Routes Under Fire

How Civil War campaigns changed Alabama's trade and transportation

SS24.AS.11c "Assess the impacts of the Civil War on Alabama's economy and infrastructure, and identify battles and campaigns that affected these."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each named battle or campaign. Underline the changes to trade, transportation, or production linked to it so you can trace its effects.

Alabama's Economy at War

1. Before the Civil War, Alabama's economy depended heavily on cotton grown by enslaved people. Rivers, railroads, and the port of Mobile moved cotton to buyers and brought supplies into the state. Wartime blockades already restricted this trade. In August 1864, Union forces won the Battle of Mobile Bay, gaining control of the bay's entrance. The battle did not capture the city of Mobile. It made it harder for Confederate blockade runners to reach its docks, further limiting cotton shipments and imported goods. For Alabama merchants and farmers, fewer shipping routes meant fewer ways to sell crops or obtain supplies.

2. Control of the bay was not control of the city. During the Mobile campaign in April 1865, Union troops captured Spanish Fort and Fort Blakeley, the defenses east of Mobile. Confederate troops then evacuated the city, which Union forces occupied. Mobile's wharves and rail connections had made it a key supply point for the Confederacy. Losing that hub cut Confederate access to port facilities and transportation links, even though the campaign did not flatten every dock or rail line. For Alabama's economy, the change was not simply physical damage: control of a working trade center had shifted to Union forces.

3. Meanwhile, Wilson's Raid struck central Alabama in spring 1865. Union cavalry defeated Confederate defenders at the Battle of Selma on April 2. Afterward, Union troops destroyed Selma's arsenal, foundries, and railroad facilities, reducing the Confederacy's ability to make weapons and move military supplies. These losses also damaged equipment and workplaces that local people would need after the war. The raid continued toward Montgomery, which Union forces occupied without a battle. By war's end, Alabama faced disrupted trade, damaged production and transportation, and the end of slavery, which required a major change in how farms obtained labor.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Battle of Mobile Bay affect Alabama's trade without capturing the city of Mobile?

2. How did the Mobile campaign change Confederate access to infrastructure? Why is that different from saying the campaign destroyed the infrastructure?

3. Which battle in the passage was followed by the destruction of weapons-making and railroad facilities? Explain one likely economic effect of that damage.

4. Compare the Battle of Mobile Bay with the Battle of Selma. Which one more directly damaged production facilities, and which one more directly restricted a shipping route?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise Alabama leaders just after the war. In 75 to 100 words, recommend two recovery priorities tied to two different battles or campaigns in the passage. Explain how each would help the economy, and distinguish physical damage from a change in control.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.AS.11c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each named battle or campaign. Underline the changes to trade, transportation, or production linked to it so you can trace its effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Battle of Mobile Bay affect Alabama's trade without capturing the city of Mobile?	**Union control of the bay's entrance made it harder for blockade runners to reach Mobile, further limiting cotton shipments and imported goods.**
2	How did the Mobile campaign change Confederate access to infrastructure? Why is that different from saying the campaign destroyed the infrastructure?	**After Union forces occupied Mobile, the Confederacy lost access to its port facilities and transportation links. The passage says the campaign did not flatten every dock or rail line.**
3	Which battle in the passage was followed by the destruction of weapons-making and railroad facilities? Explain one likely economic effect of that damage.	**The Battle of Selma was followed by the destruction of the city's arsenal, foundries, and railroad facilities. Damaged workplaces and transportation equipment made production and the movement of goods harder.**
4	Compare the Battle of Mobile Bay with the Battle of Selma. Which one more directly damaged production facilities, and which one more directly restricted a shipping route?	**The Battle of Selma was followed by damage to production facilities. The Battle of Mobile Bay restricted access to the shipping route through the bay.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would first repair Selma's railroad facilities because Wilson's Raid destroyed equipment needed to move goods. Restored rail service could connect farms and workshops to buyers and support jobs. I would also reopen Mobile's port to civilian trade after the Mobile campaign. That campaign transferred control of a useful transportation hub; it did not destroy every dock. Getting ships and rail shipments moving through Mobile would give merchants access to supplies and markets. Rebuilding Selma addresses physical damage, while reopening Mobile addresses disrupted access.

Accept other well-supported priorities tied to two different named battles or campaigns. Responses should explain economic effects and accurately distinguish damaged facilities from lost access or changed control.