

Shaping Low Lands

Read how water and human choices shape a regional landscape.

WG.1.b “describing how regional landscapes reflect the physical environment and the cultural characteristics of their inhabitants;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that describe the physical environment. Circle details that show cultural choices, then draw a line between one underlined detail and one circled detail that are connected.

The Netherlands and Water

- ① The Netherlands lies on a low, flat coastal plain beside the North Sea. Much of its land is at or below sea level, so water strongly shapes the region. Rivers carry water across the plain, and storms can push seawater inland. Wide canals, drainage ditches, and dikes, which are raised earth barriers, appear throughout the landscape. Windmills once helped pump water from low areas. These features show how inhabitants responded to a wet physical environment.
- ② Over centuries, Dutch communities built networks of dikes and canals, then worked together to maintain them. Farmers drained some areas to create rectangular fields for dairy cattle, tulips, and other crops. Towns often grew along waterways, where boats could move people and goods. In older cities, narrow houses face canals because land behind the dikes was valuable and limited. The orderly fields and water-control structures reflect cultural decisions about farming, trade, and cooperation.
- ③ Today, the landscape continues to change as sea level rises and heavier rains sometimes threaten low land. Engineers strengthen dikes, create space for rivers to spread safely, and use pumps to manage water. Some new neighborhoods include ponds and green areas that can hold extra rainwater. These choices are not caused by nature alone. They show what the people of the Netherlands value: safety, productive farmland, transportation by water, and places to live near the coast.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Which two physical conditions make water management necessary in the Netherlands?

2 How do the rectangular fields reflect both the physical environment and cultural choices?

3 How did canals influence the location and purpose of Dutch towns?

4 Why does the passage say that the modern landscape choices are not caused by nature alone? Name two values these choices show.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose a region you know or have studied. Write four sentences explaining how one physical feature or weather pattern and at least two human choices shape its landscape.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that describe the physical environment. Circle details that show cultural choices, then draw a line between one underlined detail and one circled detail that are connected. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two physical conditions make water management necessary in the Netherlands?	Much of the land is at or below sea level, and rivers, storms, heavier rains, and rising sea level can bring or threaten the low land with water.
2	How do the rectangular fields reflect both the physical environment and cultural choices?	People drained wet, low areas to create the rectangular fields. The fields show adaptation to the watery environment and choices to farm dairy cattle, tulips, and other crops.
3	How did canals influence the location and purpose of Dutch towns?	Towns often grew along waterways because boats could move people and goods there.
4	Why does the passage say that the modern landscape choices are not caused by nature alone? Name two values these choices show.	People decide how to respond to water threats. The choices show values such as safety, productive farmland, transportation by water, and places to live near the coast.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the Appalachian region, steep mountains and narrow valleys shape where people build. Roads and towns often follow valleys because flatter land is easier to travel across and build on. Forests provide timber, and some communities have used the land for logging or coal mining. The roads, small valley towns, and working landscapes reflect both rugged terrain and people's economic choices.

Accept answers that accurately name a region, connect a physical condition to visible landscape features, and explain at least two human choices or cultural practices. Wording and examples may vary.