Paths to Indiana

How work and land shaped migration

IS.4.9 "Examine the migration of groups to Indiana for economic opportunity."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each job or land opportunity that drew people to Indiana. Circle a cost or barrier each group faced, then number the opportunities in the order they appear.

Different Routes, Different Work

1 In the 1800s, German-speaking families arriving in Indiana often looked for land and a living they could control. Some had left European regions where farmland was scarce or expensive. In Indiana, a family with enough savings could buy farmland, raise crops, and sell extra produce in growing towns. Others used trades such as carpentry or brewing in places including Indianapolis and Evansville. Land was not free, and success depended on money, labor, and access to markets. Still, the chance to own a farm or run a business helped draw German immigrants to the state.

2 Decades later, steel mills changed the pull of northwest Indiana. During the Great Migration, especially from the 1910s through the 1960s, many Black Americans left the South, where low pay, limited job choices, and racist violence narrowed their options. Mills in Gary and nearby cities offered industrial wages that could exceed what many workers earned in Southern farm work. Relatives and friends already in Indiana sometimes passed along news of openings. A better paycheck did not erase discrimination. Black workers faced barriers to housing and advancement, so an offer of work did not guarantee equal access to the city's benefits.

3 Mexican migrants also sought paid work in Indiana during the early twentieth century. Railroads and factories needed workers, and jobs in northwest Indiana's steel industry attracted some Mexican families. Employers and personal networks spread word about openings across borders and between cities. A worker might follow a railroad job first, then look for steadier factory pay. Yet layoffs could suddenly cut off income, and discrimination could limit where families lived or which jobs they held. These three migrations were not identical: farmland, mills, and railroads offered different paths. In each case, people weighed a possible livelihood against costs and barriers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might buying farmland in Indiana have appealed to some German-speaking families, and what did a family need to take that opportunity?

2. How did steel jobs in Gary offer Black migrants a different economic option from Southern farm work? Name one barrier they still faced.

3. How could railroad work lead a Mexican migrant to another economic opportunity in Indiana, and what could threaten that opportunity?

4. How did personal connections help both Black and Mexican migrants pursue work in Indiana?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word museum exhibit label titled “Work Drew People to Indiana.” Use details about at least two groups to explain how economic opportunities shaped their moves, and show why those opportunities did not mean equal access.

Paths to Indiana

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each job or land opportunity that drew people to Indiana. Circle a cost or barrier each group faced, then number the opportunities in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might buying farmland in Indiana have appealed to some German-speaking families, and what did a family need to take that opportunity?	**Farmland offered a way to raise crops and sell extra produce. A family needed enough savings to buy land, as well as labor and access to markets.**
2	How did steel jobs in Gary offer Black migrants a different economic option from Southern farm work? Name one barrier they still faced.	**Steel mills could pay more than Southern farm work. Black workers still faced discrimination, including barriers to housing or advancement.**
3	How could railroad work lead a Mexican migrant to another economic opportunity in Indiana, and what could threaten that opportunity?	**A worker could follow a railroad job to Indiana and then seek steadier factory pay. Layoffs could cut off that income.**
4	How did personal connections help both Black and Mexican migrants pursue work in Indiana?	**Relatives and friends shared news of openings with Black migrants. Personal networks also spread word of jobs to Mexican migrants.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Work Drew People to Indiana. In the 1800s, some German-speaking families saw Indiana farmland as a chance to grow crops and sell what they did not need. Decades later, Black migrants from the South sought steel jobs around Gary that could pay more than farm work. Both groups moved toward possible livelihoods, but their opportunities came with limits. Buying a farm required savings, while Black steelworkers faced discrimination in housing and advancement. These stories show that an available job or piece of land was not equally accessible to everyone.

Accept answers that connect a specific opportunity to a group's migration decision and accurately describe a limit stated in the passage. The exhibit label may use any two or all three groups.