City on the Rise

Tracing why cities grew around 1900

SS24.5.1c "Outline reasons for the growth of urban areas at the turn of the twentieth century, including Birmingham."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline at least four reasons cities grew, and circle two places that show how one kind of growth led to another in Birmingham.

Why Birmingham Grew

1. In 1900, a train rolled toward Birmingham, Alabama, past smoking furnaces and busy rail yards. Only a few decades earlier, Birmingham had not existed as a city. Its growth began near rich deposits of iron ore, coal, and limestone. Workers used these materials to make iron and steel. Furnaces and mills needed many hands, so people looking for steady pay moved to the city.

2. Railroads helped Birmingham grow even faster. Trains carried coal and ore to the furnaces, then shipped finished metal to buyers in other places. Companies could sell more when they could move heavy loads by rail. That meant more work in the mills and on the trains. As families arrived, stores, homes, and other services opened to meet their needs.

3. Birmingham's story was part of a wider change around 1900. Across the United States, factories and other city businesses offered wages that drew people from farms and small towns. Immigrants also settled in many growing cities to find work. Growth brought crowded neighborhoods and difficult working conditions. In Birmingham, Black workers faced unfair segregation as well as dangerous jobs, even while their labor helped build the city.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did nearby natural resources lead to more people living in Birmingham?

2. Why did railroads help Birmingham's factories grow and attract workers?

3. Why did people leave farms and small towns for growing cities around 1900?

4. How did the arrival of families lead to still more work in Birmingham?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence letter from someone who moved to Birmingham around 1900. Explain two linked reasons the city grew and describe one difficulty the newcomer might face.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · SS24.5.1c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline at least four reasons cities grew, and circle two places that show how one kind of growth led to another in Birmingham. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did nearby natural resources lead to more people living in Birmingham?	**Iron ore, coal, and limestone supplied furnaces and mills. These workplaces needed workers, so people moved to Birmingham for pay.**
2	Why did railroads help Birmingham's factories grow and attract workers?	**Trains brought materials to furnaces and carried metal to buyers. Companies could sell more, creating more work.**
3	Why did people leave farms and small towns for growing cities around 1900?	**Factories and other city businesses offered wages.**
4	How did the arrival of families lead to still more work in Birmingham?	**Arriving families needed goods, homes, and services, so stores and other businesses opened.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Aunt May, I moved to Birmingham in 1900 because the furnaces offer wages. Nearby coal and iron ore keep the furnaces working, and trains ship their metal to buyers. As more workers arrive, new stores open for their families. The streets are crowded, and furnace work can be dangerous.

Accept other accurate cause-and-effect links supported by the passage. The letter should have four sentences, connect at least two reasons for Birmingham's growth, and include a plausible difficulty.