Steel City Choices

Trace how industrial growth changed work, cities, and government.

USH.2.1 "Explain the causes of the Industrial Revolution and its social, political, and economic outcomes."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three conditions that fueled steel production, circle one social outcome and one economic outcome, and number two government responses. Use your marks to trace causes to consequences.

Pittsburgh's Industrial Boom

1 In the 1870s, a train carrying coal and iron ore could feed the furnaces of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, while other trains carried finished steel across the country. The United States had large deposits of coal and iron, and a growing railroad network moved these resources cheaply. New steelmaking methods, including the Bessemer process, lowered the cost of producing steel in great quantities. Investors supplied money for large furnaces and machines. A growing workforce, including immigrants from Europe, provided labor. These conditions reinforced one another: cheaper steel helped build more tracks, and more tracks opened new markets for steel.

2 Steel companies used this network to supply rails, bridges, and buildings far beyond Pittsburgh. Producing more steel at lower cost helped large companies earn profits and pushed smaller competitors to combine or close. To find work, many families moved to industrial cities. Jobs offered wages, but long shifts near hot furnaces brought serious risks. As workers crowded into neighborhoods close to mills, housing and sanitation often failed to keep pace with population growth. Some workers formed unions to seek better pay and safer conditions. The same expansion that widened markets also changed where people lived and how they worked.

3 Industrial growth also forced political choices. In 1892, a wage dispute at Carnegie Steel's Homestead plant near Pittsburgh led to a strike and violent clashes between strikers and private guards. Pennsylvania's governor sent the state militia to restore order. The company resumed operations with replacement workers, weakening the union there. Government action could protect industrial production while leaving workers with less bargaining power. At the national level, Congress passed the Interstate Commerce Act in 1887 to regulate railroad practices and the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890 to address restraints on trade. Such laws showed growing pressure to set rules for powerful businesses.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did railroads and cheaper steel production reinforce each other? Explain one economic outcome of this cycle.

2. How did industrial expansion create both a wage opportunity and a social problem in cities?

3. How did the Homestead wage dispute produce a government response, and how did the outcome affect workers?

4. Link one economic change in the passage to Congress's decision to set rules for businesses.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you serve on Pittsburgh's city council in 1893. In four sentences, propose a specific city policy addressing a problem caused by industrial growth, trace that problem to one cause of the boom, and explain one likely economic benefit and one likely cost of your policy.

ANSWER KEY

Steel City Choices

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three conditions that fueled steel production, circle one social outcome and one economic outcome, and number two government responses. Use your marks to trace causes to consequences. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did railroads and cheaper steel production reinforce each other? Explain one economic outcome of this cycle.	**Cheaper steel helped build railroad tracks, while railroads opened new markets for steel. Those markets helped steel companies sell more of their products.**
2	How did industrial expansion create both a wage opportunity and a social problem in cities?	**Industrial jobs drew families to cities and offered wages, but population growth outpaced housing and sanitation.**
3	How did the Homestead wage dispute produce a government response, and how did the outcome affect workers?	**After the strike and violent clashes, Pennsylvania's governor sent the militia. The company resumed operations with replacement workers, weakening the union.**
4	Link one economic change in the passage to Congress's decision to set rules for businesses.	**As railroads expanded and large companies grew more powerful, pressure grew for rules. Congress passed laws regulating railroad practices and addressing restraints on trade.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would require inspections of crowded rental buildings near the mills and order landlords to repair unsafe toilets. Railroads opened new markets for steel, attracting workers to Pittsburgh faster than housing and sanitation could improve. Cleaner buildings could reduce illness and help workers miss fewer shifts, benefiting mills and families. Landlords would pay for repairs and might raise rents, so the city should give them time to meet the rule.

Accept supported cause-and-effect explanations, including other conditions that fueled steel production. For Part 3, accept a specific local policy with a plausible economic benefit and cost, even if it differs from the sample.