Chicago Changes Course

How urban growth reshaped daily life in the 1890s

SS24.US1.17a "Summarize social, economic, and cultural consequences of urbanization for American society, including changes in living and working conditions, the emergence of new social classes, and the growth of leisure opportunities."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details about living conditions and circle details about working conditions. Write 1 beside a class difference and 2 beside a leisure opportunity to track how city growth changed daily life.

A Growing City, Different Lives

1 In the 1890s, Chicago grew as railroads and factories drew migrants from rural America and immigrants from overseas. Many working families rented rooms in crowded tenement buildings near jobs, where shared toilets and limited fresh air could make illness spread more easily. City streets brought people of different languages and customs close together. Neighbors might share news, help newcomers find work, or argue over noise and space. Some middle-class families could afford larger homes on less crowded streets, showing that the benefits of city growth were not shared equally.

2 Factories offered wages to people who once might have worked on farms, but jobs could demand long hours beside dangerous machines. Workers organized unions to press for better pay and safer conditions, while owners and managers controlled hiring and investment. Growing businesses also employed clerks and salespeople, helping expand a middle class whose work differed from factory labor. These groups did not experience urban growth in the same way. A factory worker's wages might barely cover rent, while an owner could profit as production increased. The city created opportunities, but it also sharpened economic divisions.

3 After a shift, a worker could visit a public park, watch a baseball game, or attend a theater show if time and money allowed. Streetcars helped residents reach places beyond their own neighborhoods, and cheap newspapers advertised events to wide audiences. These shared activities helped shape a city culture, even as people kept traditions brought from other places. Still, leisure was not equal: long workdays and low pay limited what many families could do. Chicago's growth changed more than its skyline. It changed where people lived, how they earned a living, and how they spent free time.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did crowded city neighborhoods create both a social benefit and a problem for residents?

2. Summarize one economic opportunity and one working-condition problem that factories brought to Chicago.

3. How did factory workers, middle-class employees, and owners experience the growing city differently?

4. How did city growth expand leisure opportunities while still limiting who could enjoy them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence newspaper report from 1890s Chicago that summarizes how urban growth affected living conditions, work, social class, and leisure. Connect at least two changes with a cause or contrast, using only details supported by the passage.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.17a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details about living conditions and circle details about working conditions. Write 1 beside a class difference and 2 beside a leisure opportunity to track how city growth changed daily life. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did crowded city neighborhoods create both a social benefit and a problem for residents?	**Neighbors could share news and help newcomers find work, but crowding could lead to disputes over space and help illness spread.**
2	Summarize one economic opportunity and one working-condition problem that factories brought to Chicago.	**Factories offered wages, including to people who might otherwise have worked on farms, but factory jobs could involve long hours and dangerous machines.**
3	How did factory workers, middle-class employees, and owners experience the growing city differently?	**Factory workers might struggle to cover rent, clerks and salespeople held jobs outside factory labor, and owners could profit from increased production.**
4	How did city growth expand leisure opportunities while still limiting who could enjoy them?	**Streetcars helped residents reach places beyond their neighborhoods, and newspapers advertised events, but long workdays and low pay limited many families' leisure.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Chicago's railroads and factories drew newcomers, and many working families rented crowded rooms near their jobs. Factories paid wages but often demanded long hours near dangerous machines, while growing businesses also hired clerks and salespeople. Owners could profit as workers struggled to cover rent, showing that city growth affected social classes differently. Streetcars helped residents travel beyond their neighborhoods for leisure, although low pay and long workdays limited many families' options.

Accept other passage-supported examples that explain consequences rather than merely name them. The report should have four sentences and address all four requested areas.