

Siege Shaped by Geography

Analyze how geographic factors influenced the Union victory at Vicksburg.

8.10.C “analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors such as weather, landforms, waterways, transportation, and communication on major historical events in the United States.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the four bold geographic-factor phrases and number them 1 through 4. Then write each number beside the one italic sentence that tells that factor's effect on the Vicksburg campaign.

Geography at Vicksburg

- ① In 1863, Union leaders focused on Vicksburg, Mississippi, a Confederate stronghold during the Civil War. The **Mississippi River** was a major waterway for moving crops, supplies, and soldiers. Confederate control of Vicksburg helped block Union use of the river and linked Confederate territory on its eastern and western sides. *Capturing the city would give the Union a route through the region and cut an important Confederate connection.* Geography therefore shaped both the Union's goal and the Confederacy's need to hold the city.
- ② Vicksburg stood on **high bluffs above the river**. From these heights, Confederate guns could fire on approaching Union boats and troops. *The steep ground made direct Union assaults costly.* After attacks failed in May, General Ulysses S. Grant turned to a siege. His army surrounded the city by land while Union forces controlled nearby approaches. This landform helped shape military choices during the campaign.
- ③ Two additional factors affected the Union campaign. **Spring rains that turned dirt roads muddy** slowed wagons carrying food and equipment, so commanders had to adjust marches and supply plans. Meanwhile, **Union transport vessels and military roads** moved soldiers and supplies to positions around Vicksburg. *These human-built transportation networks helped Union forces surround the city.* After weeks under siege, Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863. This victory helped secure Union control of the Mississippi River, completed when Port Hudson surrendered on July 9, and weakened the Confederacy.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Mississippi River affect why the Union wanted to capture Vicksburg?

2 How did the high bluffs change Grant's military strategy?

3 What effect did the spring rains and muddy roads have on the Union campaign?

4 How did Union transportation networks help lead to Vicksburg's surrender?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In three sentences, compare one physical geographic factor and one human geographic factor from the passage. State one effect of each, then argue which factor more strongly helped the Union win at Vicksburg.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle the four bold geographic-factor phrases and number them 1 through 4. Then write each number beside the one italic sentence that tells that factor's effect on the Vicksburg campaign. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Mississippi River affect why the Union wanted to capture Vicksburg?	Capturing Vicksburg would open a Union route through the region and cut an important Confederate connection.
2	How did the high bluffs change Grant's military strategy?	The bluffs made direct assaults costly. After attacks failed, Grant turned to a siege.
3	What effect did the spring rains and muddy roads have on the Union campaign?	They slowed wagons carrying food and equipment, forcing commanders to adjust marches and supply plans.
4	How did Union transportation networks help lead to Vicksburg's surrender?	Transport vessels and military roads moved soldiers and supplies into positions around Vicksburg, helping Union forces surround the city.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Vicksburg's high bluffs were a physical geographic factor because they made direct Union attacks costly; Grant turned to a siege after attacks failed. Union transport vessels were a human geographic factor because they moved soldiers and supplies to positions around the city. The transport vessels had the stronger effect because they helped the Union surround Vicksburg.

Accept equivalent cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. For Part 3, accept either factor as more important if the student names one physical factor, one human factor, and supports the claim with accurate effects from the passage.