

Choices Under Rationing

Trace how limited supplies shaped family decisions during World War II.

SS5E1.a "Describe opportunity costs and their relationship to decision-making across time (e.g., decisions by individuals in response to rationing during WWII)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each decision or choice in the passage, circle the opportunity cost connected to it, and number the words that show time changing. Your marks will show how choices and opportunity costs can change over time.

Rationing at Home

- ① During World War II, the United States needed large amounts of rubber, metal, sugar, and gasoline for the military. The government used ration books and stamps to limit how much of certain goods each person could buy. A family could not simply purchase extra sugar or gas when it wanted to. Rationing forced people to make choices with limited supplies.
- ② In 1943, Sofia's family had gasoline coupons for either a Sunday drive to visit cousins or an emergency trip later in the month. They saved the coupons for later because Sofia's father might need to drive her grandmother to a doctor. Their choice meant giving up the cousin visit. The missed visit was the opportunity cost, or the next-best choice they did not take.
- ③ At the same time, Mr. Lee used his coupons for a trip to work each week. He gave up taking his children to the beach during the summer. His opportunity cost was different because his goal was different. Months later, when bus service began near his job, he could save coupons. The choices people made changed as their needs and available options changed over time.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Why did rationing force families to make choices?

2 What did Sofia's family choose to do, and what was their opportunity cost?

3 How did Sofia's family's goal differ from Mr. Lee's goal, and how did that affect each opportunity cost?

4 How did the new bus service change Mr. Lee's future choices?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Imagine your family has coupons for only one car trip. Choose either a trip to a game this weekend or a medical appointment next week. In 3 sentences, state the choice, name the opportunity cost, and explain how a later change, such as a new bus route, could affect a future decision.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each decision or choice in the passage, circle the opportunity cost connected to it, and number the words that show time changing. Your marks will show how choices and opportunity costs can change over time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did rationing force families to make choices?	Rationing limited how much of certain goods each person could buy, so families had limited supplies.
2	What did Sofia's family choose to do, and what was their opportunity cost?	They saved gasoline coupons for a possible doctor trip. Their opportunity cost was the Sunday visit to cousins.
3	How did Sofia's family's goal differ from Mr. Lee's goal, and how did that affect each opportunity cost?	Sofia's family wanted to prepare for a possible doctor trip, so they gave up visiting cousins. Mr. Lee wanted to travel to work, so he gave up a beach trip with his children.
4	How did the new bus service change Mr. Lee's future choices?	The bus gave Mr. Lee another way to get to work, so he could save his gasoline coupons.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My family saves the coupons for the medical appointment next week. The opportunity cost is missing the game this weekend. If a new bus route reaches the clinic, we could take the bus and use future coupons for a different important trip.

Accept answers that identify a limited resource, a chosen option, and the next-best option given up. For the open response, accept either trip choice if the opportunity cost matches the choice and the later change reasonably affects future options.