THE GEOGRAPHY OF NORTH AMERICA THROUGH ELA, MATHEMATICAL AND SCIENTIFIC LITERACY

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Date _____ Class _____

Grade 6 | Five Day Reading and Reasoning RST

Essential Question

How do physical geography, climate processes, and quantitative evidence explain settlement, movement, and human activity across North America?

Learning Targets

Interpret physical, political, and climate maps; explain geographic cause and effect; calculate scale, rainfall, density, and trade quantities; evaluate evidence; and write a supported RACE response.

Five Themes of Geography

Location identifies where a place is. Place describes physical and human characteristics. Human environment interaction examines adaptation and change. Movement follows people, goods, and ideas. Region groups places by shared features.

Reading and Annotation Protocol

Underline the central idea. Circle unfamiliar vocabulary. Box quantities and units. Note cause and effect in the margin. Cite Source One, Two, or Three and Map A, B, or C when using evidence.

Map and Data Guidance

Maps have legends, compass directions, and a distance bar calibrated at 30° north. Distortion increases away from that latitude. River paths and climate focus areas are generalized. All classroom numerical datasets are fictional models, not measured regional statistics.

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Source One Physical Geography, Regions, and Settlement

North America stretches from Arctic lands to tropical Central America and the Caribbean. The Pacific Ocean lies to the west and the Atlantic to the east. Greenland is geographically part of North America, although it is an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark. Central America forms the narrow land connection toward South America. These regions differ in climate, landforms, cultures, and histories, so the continent cannot be understood as one uniform place.

The Rocky Mountains extend through western North America. The Appalachians lie farther east, while the Great Plains occupy much of the continental interior. Mountain slopes can raise the cost of roads and railways, but valleys and passes provide routes. Plains may support farming and transport, although water availability and soil conditions vary. The physical landscape creates opportunities and constraints without determining every human decision.

The Mississippi river system drains a large part of the interior and reaches the Gulf of Mexico. The Colorado River crosses dry western environments, where access to its water matters for communities and agriculture. The St. Lawrence connects the Great Lakes region to the Atlantic. A river basin is the area drained by a river and its tributaries. Floodplain soils and transport access can encourage settlement, while flooding, pollution, and competing water demands create challenges.

Indigenous peoples developed diverse relationships with these environments long before European colonization. Communities created farming systems, managed resources, and established exchange networks. Indigenous nations remain present today and do not share one language or culture. Modern political borders can divide older homelands and river basins. A country label therefore cannot replace a careful study of a particular community and place.

The Five Themes of Geography connect these ideas. Coordinates describe location; landforms and community characteristics describe place; irrigation illustrates human environment interaction; river transport illustrates movement; and a watershed forms a region. Map A emphasizes selected physical features, while Map B identifies selected countries and territories. Both simplify reality, and neither alone explains why people settle where they do.

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