

Tracks and Cotton

Trace how new technology changed Georgia's economy and communities.

SS8H4.c "Explain how technological developments, including the cotton gin and railroads, had an impact on Georgia's growth."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the two technological developments. Number three details that show how these developments changed Georgia's farming, trade, or towns.

Technology Changes Georgia

- ① In 1793, Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, a machine that quickly separated cotton fibers from seeds. Before the gin, cleaning short-staple cotton took much hand labor, so growing it brought smaller profits. The gin made cotton easier and faster to prepare for sale. Georgia farmers planted more cotton, especially in the Piedmont and newly taken lands farther west. As cotton became valuable, planters bought more land and forced more enslaved people to work in Georgia's expanding cotton fields.
- ② Railroads changed how Georgia's cotton and other goods reached markets. Beginning in the 1830s, railroad lines connected interior farming areas to river ports and trading centers. A trip by wagon over rough roads could take days, cost more, and damage goods. Trains moved freight and passengers more quickly and regularly. Rail lines also drew stores, warehouses, and workers to their stops. The rail junction called Terminus grew into Atlanta, a city that became an important center for transportation, trade, and industry.
- ③ Together, these developments reshaped Georgia's economy and population. The cotton gin increased the amount of cotton that could be sold, which encouraged plantation agriculture and the expansion of slavery. Railroads then carried cotton to markets and brought supplies and people into growing communities. More trade created jobs beyond farms, including work in shipping, storage, and rail service. Technology did not cause every change by itself, but it sped up Georgia's movement from scattered rural settlements toward larger commercial towns and cities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the cotton gin change cotton farming in Georgia, and how did that affect enslaved people?

2 Why did railroads help Georgia goods reach markets more effectively than wagons?

3 How did railroad stops help towns grow? Use Terminus as an example.

4 What were two ways the cotton gin and railroads changed Georgia's economy?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write four or five sentences explaining how the cotton gin and railroads worked together to change Georgia. Include one effect on farming or labor and one effect on trade or towns. Use because or therefore to show cause and effect.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the two technological developments. Number three details that show how these developments changed Georgia's farming, trade, or towns. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the cotton gin change cotton farming in Georgia, and how did that affect enslaved people?	The gin made cotton faster to clean and prepare for sale, so farmers planted more cotton. Planters expanded their land and forced more enslaved people to work in cotton fields.
2	Why did railroads help Georgia goods reach markets more effectively than wagons?	Trains moved freight more quickly and regularly than wagons on rough roads. Wagon trips could take days, cost more, and damage goods.
3	How did railroad stops help towns grow? Use Terminus as an example.	Railroad stops attracted stores, warehouses, and workers. Terminus was a rail junction that grew into Atlanta, an important transportation and trade center.
4	What were two ways the cotton gin and railroads changed Georgia's economy?	The cotton gin increased cotton production and plantation agriculture. Railroads moved cotton to markets and created trade-related jobs in shipping, storage, and rail service.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Because the cotton gin made cleaning cotton faster, planters grew more cotton and expanded plantation agriculture using enslaved labor. Railroads carried this cotton more quickly to markets than wagons could. Railroad stops attracted warehouses, stores, and workers, so places such as Terminus grew. Therefore, these technologies increased trade while changing where Georgians lived and worked.

Accept equivalent cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. For the open response, look for both technologies, a farming or labor effect, a trade or town effect, and clear causal reasoning.