Physical Geography Research Project

Your small group will be assigned one of the following examples. Use the provided websites to conduct research and answer the questions for your assigned example.

Example 1: The North Sea
Humans have divided land into governed territories for centuries. But what happens when a body of water needs to be divided up because of a natural resource? That is what happened in the North Sea after oil was discovered in the 1960s. The countries that surround the North Sea include the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Norway. Research how the countries that border the North Sea have divided up the claim. If possible, find information on the United Nations Law of the Sea Treaty and exclusive economic zones (EEZ).

1. Do you think the way the North Sea was split was fair to all countries involved? Why or why not?
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2. How do you think dividing up a claim like this affects the relationships between the countries involved? Support your opinion with evidence. __________________________________________________________________________________________
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3. Are there other areas of Europe where natural resources have been divided between multiple countries? If so, describe them. __________________________________________________________________________________________
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Example 2: Scandinavia
The Scandinavian Peninsula in northern Europe is one physical feature that includes three countries: Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

1. Do these country borders appear to follow artificial or natural barriers? Explain.
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   __________________________________________________________________________________________
2. How do you think this proximity, or closeness, affected each country’s culture? Are the cultures similar or different? How? __________________________________________________________
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3. Are there other areas of Europe that have a similar situation? If so, describe them.
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Example 3: Strait of Gibraltar
Important points of water passage, such as the Strait of Gibraltar and the Dardanelles Strait in Europe, have been highly prized for centuries. The countries controlling the Strait of Gibraltar control the flow of traffic into and out of the Mediterranean Sea. The countries controlling the Dardanelles Strait control the traffic into the Black Sea, by way of the Aegean Sea.

1. Who controlled the Strait of Gibraltar region in the year 700? Who controlled it in the year 1400? Who controls it in the present day? __________________________________________________________
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__________________________________________________________________________

2. How have the countries that controlled or are controlling the strait affected the cultural regions that surround it? __________________________________________________________
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3. Are there other water passages in Europe that have been in similar situations? If so, describe them. __________________________________________________________
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Example 4: The Netherlands
The Netherlands has been successfully fighting against the North Sea to keep its coastline for approximately 800 years. Sixty-five percent of the Netherlands would be underwater today without the dikes, or barriers built to control water and protect the land from flooding. Reclaimed lands, such as the Zuider Zee Inlet in the northeast of the Netherlands, represent the victory of humankind over the ocean.

1. How has the Netherlands controlled the North Sea, or kept it at bay, for so long?
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2. What could happen to the coast in the Netherlands if there is a rise in sea level due to climate change?
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3. Are there other countries in Europe struggling with their water borders? If, so describe them.
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