When Power Arrived

Trace how one change reshaped rural life.

S.8.6 "Investigate the consequences of change to society."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the change that brought electricity to more farms, circle three effects on daily life or work, and number two details that show why the benefits were uneven.

Electricity Reaches the Farm

1 In the 1930s, many American farm families ended each day by the light of kerosene lamps. Without electric lines, they also pumped water by hand or with engines and kept food cool with ice or in cellars. Power companies often avoided sparsely settled areas because long lines to a few customers brought little profit. In 1935, the federal government created the Rural Electrification Administration, which offered loans for building rural power systems. Farmers organized cooperatives to borrow money, put up lines, and deliver electricity. A decision about who would build the lines began to change daily life far beyond the farm.

2 Electric light allowed children to read after sunset without a smoking lamp, while electric pumps saved time carrying water. Refrigerators helped households store perishable food longer, but buying one cost money. On farms, powered equipment could speed tasks such as milking and grinding feed. As work changed, families could shift time from repetitive chores toward other work, school, or rest. Radios also connected rural listeners to weather reports and national news at the same time as city audiences. Electricity did not simply add convenience. It changed how people used time and how isolated households connected to a larger public.

3 The change did not reach everyone at once. Building a line to a distant farmhouse remained expensive, and households still had to pay for wiring, appliances, and monthly power. Some families gained lights before they could afford a refrigerator or a pump. Cooperatives also had to repay their loans, so communities weighed the benefits of service against its costs. More electric machines could reduce the need for certain kinds of hired farm work, even while creating jobs installing and repairing equipment. Rural electrification shows how one change can help some people immediately, leave others waiting, and reshape local work in different ways.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did federal loans and farmer cooperatives work together to change access to electricity?

2. How could electric equipment change farm jobs in two different ways?

3. Why did families not all gain the same benefits as soon as power lines arrived? Give two costs from the passage.

4. How could electricity change both a family's schedule and its connection to people beyond the farm?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a rural town adds its first regular public bus route. In one paragraph, explain one benefit for each of two different groups, one possible drawback, and why the groups might experience the change differently.

ANSWER KEY

When Power Arrived

HIGH SCHOOL · S.8.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the change that brought electricity to more farms, circle three effects on daily life or work, and number two details that show why the benefits were uneven. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did federal loans and farmer cooperatives work together to change access to electricity?	**Federal loans helped farmer cooperatives build lines and deliver electricity in areas power companies often avoided.**
2	How could electric equipment change farm jobs in two different ways?	**Machines could reduce the need for some hired farm work while creating jobs installing and repairing equipment.**
3	Why did families not all gain the same benefits as soon as power lines arrived? Give two costs from the passage.	**Families still had to pay for costs such as home wiring, appliances, and monthly power. Some could not afford a refrigerator or pump right away.**
4	How could electricity change both a family's schedule and its connection to people beyond the farm?	**Electric pumps and other equipment could free time for school, rest, or other work. Radios connected families to weather reports and national news heard by city audiences.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A regular bus could help students reach after-school activities when their families cannot drive them. It could also help older residents get to medical appointments without asking a neighbor for a ride. A possible drawback is that the town must pay drivers and maintain buses, even on days when few people ride. Students and older residents might use the same route differently because they travel at different times and to different places. To benefit both groups, the town would need to consider where the bus stops and when it runs.

Accept other passage-supported effects and barriers in Part 2. For Part 3, look for a clear cause-and-effect explanation that distinguishes the two groups and includes a plausible drawback.