From Farms to Cities

How work and communities changed in Alabama after World War II

SS24.5.11b "Describe the decline of farming and the growth of urban areas in Alabama after World War II."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what reduced the need for farm workers, circle two kinds of city work, and write 1 and 2 beside two details that show urban areas growing.

A Changing Alabama

1 In 1945, many Alabama families lived in the countryside and earned a living from farming. Cotton was an important crop, and picking it by hand took many workers. After World War II, more farmers began using tractors and cotton-picking machines. A machine could do work that once took several people. Farms still grew crops, but they needed fewer workers, so some families began looking for other jobs.

2 At the same time, jobs grew in Alabama's cities. Factories and steel mills in Birmingham needed workers to make goods and building materials. The port and shipyards in Mobile offered work linked to ships and trade. In Huntsville, rocket and space work expanded in the 1950s and 1960s. A person leaving a farm might move to one of these urban areas for a paycheck.

3 Imagine a family packing a truck outside a farm town. They might be moving because farm work had become harder to find, not because farming had ended. In a city, more people needed homes, stores, schools, and roads. As families moved and city jobs grew, urban areas spread outward. Alabama's shift after the war was not the same for everyone: many people still farmed or lived in small towns.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did new farm machines change the need for workers on Alabama farms after World War II?

2. Why might a farm worker have moved to Birmingham?

3. How could work in Mobile and Huntsville help Alabama's urban areas grow?

4. As people moved from farms to cities, how did the needs of urban areas change?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence letter from an Alabama child whose family moved from a farm to a city after World War II. Explain why farm work became harder to find, name a city job a family member found, and describe one change the child notices as the city grows.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · SS24.5.11b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what reduced the need for farm workers, circle two kinds of city work, and write 1 and 2 beside two details that show urban areas growing. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did new farm machines change the need for workers on Alabama farms after World War II?	**Machines did work that had taken several people, so farms needed fewer workers.**
2	Why might a farm worker have moved to Birmingham?	**The worker might have moved for a job in a factory or steel mill.**
3	How could work in Mobile and Huntsville help Alabama's urban areas grow?	**Jobs at Mobile's port and shipyards and in Huntsville's rocket and space work could draw people from farms to those urban areas.**
4	As people moved from farms to cities, how did the needs of urban areas change?	**More people needed homes, stores, schools, and roads as urban areas spread outward.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Farm machines took over some of the work at our old Alabama farm, so Dad had trouble finding work there. Now he earns a paycheck at a steel mill in Birmingham. More families are moving here, and I can see new homes being built.

Accept any two marked details that show people moving to urban areas or those areas growing. For the letter, accept a historically reasonable city job from the passage and a change linked to population growth.