Routes to Chicago

Trace how migration shaped settlement and economic growth

8.G.6 "Analyze human and physical factors that have influenced migration and settlement patterns and relate them to the economic development of the United States."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one physical factor and one human factor that pushed people from the South, and circle two factors that pulled people to Chicago. Write 1 beside a settlement barrier and 2 beside an economic effect to trace what happened after people moved.

A Train Ticket North

1. In 1917, a traveler leaving rural Mississippi for Chicago might have packed more than clothes: a train ticket could mean a different future. Across the South, Jim Crow laws denied Black people equal rights, and violence made daily life dangerous. Many Black families also earned little as farm laborers or sharecroppers. The boll weevil, an insect that damaged cotton crops, reduced work on some farms. These pressures helped drive the Great Migration, when millions of Black Americans moved from the South to cities in the North and West between about 1916 and 1970.

2. Chicago offered a different mix of conditions. Rail lines linked the city to distant markets, and its location beside Lake Michigan helped ships carry raw materials and finished goods. Factories, steel mills, and meatpacking plants needed workers, especially during World War I, when immigration from Europe slowed. Northern employers recruited some Southern workers, while relatives already in Chicago sent news of openings. As newcomers arrived, businesses gained workers and customers. The city's transport links helped industries sell products far beyond Chicago, connecting migration to economic growth.

3. Growth did not bring equal benefits. Black migrants faced discrimination in hiring and housing, so many settled in crowded neighborhoods on Chicago's South Side. Restrictive housing practices limited where families could live, even when they had steady jobs. New residents opened stores, churches, and newspapers, strengthening neighborhood economies and community networks. Meanwhile, some Southern farms lost workers, and landowners increasingly used machines as farming changed. Chicago's jobs and transport routes helped pull people north, but unfair rules shaped where they settled and who shared in the city's wealth.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did one physical factor and one human factor both encourage people to leave Southern farms?

2. How did Chicago's location and its industries work together to draw migrants and support economic growth?

3. How did discriminatory housing practices shape where Black migrants settled and who benefited from Chicago's growth?

4. How did migration change economic activity in both Chicago and the South?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a western town beside a river and a railroad that opens a food-processing plant while nearby farms face a long drought. In four sentences, explain how physical and human factors could change where people live and affect both the town's economy and the farms' economy.

ANSWER KEY

Routes to Chicago

GRADE 8 · 8.G.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one physical factor and one human factor that pushed people from the South, and circle two factors that pulled people to Chicago. Write 1 beside a settlement barrier and 2 beside an economic effect to trace what happened after people moved. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did one physical factor and one human factor both encourage people to leave Southern farms?	**Boll weevils damaged cotton crops and reduced farm work. Jim Crow laws denied Black people equal rights, giving families another reason to leave.**
2	How did Chicago's location and its industries work together to draw migrants and support economic growth?	**Lake Michigan and rail lines helped Chicago's industries move materials and sell goods. The industries needed workers, drawing migrants whose labor and spending helped businesses grow.**
3	How did discriminatory housing practices shape where Black migrants settled and who benefited from Chicago's growth?	**Housing discrimination limited where Black families could live, and many settled in crowded South Side neighborhoods. Although residents built neighborhood businesses, unfair rules kept them from sharing equally in the city's wealth.**
4	How did migration change economic activity in both Chicago and the South?	**Chicago businesses gained workers and customers. Some Southern farms lost workers, and landowners increasingly used machines as farming changed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Drought could shrink harvests and push farm families to seek work in town. The new plant's jobs could draw those families to settle near the railroad. The river could supply water, while the railroad could bring crops from other regions to the plant. The town could gain wages and sales, but nearby farms could lose workers and income.

Accept other passage-supported factors and effects in Parts 1 and 2. For Part 3, look for four sentences that connect at least one physical factor and one human factor to settlement and to economic effects in both places.