

Canal Connections

Identify main ideas and trace supporting details in a historical text.

L6-8RHSS10 “By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence in each paragraph that gives its main idea, then write 1 and 2 beside two details in each paragraph that support that idea.

The Erie Canal

- ① The Erie Canal changed how people and goods moved between inland New York and eastern markets. In 1825, it connected the Hudson River at Albany to Lake Erie at Buffalo. For eight years, work crews dug the 363-mile waterway across New York State. Before it opened, moving products west of the Appalachian Mountains was slow and expensive. Canal boats carried flour, timber, and other goods, giving farmers and merchants a cheaper route to buyers in distant cities.
- ② Canal towns grew because the waterway brought steady traffic and trade. Boat crews needed food, lodging, and repairs, so businesses opened near canal stops. Some towns built warehouses and docks where workers loaded or stored goods. The canal also brought new residents, including immigrants who found jobs digging, operating boats, or running shops. These changes turned small settlements into busy places where people could sell services and exchange news with travelers from many places.
- ③ The canal's success affected places far beyond its banks. Lower shipping costs helped New York City become a major trading center, since goods from the Great Lakes region could reach its port more easily. Other states began building canals after seeing New York's results. By the 1850s, railroads offered faster travel on many routes, but the Erie Canal remained important for carrying heavy cargo. Its history shows how one transportation project can reshape trade, work, and settlement.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the main idea of paragraph 1? Give two details that support it.

2 How do the details about businesses, warehouses, and jobs support the main idea of paragraph 2?

3 What cause-and-effect relationship connects paragraphs 1 and 2?

4 Why does the author mention railroads in paragraph 3?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 3-4 sentence summary explaining why the Erie Canal mattered. Include at least one detail from paragraph 1 and one detail from paragraph 3.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence in each paragraph that gives its main idea, then write 1 and 2 beside two details in each paragraph that support that idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the main idea of paragraph 1? Give two details that support it.	The Erie Canal changed transportation between inland New York and eastern markets. It connected Albany and Buffalo in 1825, and it gave farmers and merchants a cheaper route to distant buyers.
2	How do the details about businesses, warehouses, and jobs support the main idea of paragraph 2?	They show that canal traffic and trade helped towns grow by creating work, services, and places to store goods.
3	What cause-and-effect relationship connects paragraphs 1 and 2?	Because the canal provided a cheaper route for goods and brought boat traffic, towns along it gained businesses, workers, and new residents.
4	Why does the author mention railroads in paragraph 3?	The author shows that railroads later provided faster travel, but the Erie Canal still remained important for moving heavy cargo.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Erie Canal mattered because it connected inland communities to eastern markets at a lower cost. Farmers and merchants could ship flour, timber, and other products to distant buyers. It also helped New York City become a major trading center and showed other states why canals could be useful.

Accept summaries that state the canal's importance and accurately use details from both required paragraphs. Students may use different supporting details, as long as they remain faithful to the passage.