Changing City Life

New technology, unfair influence, and reform

SS24.US1.16 "Describe the transformation of American society and politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. 16a Analyze how the growing awareness of economic and political corruption during the Gilded Age led to reform efforts..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways inventions changed daily life, circle two unfair practices, and number the state and national reforms. Use your marks to trace how change led to calls for reform.

A City in Transition

1 At dusk in 1900, a storekeeper could switch on electric lights instead of trimming oil lamps. Electric power systems, expanded by entrepreneurs such as George Westinghouse, made longer store hours practical. Telephone networks let customers place orders without traveling to the shop. The table shows two more ways new technologies changed daily routines.

NEW TECHNOLOGY, NEW ROUTINES

Innovation	Change in daily life
Electric streetcars	Workers could commute from neighborhoods farther from their jobs.
Refrigerated railcars	Meat and produce could travel farther before spoiling.

2 As railroads carried goods nationwide, some companies granted secret discounts to large shippers, putting smaller rivals at a disadvantage. Political bosses also traded city jobs for votes and loyalty. Newspaper reports helped more people see that private influence could distort both business competition and elections. Many citizens called for rules that would limit these unfair practices.

3 Reformers answered at two levels. Wisconsin adopted a direct primary in 1903, giving voters rather than party leaders a stronger say in choosing candidates. At the national level, the Hepburn Act of 1906 strengthened federal regulation of railroad rates and prohibited free passes. Neither reform ended corruption, but each addressed a different path to unfair influence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did electric power and telephone networks change the storekeeper's work?

2. Why could secret railroad discounts lead people to demand a national reform?

3. How did Wisconsin's direct primary respond to the kind of political influence described in the passage?

4. Use the table and passage to explain why railroad rate rules mattered to businesses beyond railroad companies.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short letter to a 1906 editor as a small produce seller. Explain how refrigerated railcars changed your business, describe one unfair railroad practice, and explain how the national reform in the passage could help.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.16

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways inventions changed daily life, circle two unfair practices, and number the state and national reforms. Use your marks to trace how change led to calls for reform. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did electric power and telephone networks change the storekeeper's work?	**Electric lights made longer store hours practical, and telephones let customers place orders without visiting.**
2	Why could secret railroad discounts lead people to demand a national reform?	**Railroads carried goods nationwide, and discounts to large shippers put smaller rivals at a disadvantage.**
3	How did Wisconsin's direct primary respond to the kind of political influence described in the passage?	**It gave voters, rather than party leaders, a stronger say in choosing candidates, limiting bosses' influence.**
4	Use the table and passage to explain why railroad rate rules mattered to businesses beyond railroad companies.	**Refrigerated railcars let sellers ship food farther. Rate rules could protect smaller shippers from the unfair advantage large shippers gained through secret discounts.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Editor, refrigerated railcars let me ship produce farther before it spoils. But secret discounts for large shippers put my small business at a disadvantage. The Hepburn Act strengthens federal regulation of railroad rates. Fairer rates could help small sellers compete.

Accept responses that accurately connect a specific innovation to a change in daily life or business. For the letter, accept a qualified claim about how federal rate regulation could address unfair shipping practices.