Growing Cities, Changing Work

Trace how immigration changed urban life and labor relations.

6-12.US1.53 "Identify the impact of post-Civil War immigration on urbanization and labor relations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways immigration changed cities, and circle two ways it affected relations between workers and employers.

New Neighbors, New Pressures

1. In 1890, a family arriving from Italy might settle in New York City near relatives who spoke their language. Across the United States, immigrants from southern and eastern Europe joined earlier arrivals from other regions. Many chose cities because factories, docks, and construction crews offered wages. As newcomers filled city blocks, landlords divided buildings into small apartments called tenements. Streets grew crowded, and city governments struggled to provide clean water, sewers, and schools for fast-growing neighborhoods. Yet those same neighborhoods offered shops, places of worship, and networks that helped families find housing and work.

2. On a busy city street, a clothing factory might hire dozens of newcomers to cut and sew garments. A growing pool of workers helped factories expand, but owners could also offer low pay because many people needed jobs. Immigrants often faced long hours and unsafe rooms, while families depended on every paycheck. Workers did not always act together. Differences in language, job skills, and experience could make organizing harder. Some employers used these divisions to resist demands for higher wages or safer conditions.

3. Immigrant workers also helped build labor organizations. In 1909, thousands of New York garment workers, many of them immigrant women, walked out of shops to demand better pay and working conditions. By striking together, workers tried to gain power in talks with factory owners. A strike could slow production and push an owner to negotiate, but it could also leave families without wages. Employers sometimes refused demands or hired replacement workers, increasing tension between the two sides. Immigration helped cities and industries grow, but it also shaped struggles over wages, safety, and who had a say at work.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did available jobs and family networks help immigration increase the size of cities?

2. How did the arrival of newcomers affect housing and city services?

3. How could a growing pool of workers change the balance of power between factory owners and workers?

4. How did immigrant workers try to gain power at work, and how could employers respond?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence statement to a city council in 1909. Propose one response to crowded neighborhoods and one response to factory conditions, and explain how immigration connects to each issue.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.53

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways immigration changed cities, and circle two ways it affected relations between workers and employers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did available jobs and family networks help immigration increase the size of cities?	**City jobs drew immigrants, while relatives and neighborhood networks helped them settle there.**
2	How did the arrival of newcomers affect housing and city services?	**More people filled small tenement apartments, and city governments struggled to provide clean water, sewers, and schools.**
3	How could a growing pool of workers change the balance of power between factory owners and workers?	**Factories could expand, but owners could offer low pay because many people needed jobs.**
4	How did immigrant workers try to gain power at work, and how could employers respond?	**Workers organized and struck for better pay and conditions. Employers could refuse demands or hire replacement workers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As immigrants settle near city jobs and relatives, more families need safe places to live. The city should add sewers to crowded neighborhoods so its services keep up with growth. Factories are also hiring newcomers who may face unsafe rooms and long hours. The city should inspect workplaces to help protect these workers.

Accept other passage-supported links between immigration, city growth, and labor relations. For Part 3, accept practical proposals beyond those in the sample if the student explains each connection to immigration.