

Lines Under Pressure

How claims, history, and resources can make borders contested.

WG.17.a "identifying and describing examples of disputed borders and explaining the reasons for the disputes;"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each disputed region, then circle words or phrases that explain why governments claim or want control of it.

Why Borders Become Disputed

- ① A disputed border is a boundary that two or more governments claim, interpret differently, or have not fully agreed on. Disputes can involve land, rivers, islands, or sea areas. They matter because borders affect who makes laws, collects resources, protects people, and controls travel. A claim may come from an old treaty, a colonial map, a cultural connection, or the location of valuable resources. Governments may negotiate, use international courts, or sometimes increase military patrols while seeking control.
- ② In the Kashmir region, India and Pakistan each control territory and claim the whole former princely state. China also controls an eastern area that India claims. The dispute grew during the 1947 partition of British India. The ruler of Jammu and Kashmir signed an accession to India, while Pakistan rejected that result. Different national identities, security concerns, and access to rivers and mountain routes have kept the disagreement active. A cease-fire line, called the Line of Control, separates Indian- and Pakistani-controlled areas, but it is not an agreed international border.
- ③ Far from Kashmir, the South China Sea contains small islands, reefs, fishing grounds, and possible oil and gas deposits. China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan have overlapping claims to some features or waters. China points to historic claims, while several coastal countries point to sea zones measured from their shores under the Law of the Sea. Control could bring fishing access, energy resources, and influence over busy shipping routes. Because these claims overlap, governments use patrols, build facilities, and hold talks, yet no single agreement settles every claim.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What makes Kashmir a disputed border region? Include the countries and territory described in the passage.

2 Describe two reasons the Kashmir dispute has continued.

3 How do China's claim and several coastal countries' claims in the South China Sea differ?

4 Give one reason control matters in Kashmir and one reason control matters in the South China Sea.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Create a realistic fictional border dispute between two neighboring countries. In 3 or 4 sentences, identify the place both countries claim, explain two reasons for the dispute, and suggest one peaceful way they could address it.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each disputed region, then circle words or phrases that explain why governments claim or want control of it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What makes Kashmir a disputed border region? Include the countries and territory described in the passage.	India and Pakistan each control territory in Kashmir and claim the whole former princely state. China controls an eastern area that India claims.
2	Describe two reasons the Kashmir dispute has continued.	The countries disagree about the 1947 accession and partition. Different national identities, security concerns, and access to rivers and mountain routes also keep the dispute active.
3	How do China's claim and several coastal countries' claims in the South China Sea differ?	China points to historic claims. Several coastal countries point to sea zones measured from their shores under the Law of the Sea.
4	Give one reason control matters in Kashmir and one reason control matters in the South China Sea.	In Kashmir, control matters for security or access to rivers and mountain routes. In the South China Sea, it matters for fishing, energy resources, or shipping routes.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Northland and Southland both claim a strip of land beside the River Sol. Northland uses a treaty written before the river changed course, while Southland says its farmers need the river water. Both countries also want control of a copper mine in the strip. They could ask an international court to study the treaty and agree to share the river water.

Accept equivalent descriptions that identify competing claims and accurately connect each dispute to reasons stated in the passage. For the open response, accept varied fictional settings if the student identifies a disputed place, gives two logical reasons, and proposes a peaceful response.