Tracks and Towns

How transportation and industry changed Indiana communities

IS.1.9 "Explain key ideas, movements, and inventions and summarize their impact on rural and urban communities throughout Indiana."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline three developments that changed Indiana communities. Number one rural effect and one urban effect of each development so you can explain who was affected and how.

When Indiana's Connections Changed

1. Imagine an Indiana farmer loading sacks of grain beside a railroad depot in the 1890s. Before rail lines reached many counties, hauling crops by wagon to distant buyers took time and money. Trains carried farm products to cities more quickly, giving some rural families access to larger markets. Railroads also brought manufactured tools and household goods from cities into small towns. In urban centers such as Indianapolis, rail connections helped merchants collect crops and ship finished goods. Yet a town bypassed by the tracks could lose customers to a nearby depot town. Transportation changed where both farmers and shopkeepers could compete.

2. By the early 1900s, electric interurban railcars ran between many Indiana towns and cities. Unlike long-distance trains, these cars stopped frequently, sometimes near farms as well as in town centers. A rural resident could ride to an urban store, hospital, or job without owning a car. City businesses gained customers from a wider area, while small-town shops faced new competition. Building electric lines required tracks and power, so service did not reach every community. Later, growing automobile use and improved roads drew many passengers away. This invention connected places, but it also shifted where people spent their money.

3. Rail transport also helped Indiana's industrialization, a shift toward factory production. In 1906, U.S. Steel founded Gary beside Lake Michigan, where lake ships delivered iron ore and rail lines carried coal and finished steel. Mill jobs drew workers from other places, including rural communities, into a growing city. Factory wages offered an alternative to farm work, but steelmaking brought smoke and dangerous conditions. Organized labor grew as workers pressed employers for better pay, safer workplaces, and shorter hours. During the 1919 steel strike, workers in Gary joined a national effort to win union recognition and improve conditions. The movement challenged how the benefits and risks of industrial growth were shared.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did railroads change opportunities for farmers and city merchants? What could happen to a town the tracks bypassed?

2. Explain one benefit and one drawback of interurban service for different Indiana communities.

3. How did Gary's growing steel industry affect people from rural communities and the city itself?

4. How did organized labor respond to industrial growth in Gary, and whom could its goals help?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In four or five sentences, write a proposal to a town council in 1910: should your town seek an interurban stop and welcome a new factory? Recommend a plan, predict effects on rural and urban residents, and explain a trade-off using at least two details from the passage.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline three developments that changed Indiana communities. Number one rural effect and one urban effect of each development so you can explain who was affected and how. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did railroads change opportunities for farmers and city merchants? What could happen to a town the tracks bypassed?	**Farmers could reach larger markets, and city merchants could collect crops and ship goods. A bypassed town could lose customers to a depot town.**
2	Explain one benefit and one drawback of interurban service for different Indiana communities.	**Rural residents could reach city stores, hospitals, or jobs. Small-town shops faced competition when riders spent money elsewhere.**
3	How did Gary's growing steel industry affect people from rural communities and the city itself?	**Mill wages drew some rural residents to Gary. The growing city gained jobs but also faced smoke and dangerous working conditions.**
4	How did organized labor respond to industrial growth in Gary, and whom could its goals help?	**Steelworkers joined the 1919 strike to seek union recognition and better conditions. Goals such as safer workplaces and shorter hours could help mill workers, including newcomers from rural communities.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our town should seek an interurban stop but welcome a factory only if its owners make a worker safety plan. Frequent electric cars could help farm families reach jobs and city services. A factory could offer wages to people leaving farm work, while city businesses could gain customers who travel on the line. However, small-town shops might lose sales to urban stores, and factory work could be dangerous. The council should weigh those costs before approving either project.

Accept other passage-supported benefits and costs, including access to markets, unequal rail service, smoke, and demands for shorter hours. For the proposal, look for a clear recommendation, effects on both rural and urban residents, and a trade-off supported by at least two passage details.