

Name:

Date:

SS.3.G.4.AP.1 Identify major ways environmental influences contribute to settlement patterns in the United States

1. The Power of Water



Water is the most significant environmental factor in settlement. Early settlers needed water for drinking, farming, and, most importantly, **transportation**.

Coastal Cities: Many major U.S. cities (like New York, Boston, and San Francisco) are located on the coast because harbors allowed ships to bring in goods and people.

Rivers as Highways: Before railroads or cars, rivers like the Mississippi and the Ohio were the primary way to move goods deep into the country. Cities like New Orleans and St. Louis grew because they were "hubs" on these water highways.

Power Source: In New England, many towns were built next to fast-moving waterfalls to power the mills that made cloth and paper.



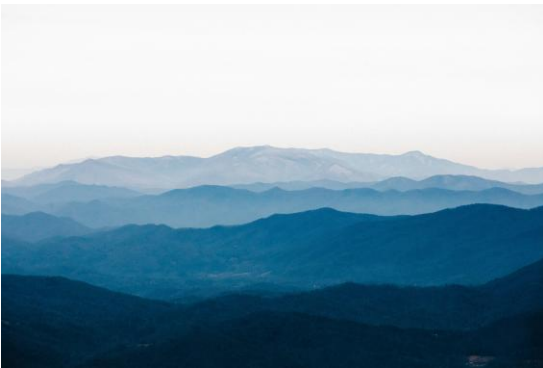
2. Landforms: Mountains vs. Plains

The shape of the land determines how easy it is to build and travel.

The Appalachian Mountains: Early in United States history, these mountains acted as a "wall." People settled mostly on the East Coast because crossing the steep, rocky terrain was too difficult.

The Great Plains: This flat, open land was perfect for large-scale farming once the steel plow was invented. Because there were few natural barriers, settlements spread out in a "grid" pattern across the Midwest.

Valleys: People often settle in valleys because they are protected from wind and usually have fertile soil washed down from the surrounding hills.



The Appalachian Mountains



The Great Plains

3. Climate and Survival



Climate refers to the long-term weather patterns of a region. It dictates what people wear, what they eat, and how they build their houses.

Climate Type	Influence on Settlement
Temperate (Mild)	Most people choose to live here. The weather isn't too hot or too cold, making it easy to live year-round.
Arid (Dry)	In the Southwest (like Arizona), settlements remained small until humans learned how to "irrigate" (move water) to the desert.
Cold/Harsh	Settlement patterns in the far North (Alaska) are sparse because the short growing season makes farming difficult.



4. Natural Resources

Settlements often "pop up" wherever valuable materials are found in the earth.

Timber: Towns in the Pacific Northwest grew quickly because of the massive forests used for building homes and ships.

Mining: In the mid-1800s, "Boomtowns" appeared overnight in California and Colorado when gold and silver were discovered. When the gold ran out, many of these became "Ghost Towns."

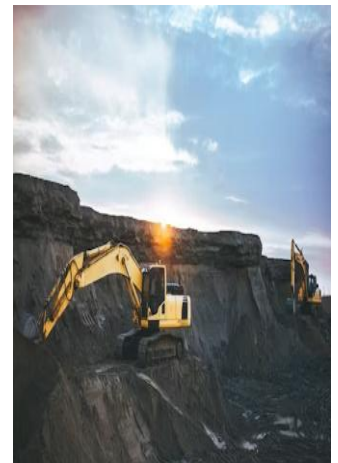
Fertile Soil: The "Breadbasket" of the U.S. (the Midwest) is densely settled with farming communities because the soil is rich in nutrients.



Soil



Timber



Mining

Worksheet Practice Questions



Fill in the Blank

1. Many early cities were built near _____ because it was the easiest way to transport goods.
2. The _____ Mountains acted as a barrier that kept early settlers on the East Coast.
3. A _____ is a town that grows very quickly because of a resource like gold.
4. In the hot Southern states (the Sun Belt), the invention of _____ helped cities like Phoenix and Miami grow rapidly.
5. Humans use _____ to move water from rivers to dry farm lands in the desert.
6. Large walls called _____ are built across rivers to control flooding and generate electricity.

Short Answer Type Questions



Write Answers

Q- Why would a farmer choose to settle in the Great Plains instead of the Rocky Mountains?

Short Answer Type Questions



Write Answers

Q- If you were starting a new colony, would you rather build it on a coast or in the middle of a desert? List two reasons why.

Short Answer Type Questions



Write Answers

Q- Why was the Flat Land of the Midwest (Great Plains) better for farming than the Rocky Mountains?.

Multiple Choice Questions

Question 1. Which city became a "hub" for railroads because of its central location and flat landscape?

- A) San Francisco
- B) Chicago
- C) New York

Question 2. Which region was settled quickly because of its massive Timber (forests) used for building ships and houses?

