Resources and Rules

How competing views shaped resource policies in the 1800s

WG.5.5 "Identify examples from different world regions, involving the use and management of resources. Explain how different points of view influence policies relating to the use of these resources."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the resource and its region in each paragraph, circle a rule or policy about its use, and number two groups whose views of that resource differed.

Who Decides How Resources Are Used?

1. In the 1870s, British officials in India wanted timber for railway ties and ships. They expanded reserved forests, where the colonial government controlled tree cutting and limited grazing. Officials argued that these rules would protect valuable trees and ensure a steady supply of wood. Yet many villagers relied on the same forests for firewood, grazing land, and materials for their homes. A family that once collected branches freely might now need permission or face a fine. To railway planners, the trees were a strategic supply. To nearby households, the forest was part of everyday survival.

2. Across the Pacific, Peru's Chincha Islands held thick deposits of guano, seabird droppings used as fertilizer. During the mid-1800s, Peru's government sold guano abroad and relied on the income to pay debts and build projects, including railways. Officials used contracts with merchants to organize its sale. European and North American farmers wanted the fertilizer because it improved crop yields. But workers who dug and loaded guano, including Chinese laborers brought under harsh contracts, faced dangerous dust and grueling work. Policies that sped up exports served state finances and overseas farms, while giving workers little control over conditions.

3. In the 1890s, demand for rubber rose as factories made tires and other goods. In Central Africa's Congo Free State, ruled by Belgium's King Leopold II, officials forced communities to collect wild rubber to meet quotas. The state and companies treated rubber as a source of profit, not as a crop that local people chose to harvest. Collectors lost time needed for farming and faced severe punishment when quotas were not met. For European buyers, more rubber meant more material for factories. For many Congolese families, the collection policy meant hunger, fear, and violence. Demand shaped a rule with unequal costs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did British officials expand reserved forests in India, and why might villagers have opposed the new rules?

2. How did Peru's policy for selling guano serve the government and overseas farmers, and what did it mean for workers?

3. How did officials and Congolese families experience the rubber quota policy differently?

4. Compare India and Peru. Whose interests did each resource policy favor, and what cost did local people bear?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine an 1880s coastal West African district where merchants want more palm oil exports and local families need palms for food and soap. In four or five sentences, propose one rule for managing the palms, explain how both groups might judge it, and name one likely trade-off.

ANSWER KEY

Resources and Rules

HIGH SCHOOL · WG.5.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the resource and its region in each paragraph, circle a rule or policy about its use, and number two groups whose views of that resource differed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did British officials expand reserved forests in India, and why might villagers have opposed the new rules?	**Officials wanted to protect timber and maintain a supply for railways and ships. Villagers depended on the forests and faced limits on grazing and gathering wood.**
2	How did Peru's policy for selling guano serve the government and overseas farmers, and what did it mean for workers?	**Guano sales brought Peru income and supplied fertilizer to overseas farmers. Workers faced dangerous dust and grueling labor, with little control over conditions.**
3	How did officials and Congolese families experience the rubber quota policy differently?	**Officials and companies sought rubber for profit, while Congolese families were forced to collect it and faced lost farming time, hunger, and punishment.**
4	Compare India and Peru. Whose interests did each resource policy favor, and what cost did local people bear?	**India's forest rules favored colonial timber needs but restricted villagers' access. Peru's guano sales favored government income and overseas farms, while workers endured harsh conditions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would limit how many palms merchants could use for oil exports each season. Local families might support the rule because it would leave more palms for food and soap. Merchants might oppose it because they could sell less oil. The trade-off is lower export income in exchange for protecting a resource families depend on.

Accept answers that accurately connect a group's view of a resource to a policy or its effects. For Your Turn, accept other plausible rules if the response explains both groups' views and a trade-off.