Why Families Moved

Economic and social causes of the Great Migration

SS24.5.4b "Identify the economic and social conditions that led to the start of the Great Migration."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two economic conditions and circle two social conditions that helped start the Great Migration. Look for reasons to leave the South and reasons to move North.

A Choice to Move

1 Around 1915, many Black families in the South faced a hard choice. A sharecropper might grow cotton on land owned by someone else, then pay the owner with part of the crop. After paying for seed and supplies, families often had little money left. A tiny insect called the boll weevil damaged cotton crops, making it even harder to earn a living.

2 Money was not the only reason to leave. Jim Crow laws in the South forced Black people to use separate public places and denied them equal treatment. Many Black citizens were blocked from voting, and racist violence put families in danger. Parents wanted their children to live with greater safety and freedom. These unfair conditions pushed many people to consider leaving the South.

3 At the same time, factories in northern cities needed workers, especially as World War I raised demand for goods and immigration from Europe slowed. Factory jobs could pay more than farm work. Black newspapers shared news of jobs, and relatives already in northern cities sent word home. These chances drew families north. The move that began in these years became known as the Great Migration.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What two conditions in the South made it hard for farm families to earn money?

2. Why did northern factory jobs attract workers? Give two details from the passage.

3. Name two unfair or unsafe conditions that pushed Black families to consider leaving the South.

4. How did newspapers and relatives help draw families north?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence letter from a Southern farm worker to a relative in a northern city in 1917. In your own words, include one economic and one social reason to leave the South, plus one economic reason to move North.

ANSWER KEY

Why Families Moved

GRADE 5 · SS24.5.4b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two economic conditions and circle two social conditions that helped start the Great Migration. Look for reasons to leave the South and reasons to move North. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two conditions in the South made it hard for farm families to earn money?	**Sharecropping left families with little money after expenses, and boll weevils damaged cotton crops.**
2	Why did northern factory jobs attract workers? Give two details from the passage.	**Factories needed workers during World War I, and factory jobs could pay more than farm work.**
3	Name two unfair or unsafe conditions that pushed Black families to consider leaving the South.	**Accept two: Jim Crow segregation, being blocked from voting, or racist violence.**
4	How did newspapers and relatives help draw families north?	**Black newspapers shared news of jobs, and relatives in northern cities sent word home.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Cousin, the boll weevil has hurt our cotton crop, so I can barely earn enough to get by. Jim Crow laws keep us apart in public places, and I want a fairer life for my family. I hear northern factories need workers and may pay more than farm work. I hope to join you in your city soon.

For the letter, accept other accurate combinations of economic and social conditions from the passage. Students should distinguish a reason to leave the South from a reason to move North.