

Routes to the West

How land and inventions shaped western travel

VS.6.d “explaining how geographical features and technological advances impacted the western movement in the first half of the 1800s; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each geographical feature and circle each technological advance. Write a number beside every sentence that explains how a feature or advance affected western movement.

Moving Beyond the Mountains

- ① In the early 1800s, many Americans wanted land beyond the Appalachian Mountains. The mountains formed a long, steep barrier between eastern towns and western areas. Travelers crossed at gaps, including Cumberland Gap, but rough roads made wagon trips slow. On the other side, the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers offered routes into the interior. Rivers could carry people, tools, and farm goods farther than wagons could.
- ② Steamboats, powered by steam engines, could travel upstream as well as downstream. This made river travel faster and more dependable than using flatboats alone. In 1825, the Erie Canal opened in New York. It linked the Hudson River to Lake Erie, lowering the cost of moving settlers and supplies toward the Great Lakes region. More families could reach western places with their belongings.
- ③ Geography did not simply stop movement. Mountain passes and rivers guided people toward certain routes, while wide rivers and muddy roads could slow travel. Technology helped people use these routes more easily. Canals connected waterways, and steamboats made two-way river trips possible. Together, natural features and inventions shaped where settlers went, how quickly they traveled, and what goods they could bring.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which two kinds of geographical features gave travelers routes into western areas?

2 How did the Appalachian Mountains and rough roads affect wagon travel?

3 How did the Erie Canal help settlers move toward the Great Lakes region?

4 How did steamboats help people use rivers for western movement?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine a family moving west in 1825. Write exactly 3 sentences that name one geographical feature and one technological advance, then explain how each affects the family's journey.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each geographical feature and circle each technological advance. Write a number beside every sentence that explains how a feature or advance affected western movement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two kinds of geographical features gave travelers routes into western areas?	Mountain gaps or passes and rivers gave travelers routes west.
2	How did the Appalachian Mountains and rough roads affect wagon travel?	The mountains were a steep barrier, and rough roads made wagon trips slow.
3	How did the Erie Canal help settlers move toward the Great Lakes region?	It linked the Hudson River to Lake Erie and lowered the cost of moving settlers and supplies.
4	How did steamboats help people use rivers for western movement?	Steamboats could travel upstream and downstream, making river travel faster, more dependable, and useful for two-way trips.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A family traveling west crosses a mountain pass, which gives them a way through the Appalachian Mountains. They use a steamboat on the Ohio River, so they can travel upstream or downstream. The pass and steamboat guide their route and help them move people and supplies.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect a geographical feature or technological advance to an effect on route, speed, cost, or the movement of people and goods. For Part 3, accept any accurate feature and advance from the passage if both effects are explained in exactly three sentences.