- A) The Southwest Desert
- B) The Pacific Northwest
- C) The Appalachian Mountains

Critical Thinking Questions

Write Answers



Q- Look at a map of the United States. Why do you think there are so many large cities along the Great Lakes?

Critical Thinking Questions

Write Answers



Q- Why did "Boomtowns" in California often turn into Ghost Towns?

Answerkey

Fill in the blanks (page no 5)

1. Rivers (Waterways/Harbors)
2. Appalachian
3. Boomtown
4. Air Conditioning
5. Irrigation
6. Dams

Short Answer Type Questions

Answer for page no 6. -- A farmer would choose the Great Plains because the land makes their job much easier! Here is why:

Flat Land: The Great Plains are flat like a big table. It is very easy to drive a tractor and plant seeds. In the Rocky Mountains, the land is steep and jagged—you can't drive a tractor up a cliff!

Rich Soil: The dirt in the Great Plains is dark and soft. It has lots of "food" (nutrients) inside that help corn and wheat grow tall. In the mountains, the ground is mostly hard rocks, and plants can't grow their roots through stones.

Easy Roads: Because the land is flat, it is easy to build long, straight roads. This helps the farmer drive their food to the city in a big truck. In the mountains, roads are curvy, slow, and dangerous.

short answer for students - A farmer would choose the Great Plains because the land is flat and the soil is rich. This makes it easy to grow lots of food and drive tractors, which is too hard to do on steep, rocky mountains.

Answer for page no 7. -- I would choose to build my colony on a coast. It is much better than a desert! Here are two reasons why:

1. Water to Drink and Farm: On the coast, there is usually more fresh water nearby from rivers that flow into the ocean. This helps people drink and helps crops grow tall. In a desert, it is too dry and very hard to find water.

2. Ships and Trading: The coast has a harbor where big ships can land. This makes it easy to travel and get food, tools, or clothes from other parts of the world. In the middle of a desert, it is very hard to move heavy things across the hot sand.

short answer for students - I would choose the coast because there is more water for farming and drinking. Also, ships can easily bring in the things my colony needs to survive!

Answer for page no 8. -- The Great Plains of the Midwest are much better for farming than the Rocky Mountains for these simple reasons:

Flat Ground: The Great Plains are flat like a giant table. This makes it very easy for farmers to drive big tractors and plant long rows of seeds. In the Rocky Mountains, the land is very steep and bumpy, which makes it impossible to drive a tractor safely.

Rich Soil: The dirt in the Great Plains is dark, soft, and "rich." It has plenty of nutrients (food) that help crops like corn and wheat grow tall. In the mountains, the ground is mostly hard rocks and thin dirt, so plant roots cannot grow deep.

Easy Travel: Because the land is flat, it is easy to build straight roads and railroads. This helps farmers move their food to big cities to sell it. Building roads through high, snowy mountains is very difficult and expensive.

short answer for students - The Great Plains are better for farming because the land is flat and the soil is rich. This makes it easy to use big machines and grow healthy crops, which is too hard to do on steep, rocky mountains.

Multiple Choice Questions page no 9

B) Chicago — It is in the center of the U.S. and the flat land made it easy to build many railroad tracks.

B) The Pacific Northwest — People moved here because the massive forests provided the wood needed for building.

Critical Thinking Questions page no 10

A "Water Highway": The Great Lakes are like giant roads made of water. Before there were big highways or airplanes, ships used the lakes to move heavy things like iron, coal, and food across the country very cheaply.

Access to the Ocean: Because the lakes are connected to the Atlantic Ocean (through the St. Lawrence River), cities on the Great Lakes could trade with countries all over the world.

Fresh Water: Unlike the ocean, the Great Lakes have fresh water. This gave millions of people plenty of water to drink, cook with, and use in large factories.

Flat Land: The land around the lakes is mostly flat. This made it very easy for people to build large factories, tall buildings, and thousands of miles of railroad tracks.

short answer for students - Large cities grew along the Great Lakes because the water allowed ships to carry goods across the country and the flat land made it easy to build big factories and railroads.

Critical Thinking Questions page no 11

"Boomtowns" in California turned into Ghost Towns because they were built for only one reason: Natural Resources (like gold or silver).

The "Boom": When someone found gold in the mountains, thousands of people rushed to that spot to get rich. They built houses, shops, and hotels very quickly. This fast growth is called a "Boom."

Running Out of Gold: After a few years, the gold in the ground was all gone. There was no more money to be made from mining.

Moving Away: Since the town was usually in a difficult place to live (like high in the dry, rocky mountains), there were no other jobs like farming. When the gold ran out, people packed up their things and left to find work somewhere else.

The "Ghost" Town: Because everyone left at the same time, the buildings were left empty. Today, these towns look like "ghosts" of the busy places they used to be.

short answer for students - Boomtowns became Ghost Towns because they were built for gold mining. Once the gold ran out, there were no other jobs, so everyone moved away and left the buildings empty.