep it open. Iron is found mainly in the inland neighbor, while Harboria has a large port. The two governments trade iron for port services, but they negotiate fees for ships using the channel.

Accept answers that accurately connect a geographic factor to a political action, relationship, or decision. In Part 3, accept plausible invented societies when the response includes all required factors and clear cause-and-effect reasoning.