

Communities by Design

Compare how early American groups organized shared life.

SS.8.HC.1 "Examine early attempts at communal living in American society."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB For each community, underline its goal or organizing idea, circle one daily practice, and number the statement that explains why it ended, 1 through 3. Use your marks to compare the attempts at communal living.

Testing Shared Life

- ① In the 1800s, some Americans formed communities that tried to organize work, property, and family life in new ways. At Brook Farm in Massachusetts, members hoped to combine useful labor with learning and culture. They shared many jobs, including farming, teaching, and household work. Members bought shares in the community and received support from its common funds. Brook Farm attracted writers and reformers, but its farming income was limited. A costly fire destroyed its main building in 1846, and the community soon ended.
- ② The Shakers built villages in several states and taught that people could live peacefully by sharing property and obeying common rules. Adult members did not marry, so they did not have children through marriage. However, Shaker communities did raise children who had been adopted, placed with them, or joined with their families. Men and women lived separately in daily housing areas but held equal authority in many community decisions. Shakers earned money by selling seeds, furniture, and other goods. Their religious rules and celibacy made it difficult to gain new adult members, and most villages closed.
- ③ At the Oneida Community in New York, founder John Humphrey Noyes promoted a system called complex marriage. Under this system, members were not expected to form exclusive married couples. The community owned property together and operated businesses that made items such as animal traps and silverware. Members also used a system of mutual criticism, in which a group discussed a person's behavior. Some members objected to these practices. In 1879, opposition and outside pressure helped bring the communal experiment to an end. The business continued later as a company, but the communal system did not.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did Brook Farm organize work and money, and what did members hope to combine?

2 How could Shaker communities raise children even though adult members did not marry?

3 Compare the family-life rules of the Shakers and the Oneida Community.

4 What challenge helped end each of the three communal experiments?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose two communities from the passage. In five sentences, explain one similarity and one difference in their communal living, then judge which challenge was harder to sustain using two details from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

For each community, underline its goal or organizing idea, circle one daily practice, and number the statement that explains why it ended, 1 through 3. Use your marks to compare the attempts at communal living. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Brook Farm organize work and money, and what did members hope to combine?	Members shared jobs and used common funds supported by member shares. They hoped to combine useful labor with learning and culture.
2	How could Shaker communities raise children even though adult members did not marry?	Shakers did not have children through marriage, but they raised children who were adopted, placed with them, or joined the community with their families.
3	Compare the family-life rules of the Shakers and the Oneida Community.	Shaker adults did not marry and men and women lived separately in housing areas. Oneida members practiced complex marriage and were not expected to form exclusive married couples.
4	What challenge helped end each of the three communal experiments?	Brook Farm had limited farming income and a destructive fire. Shaker villages struggled to gain new adult members because of religious rules and celibacy. Oneida ended after member opposition and outside pressure.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Brook Farm and the Oneida Community both tried to organize work and property differently from ordinary private households. Brook Farm shared jobs and common funds, while Oneida owned property together and ran businesses. They differed because Brook Farm aimed to join labor with learning and culture, whereas Oneida used complex marriage. I think Oneida's challenge was harder to sustain because some members objected and outsiders added pressure. Brook Farm faced limited income and a fire, but Oneida's conflict involved personal behavior and family life.

Accept responses that accurately compare two communities and support a judgment with at least two relevant passage details. For the open task, accept a different reasonable judgment if the evidence is accurate.