Cotton on the Move

How inventions changed work and trade in the early United States

5.E.2 "Describe the impacts of technological developments and major inventions on business productivity during the early development of the United States."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the first mention of each invention, underline how it sped up work or travel, and put a star beside one business result in each paragraph.

From Cotton Field to Cloth

1. In the early 1800s, workers picked cotton by hand. Removing sticky seeds from the fibers was slow, too. The cotton gin used turning parts to pull fibers through a screen that held back the seeds. A worker could clean much more cotton in a day. This helped cotton growers prepare more cotton for sale, but it also increased demand for enslaved workers to grow and pick it.

2. After cleaning, cotton had to reach buyers and mills. In the early 1800s, steamboats carried goods on rivers, including trips upstream against the current. Earlier boats often needed much more time to travel upstream. Steamboats could move cotton to market faster and carry supplies back. Merchants could restock sooner and make more trips, giving them more chances to sell goods.

3. At a textile mill, workers turned cotton into yarn and cloth. In many mills, flowing water powered spinning machines that twisted cotton fibers into yarn. One machine could spin many threads at once, so a mill could make more yarn than workers spinning by hand. Mill owners could sell more yarn or use it to make more cloth. Workers also had to learn new tasks around the machines.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the cotton gin help growers prepare cotton for sale? What harmful effect did it also help cause?

2. How did steamboats change river travel, and how could that help merchants sell more goods?

3. Why could a mill with water-powered spinning machines make more yarn than workers spinning by hand?

4. How could the cotton gin and steamboats work together to help a cotton merchant?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you run a bakery in the early United States. In three sentences, invent a simple tool or machine, explain how it works, and describe how it could change the number of loaves your bakery sells in a day.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the first mention of each invention, underline how it sped up work or travel, and put a star beside one business result in each paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the cotton gin help growers prepare cotton for sale? What harmful effect did it also help cause?	**It let workers remove seeds from more cotton each day, so growers could prepare more for sale. It also increased demand for enslaved workers to grow and pick cotton.**
2	How did steamboats change river travel, and how could that help merchants sell more goods?	**Steamboats moved goods upstream faster. Merchants could restock sooner and make more trips, giving them more chances to sell.**
3	Why could a mill with water-powered spinning machines make more yarn than workers spinning by hand?	**A machine could spin many threads at once, increasing the mill's yarn output.**
4	How could the cotton gin and steamboats work together to help a cotton merchant?	**The cotton gin helped prepare more cotton for sale, and steamboats could carry it to market faster. Together, they could help a merchant sell more cotton.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would build a hand-cranked dough mixer for my bakery. A worker would turn its handle to mix a large batch of dough faster than mixing by hand. With more dough ready each morning, my bakers could bake and sell more loaves in a day.

Accept answers that connect each invention to faster work or travel and then to a business result. For Part 3, accept a plausible tool with a clear explanation of how it could affect daily sales.