Groups Through Time

How close ties and organized groups meet changing needs

SS24.S.7b "Trace the development of various types of social groups from hunter-gatherer societies to the present day and explain how the importance of primary and secondary groups has changed over time."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one way close ties support people in each paragraph. Then circle one goal-focused organization in paragraph 2 and one in paragraph 3 to track how group roles change over time.

Who Helps Get Things Done?

1. Imagine a small band moving across a grassland thousands of years ago. Its members gather food, hunt, share tools, and care for children together. Most people know one another well, and relatives and close companions provide daily support. Sociologists call such close, lasting ties primary groups. A band may join another band for a seasonal hunt, but formal organizations with assigned jobs are limited. As farming spreads in some regions, many people settle in villages. Families remain vital, while neighbors cooperate to maintain fields and store crops. Surplus food eventually helps support larger settlements with specialized work.

2. In growing towns and cities, people still depended on kin and close friends for trust and care. Yet a person could also join a trade guild, serve on a town council, or work with others in a large market. These organized relationships often served specific goals and did not require close personal bonds. Sociologists call goal-focused organizations and other less personal networks secondary groups. Their importance grew as settlements expanded and tasks became more specialized. Still, changes did not happen everywhere at the same pace: many rural communities continued to rely heavily on family labor and familiar neighbors.

3. Factories and mass schooling later drew many people beyond household and village networks. Workers followed schedules with coworkers; students learned alongside classmates and teachers. In modern societies, employers, schools, unions, and volunteer organizations bring together people around specific tasks. Digital platforms can connect such groups across great distances, though an online friendship can become a close primary tie. Primary groups have not vanished: families and friends still offer belonging and care. What changed is the range of needs people meet through secondary groups, from earning wages to organizing public services, alongside the close relationships that shape everyday life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did settling in farming villages change cooperation while leaving primary groups important?

2. Compared with a hunting band, why did growing towns and cities give secondary groups a larger role?

3. How did factories and mass schooling expand the role of secondary groups beyond those in earlier towns?

4. How do primary and secondary groups meet different needs today, and why is not every online connection secondary?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a new coastal town where families arrive to build a flood barrier. In five sentences, describe one primary group and one secondary group there, explain how each helps, and compare their importance with groups in an earlier period from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Groups Through Time

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.S.7b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one way close ties support people in each paragraph. Then circle one goal-focused organization in paragraph 2 and one in paragraph 3 to track how group roles change over time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did settling in farming villages change cooperation while leaving primary groups important?	**Families remained vital, while neighbors cooperated to maintain fields and store crops.**
2	Compared with a hunting band, why did growing towns and cities give secondary groups a larger role?	**Larger settlements had more specialized tasks. People joined goal-focused groups, such as trade guilds and town councils, that did not depend on close personal bonds.**
3	How did factories and mass schooling expand the role of secondary groups beyond those in earlier towns?	**Factories and schools drew workers and students beyond household and village networks into organized settings with shared schedules and tasks.**
4	How do primary and secondary groups meet different needs today, and why is not every online connection secondary?	**Families and friends offer belonging and care, while goal-focused organizations help people earn wages and organize services. An online friendship can become a close primary tie.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In a new coastal town, my family checks on younger children and shares meals when storms interrupt work. This is a primary group because our close relationships provide care and a sense of belonging. Residents also create a barrier-building committee that assigns shifts and orders supplies, a secondary group organized for a specific goal. In farming villages, families remained vital while neighbors worked together to maintain fields and store crops. In this new town, family care still matters, but the committee must coordinate many people who do not know one another well to finish the barrier.

Accept other historically grounded comparisons that explain both close relationships and goal-focused cooperation. Do not require students to treat every online connection as a secondary group.