

Canal Changes Everything

Trace how a historical explanation introduces events, develops them, and shows their impact.

L6-8WHST2 "Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that introduces the canal's purpose. Number the sequence words in paragraph 2, then circle two details in paragraph 3 that explain why the canal mattered.

Building the Erie Canal

- ① In the early 1800s, farmers in western New York had a problem. Their grain and other goods traveled slowly by wagon over rough roads to eastern markets. New York governor DeWitt Clinton supported a bold solution: dig a canal from the Hudson River near Albany to Lake Erie at Buffalo. Many people doubted that workers could build such a long waterway. Still, state leaders approved the project in 1817 because the canal could connect inland farms with the Atlantic Ocean.
- ② First, surveyors chose a route across forests, fields, and wetlands. Next, thousands of laborers dug the channel with shovels and picks. They built locks, chambers with gates that raised or lowered boats as water levels changed. Workers also cut through a rocky ridge near Lockport, a difficult task that required blasting. Construction lasted eight years. On October 26, 1825, a boat carrying Governor Clinton traveled from Buffalo toward New York City to celebrate the completed canal.
- ③ The Erie Canal changed trade and travel. A trip that once took weeks by wagon could be made faster and more cheaply by boat. Farmers shipped wheat, lumber, and other products east, while stores in western towns received goods from the east. The canal helped New York City grow into a major trading port. It also encouraged settlement along the route. By explaining both the building process and its results, the canal's story shows why this engineering project mattered.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What problem and solution does the first paragraph introduce?

2 How does paragraph 2 show the order of construction? Give two sequence words and one event that follows them.

3 What technical word does the writer explain in paragraph 2? What does it mean?

4 Choose two details from paragraph 3 that support the idea that the Erie Canal changed trade and travel.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly six sentences explaining a historical event you have studied. Introduce the event, use at least two sequence words to tell what happened, include one concrete detail, and explain why the event mattered.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that introduces the canal's purpose. Number the sequence words in paragraph 2, then circle two details in paragraph 3 that explain why the canal mattered. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What problem and solution does the first paragraph introduce?	Farmers had slow, difficult wagon travel to eastern markets. Leaders approved a canal connecting the Hudson River and Lake Erie.
2	How does paragraph 2 show the order of construction? Give two sequence words and one event that follows them.	It uses sequence words such as "First" and "Next." After surveyors chose a route, laborers dug the channel.
3	What technical word does the writer explain in paragraph 2? What does it mean?	Locks are chambers with gates that raised or lowered boats as water levels changed.
4	Choose two details from paragraph 3 that support the idea that the Erie Canal changed trade and travel.	Answers may include faster, cheaper boat trips; farmers shipping products east; western towns receiving eastern goods; and New York City growing as a trading port.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright tested a powered airplane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. First, they built a light aircraft with a gasoline engine and two propellers. Next, they practiced controlling the plane in strong winds. On December 17, Orville flew 120 feet in 12 seconds. Later that day, Wilbur flew 852 feet. These flights showed that a machine could carry a person under its own power and be controlled in the air.

Accept equivalent wording for the passage questions when students accurately identify the problem, sequence, explained term, or effects. For the open response, check for exactly six sentences, a clear introduction, chronological organization with at least two sequence words, a concrete detail, and an explanation of significance.