

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Borders, Bays, and Barriers: Bold 5th Grade Geopolitics

Students analyze how natural landscapes dictate national power by examining real-world mountain ranges, deep-water ports, and resource-rich border zones.

1. A country that is 'landlocked' has no direct access to the ocean. How does this geographic factor usually affect its geopolitical power?

Answer: B) It forces the country to rely on neighbors for sea trade.

Landlocked nations must negotiate with neighboring countries to move goods to international waters, which can limit their economic independence.

2. Natural barriers like the Andes Mountains can act as political borders because they are difficult for people and armies to cross.

Answer: A) True

Physical geography often defines political boundaries because high mountains or wide rivers create natural, easy-to-defend limits between nations.

3. If two countries share a _____, such as the Mekong River, they may argue over how much water each side is allowed to use.

Answer: C) Natural resource

Fresh water is a vital natural resource; when it flows through multiple countries, it often leads to geopolitical negotiations or tension.

4. Why might a country be very interested in a tiny, uninhabited island located far out in the ocean?

Answer: B) To claim the fishing and mineral rights in the surrounding water.

Owning an island allows a nation to claim an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around it, providing access to undersea oil, gas, and fish.

5. A 'buffer state' is a small country located between two powerful, rival nations to help prevent direct conflict.

Answer: A) True

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Buffer states, like Mongolia between Russia and China, act as a neutral zone that keeps powerful neighbors from having a shared, tense border.

6. The _____ of the Erdenet mine in Mongolia makes it a site of geopolitical interest for both Russia and China.

Answer: C) Copper reserves

Valuable minerals like copper are essential for technology, making the locations where they are found strategically important to global powers.

7. Brazil has a very long coastline on the Atlantic Ocean. How does this physical feature help its global standing?

Answer: B) It provides many locations for ports to export goods like coffee.

Access to the sea allows a nation to participate easily in global trade, which is a major component of geopolitical strength.

8. Geopolitics only looks at the land, and never considers how the weather or climate affects a nation's power.

Answer: B) False

Climate is a major part of geopolitics because it determines which countries can grow food, where people can live, and how resources are moved.

9. A country with a 'Deep Water Port,' like the one in Halifax, Canada, has a geopolitical advantage because it can _____.

Answer: D) Accommodate the world's largest cargo ships

Deep water ports are strategic assets because they allow the largest, most efficient trade ships to dock, boosting a nation's economy.

10. Why might the Democratic Republic of the Congo be involved in many geopolitical discussions despite not being a global military power?

Answer: B) It has 70% of the world's cobalt, used in batteries.

Countries with rare and necessary resources (like cobalt for electronics) become central to geopolitics because other nations depend on them for technology.