Goods on the Move

How new tools connected producers, sellers, and customers

6-12.US1.47 "Explain the changes in manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and communication during the Second Industrial Revolution."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence that explains a change in each of these areas: manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and communication. Circle a tool or system that helped cause each change.

A Store in a Changing Nation

1 Imagine a shopper in 1880 standing outside a store that sells nails, cloth, and canned food. Over the next thirty years, the way these goods were made changed sharply. In large factories, electric power ran machines that could keep working without depending on a nearby waterwheel. Improved steelmaking produced strong, affordable steel for machines and buildings. Workers often performed one specialized task while products moved through many steps. This division of labor helped factories turn out more goods at lower cost, but repetitive work could be exhausting. Many families bought factory-made items instead of making them at home.

2 Farmers also changed how they worked. Improved mechanical harvesters cut and gathered grain faster than people using hand tools. By the early 1900s, gasoline-powered tractors began to appear, though many farms still relied on animals. Machines helped fewer workers cultivate larger fields and send more crops to market. Railroads connected those farms and factories to distant towns. Refrigerated railcars carried meat and other foods farther before they spoiled, while standardized time made train schedules easier to coordinate. A storekeeper could order goods from far away instead of relying only on nearby producers.

3 Faster travel was only part of the story. In the late 1800s, telegraph operators sent messages as electrical signals along wires, allowing businesses to learn prices and place orders without waiting for a letter to arrive by train. Telephones later let people speak directly across long distances, although many rural homes still lacked service. A factory manager could learn that a shipment was delayed and adjust production sooner. Together, faster messages and wider rail networks linked farms, factories, and customers. These changes did not reach everyone at the same time, but they reshaped how Americans made, moved, and sold goods.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did electric power and specialized work change factory production?

2. How did new farm machines change the amount of land and crops workers could handle?

3. How did refrigerated railcars change where food could be sold?

4. How did the telegraph change the way businesses handled prices and orders?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you own a small-town store in 1905. In 3 to 4 sentences, explain how a change in farming or manufacturing and a change in transportation or communication could work together to change your business. Include one benefit and one limit.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.47

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence that explains a change in each of these areas: manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and communication. Circle a tool or system that helped cause each change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did electric power and specialized work change factory production?	**Electric power ran factory machines, and specialized tasks helped workers produce more goods at lower cost.**
2	How did new farm machines change the amount of land and crops workers could handle?	**Machines helped fewer workers cultivate larger fields and send more crops to market.**
3	How did refrigerated railcars change where food could be sold?	**They carried meat and other foods farther before the foods spoiled, allowing sellers to reach distant towns.**
4	How did the telegraph change the way businesses handled prices and orders?	**Businesses could learn prices and place orders by electrical message instead of waiting for a letter to arrive by train.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1905, machines on farms could help farmers grow more crops for my store to sell. Railroads could bring those crops from distant farms, giving my customers more choices. I could use the telegraph to order more when supplies ran low. However, some customers in rural homes might not have telephones to place orders.

For the marking task, accept sentences that explain a change in each of the four areas, with a relevant tool or system circled. For Your Turn, look for a clear link between two areas, a supported benefit, and a plausible limit.