A Bale Between Regions

Compare northern and southern life through the cotton trade

8.H.11 "Compare and contrast the ways of life in the northern and southern states, including the growth of towns and cities, the growth of industry in the North, and the growing dependence on slavery and the production of cotton in the South..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about northern industry and city growth, circle two details about southern cotton and enslaved labor, and number two statements that show a connection or conflict between the regions.

A Bale of Cotton, Two Regions

1. In the 1850s, a bale of cotton might leave a plantation in the South for a mill in the North. Across much of the South, warm weather and long growing seasons helped farmers raise cotton for sale. Plantations and smaller farms spread across the countryside, while fewer people lived in large cities than in the North. Cotton planters increasingly depended on the forced labor of enslaved people to plant, pick, and prepare the crop. Many white southerners did not own enslaved people, but slavery shaped the region's economy and politics.

2. After traveling by ship or rail, some southern cotton reached northern textile mills. Machines turned its fibers into thread and cloth. Other factories made goods such as tools and shoes, attracting workers to growing towns and cities. Railroads and canals carried supplies and finished products, while merchants sold goods to customers in both regions. Northern factory workers earned wages, though their jobs could be dangerous and poorly paid. The North also had farms, and the South had towns and businesses, but industry and urban growth were more widespread in the North.

3. The cotton trade linked the regions, but it did not erase their differences. Northern mills bought southern cotton, and northern businesses sold manufactured goods to southern buyers. As the nation expanded westward, lawmakers argued over whether slavery would be allowed in new territories. Many northerners opposed its spread, while many white southerners defended expansion to protect a slave-based economy and political power. People also disagreed within each region. These growing divisions, called sectionalism, made it harder to settle national questions through compromise, even though trade connected North and South.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the growth of northern towns and cities differ from settlement patterns in much of the South, and what helped cause the difference?

2. How did work in northern mills differ from work on southern cotton plantations?

3. What part did cotton play in both the South's dependence on slavery and the North's industry?

4. Why could economic differences between the regions lead to a dispute about new western territories?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 4- to 5-sentence museum label for a cotton bale that traveled from a southern plantation to a northern mill. Compare work in the two places, give two ways the regions were connected, and explain why those connections did not prevent sectional conflict.

ANSWER KEY

A Bale Between Regions

GRADE 8 · 8.H.11

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about northern industry and city growth, circle two details about southern cotton and enslaved labor, and number two statements that show a connection or conflict between the regions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the growth of northern towns and cities differ from settlement patterns in much of the South, and what helped cause the difference?	**Factories attracted workers to growing northern towns and cities. In much of the South, plantations and smaller farms spread across the countryside, and fewer people lived in large cities.**
2	How did work in northern mills differ from work on southern cotton plantations?	**Northern mill workers earned wages to operate machines, although their work could be dangerous and poorly paid. Enslaved people on southern plantations were forced to grow and prepare cotton.**
3	What part did cotton play in both the South's dependence on slavery and the North's industry?	**Southern planters depended increasingly on enslaved labor to produce cotton. Northern textile mills bought some of that cotton and used machines to turn it into thread and cloth.**
4	Why could economic differences between the regions lead to a dispute about new western territories?	**Many white southerners wanted slavery to expand to protect a slave-based economy and political power, while many northerners opposed its spread. They argued over whether slavery would be allowed in new territories.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This cotton bale began on a southern plantation, where enslaved people were forced to plant and pick cotton. In a northern mill, wage earners operated machines that turned cotton into cloth, sometimes in dangerous conditions. Southern cotton supplied northern mills, and northern businesses sold manufactured goods to southern buyers. Although the regions traded, many northerners opposed slavery's spread into western territories. Many white southerners defended expansion to protect slavery and their political power, so trade did not stop sectional conflict.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons and connections. For the museum label, look for two distinct trade links and an explanation that economic ties did not settle the dispute over slavery's expansion.