Strikes and Power

How two strikes changed relations between workers and owners

6-12.US1.52 "Explain the impact of labor unions and strikes on labor-management relations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what workers or unions did, circle how management responded, and number two effects on labor-management relations. Use your marks to explain how each conflict changed the balance of power.

Two Strikes, Different Results

1 In 1892, workers at Carnegie Steel's Homestead mill in Pennsylvania faced a dispute over pay. Many belonged to the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, a union that bargained for its members. Plant manager Henry Clay Frick wanted lower wages for some skilled workers and refused the union's contract terms. He locked union workers out of the mill. Instead of negotiating a new agreement, the two sides prepared for a showdown. Union members and their supporters guarded the mill so the company could not easily bring in replacement workers. The conflict moved from a dispute over wages to a struggle over who controlled the workplace.

2 In July, Frick hired Pinkerton guards to enter the mill. A gunfight broke out between the guards and people on the riverbank, leaving people dead on both sides. Pennsylvania's governor sent the state militia, which secured the mill. The company reopened with replacement workers, and the union lost the strike. For years afterward, the union had little power at Homestead. The company could set terms with less union resistance, while many workers saw management as an opponent rather than a partner. The violence also showed how quickly a failed wage negotiation could damage trust between labor and management.

3 A different struggle took place in Pennsylvania's coalfields in 1902. The United Mine Workers led a strike for better pay, shorter hours, and union recognition. Mine owners would not meet these demands, and the long walkout threatened the winter coal supply. President Theodore Roosevelt brought both sides into talks and later backed a commission to study the dispute. The commission awarded a pay increase and a shorter workday, but the owners did not recognize the union. This outcome gave miners some gains without giving their union a place at the bargaining table. Together, these strikes show that union action could change working conditions even when management resisted sharing power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the union's effort to bargain at Homestead turn into a struggle over control of the mill?

2. How did the outcome at Homestead change the balance of power between workers and management?

3. How did the coal strike change working conditions without giving the union the role it wanted?

4. How were the effects of the two strikes on labor-management relations different?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine that a streetcar company announces a pay cut and its workers' union considers a strike. In four sentences, explain one possible effect on service, one possible management response, and how the conflict could either improve or damage future relations between workers and management.

ANSWER KEY

Strikes and Power

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.52

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what workers or unions did, circle how management responded, and number two effects on labor-management relations. Use your marks to explain how each conflict changed the balance of power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the union's effort to bargain at Homestead turn into a struggle over control of the mill?	**Frick refused the union's terms and locked union workers out. Union members and supporters then guarded the mill to make it harder for the company to bring in replacement workers.**
2	How did the outcome at Homestead change the balance of power between workers and management?	**After the company reopened with replacement workers, the union had little power there, and management could set terms with less union resistance.**
3	How did the coal strike change working conditions without giving the union the role it wanted?	**The commission awarded miners higher pay and a shorter workday, but mine owners did not recognize the union.**
4	How were the effects of the two strikes on labor-management relations different?	**At Homestead, the union lost power and trust between workers and management was damaged. In the coalfields, miners gained better conditions, although owners still refused to recognize their union.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

If the union strikes, fewer streetcars may run while workers press for better pay. The company might meet with union leaders and offer a smaller cut. A negotiated agreement could give workers a say in future pay decisions. If the company instead hires replacement workers, the two sides may find it harder to trust each other.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons of bargaining power, working conditions, and trust. For Your Turn, accept plausible outcomes that connect the union's action and management's response to future relations.