One Plan, Many Interests

Economic growth and regional conflict in Clay's American System

SS24.US1.9b "Describe the central ideas of Henry Clay's American System, and explain how the implementation of these concepts contributed to the growth of the American economy and sectionalism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three policies in Clay's plan, circle a way each could help the economy, and number the places where regions disagreed about the plan.

Could One Plan Serve Every Region?

1 Imagine an Ohio farmer in the 1820s with grain to sell. Finding buyers far away was difficult because moving goods over rough roads took time and money. Henry Clay proposed an American System to connect the nation's economy. One part was federal support for roads and canals, often called internal improvements. Better routes could lower shipping costs and bring western crops to eastern markets. Clay also favored a protective tariff, a tax on imported goods meant to help American factories compete with foreign producers. He believed these policies would give farmers and manufacturers more customers within the United States.

2 A third part of Clay's plan was a national bank. The Second Bank of the United States, chartered in 1816, held federal funds and helped make money more dependable by checking the notes issued by state banks. Dependable money and access to credit could make long-distance trade easier. Together, roads, a tariff, and a bank were meant to strengthen different parts of the economy. Western farmers could ship crops, northern factories could sell more goods, and merchants could handle payments across state lines. Yet a policy that helped one group might impose costs on another.

3 Many northern manufacturers supported the tariff because it reduced competition from cheaper imports. Southern planters, who sold crops abroad and bought manufactured goods, often opposed it because it could raise their costs. Western settlers welcomed better routes to market, but some objected to the national bank's power over credit, especially when borrowers struggled to repay debts. Federal road spending also raised arguments about who should pay and which regions would benefit. Congress approved some measures tied to Clay's ideas, but his full plan was never carried out as one package. The same proposals that encouraged trade also sharpened disagreements between regions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How was the protective tariff meant to grow the economy, and why did many southern planters oppose it?

2. How could federal support for roads and canals help western farmers? What disagreement did that support create?

3. How could the national bank support trade, and why did some western settlers object to it?

4. Why could Clay's three-part plan encourage national trade while also increasing sectional disagreements?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Congress is considering a federally funded road linking Ohio farms to northeastern markets. Write a six-sentence letter from a western farmer to a member of Congress. Take a position on the road, explain how all three parts of Clay's plan could affect your region, and acknowledge one reason another region might disagree.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.9b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the three policies in Clay's plan, circle a way each could help the economy, and number the places where regions disagreed about the plan. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How was the protective tariff meant to grow the economy, and why did many southern planters oppose it?	**The tariff made imports more expensive so American factories could compete and sell more goods. Many southern planters opposed it because it could raise the cost of manufactured goods they bought.**
2	How could federal support for roads and canals help western farmers? What disagreement did that support create?	**Better routes could lower shipping costs and help farmers reach eastern markets. People disagreed about who should pay for the projects and which regions would benefit.**
3	How could the national bank support trade, and why did some western settlers object to it?	**The bank helped make money more dependable, and credit could ease long-distance trade. Some western settlers objected to its power over credit, especially when borrowers had trouble repaying debts.**
4	Why could Clay's three-part plan encourage national trade while also increasing sectional disagreements?	**Roads could connect sellers and buyers, the tariff could support American factories, and the bank could ease payments. Regions differed over the tariff's costs, the bank's power, and who would pay for or benefit from roads.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Member of Congress, I support the proposed road because it would let me send Ohio grain to northeastern buyers at a lower cost. More buyers could help my farm earn money. The protective tariff might help the factories that buy farm products, but it could also make tools I purchase more expensive. A national bank could make payments more dependable, although I worry about its power over loans. Southern planters may object to the tariff because it raises the cost of goods they buy. Please support the road while considering how the other parts of Clay's plan affect different regions.

Accept answers that accurately connect a policy to both an economic effect and a regional concern supported by the passage. For the letter, check for a clear position on the road, all three policies, and a plausible disagreement from another region.