Changing Hoosier Lives

Work, homes, and opportunity in postwar Indiana

IS.1.25 "Summarize key economic and social developments and changes in post-WWII life in Indiana."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two changes in work or production, circle two changes in where or how people lived, and draw an arrow from one economic change to a social effect.

Indiana After World War II

1 In 1946, a worker leaving a factory in Indianapolis might have seen advertisements for new cars and houses. During World War II, Indiana factories had produced military goods; afterward, many turned to consumer products. Auto parts plants around Indianapolis and steel mills near Gary offered wages that helped many families buy appliances and homes. Unions negotiated pay and benefits in major industries. Yet prosperity depended heavily on manufacturing. By the 1970s and 1980s, competition, automation, and changing demand eliminated many factory jobs, especially in older industrial cities such as Gary. The same industrial economy that created opportunity could also leave communities vulnerable.

2 The view from an Indiana farm changed, too. Larger tractors and combines let fewer workers plant and harvest more acres. As farms grew and needed less labor, some rural residents moved toward towns and cities for work. At the same time, new highways and affordable mortgages helped many families move from city neighborhoods into suburban houses. Schools, stores, and roads followed growing suburbs around Indianapolis and other cities. These changes did not mean everyone left the farm or the city. They did mean that the places where many Hoosiers worked, shopped, and raised children shifted after the war.

3 A new house key could symbolize the era's hopes, but it would not tell the whole story. Federal veterans' benefits helped eligible former service members pay for college or homes, while lending discrimination and housing segregation kept many Black Hoosiers from the same opportunities. Black residents and allies challenged unfair treatment in housing, schools, and jobs as the civil rights movement gained strength. In 1968, a federal fair housing law banned discrimination in home sales and rentals, although unequal access did not disappear overnight. Postwar Indiana brought higher living standards for many, growing suburbs, and new demands for equal opportunity alongside economic insecurity.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Summarize how manufacturing brought both opportunity and risk to Indiana communities after World War II.

2. How did changes in farming affect where some Hoosiers lived and worked?

3. Summarize how suburban growth changed daily life beyond the houses people lived in.

4. How could Indiana's living standards rise while some Hoosiers still demanded greater opportunity?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word museum label for an imagined house key or factory glove. Connect the object to a change in work and a change in community life, use facts from at least two paragraphs, and explain why the era's gains were uneven.

ANSWER KEY

Changing Hoosier Lives

HIGH SCHOOL · IS.1.25

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two changes in work or production, circle two changes in where or how people lived, and draw an arrow from one economic change to a social effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Summarize how manufacturing brought both opportunity and risk to Indiana communities after World War II.	**Factory wages helped many families buy homes and appliances, but later job losses hurt manufacturing communities such as Gary.**
2	How did changes in farming affect where some Hoosiers lived and worked?	**Larger machines reduced the need for farm labor, so some rural residents moved toward towns and cities for work.**
3	Summarize how suburban growth changed daily life beyond the houses people lived in.	**Schools, stores, and roads followed growing suburbs, changing where many families went to school and shopped.**
4	How could Indiana's living standards rise while some Hoosiers still demanded greater opportunity?	**Many families gained higher wages or access to homes and college, but discrimination limited opportunities for many Black Hoosiers, who challenged unfair treatment.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This factory glove stands for both opportunity and risk in postwar Indiana. Auto parts plants and steel mills offered wages that helped many workers buy homes and appliances. Meanwhile, machines reduced the need for farm labor, so some rural residents moved toward towns and cities for work. Later, automation and competition cost many factory workers their jobs. The glove cannot represent every Hoosier's experience: housing discrimination restricted many Black families' access to new homes, even as living standards rose for others.

Accept accurate summaries that connect economic changes to effects on where or how Hoosiers lived. For the museum label, check the word count, evidence from two paragraphs, and an explanation of unequal gains.