

Workers Take Action

How laborers used organized strategies to improve working conditions

8.2d "In response to shifts in working conditions, laborers organized and employed a variety of strategies in an attempt to improve their conditions."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number each of these eight strategies when it appears in the passage: organizing a union, striking, picketing, raising strike funds, seeking public attention, boycotting, negotiating, and asking officials for laws. Do not number a working condition or a goal.

Many Ways to Seek Change

- ① During the late 1800s and early 1900s, factory and workshop jobs drew many people to cities. Workers often faced long hours, low pay, crowded rooms, and dangerous machines. One worker alone could be replaced easily. To gain a stronger voice, laborers formed unions. The Knights of Labor welcomed many kinds of workers, while the American Federation of Labor focused mainly on skilled workers. Union members met, chose leaders, collected dues, and agreed on goals such as safer workplaces or higher wages.
- ② In 1909, thousands of shirtwaist makers in New York City joined a strike connected to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. They stopped working to demand better pay, shorter hours, and safer shops. Strikers also picketed outside factories, carrying their demands where owners and the public could see them. At meetings, workers shared news with newspapers to seek public attention and raised money to support families after they lost wages during the strike for many weeks.
- ③ Labor groups did not rely on one method. In 1894, Pullman workers and the American Railway Union used a strike and a boycott of trains carrying Pullman cars after wage cuts and high rents. Federal troops helped end the conflict, showing that strikes could bring serious risks. Union leaders also tried negotiation, meeting with employers to seek agreements. Over time, workers and reformers asked government officials for laws on hours and safety. Each strategy aimed to give workers more power over conditions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did workers form unions? Give two working conditions from the passage that helped cause this response.

2 How did the shirtwaist makers make their demands seen and heard during the 1909 strike? Name two strategies.

3 What two tactics did Pullman workers and the American Railway Union use in 1894?

4 According to the passage, what was one risk of striking, and what was the larger purpose of using labor strategies?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that factory workers want safer machines. Write exactly three sentences describing a plan that uses exactly two strategies from the passage. Explain how each strategy could help the workers seek safer conditions.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Number each of these eight strategies when it appears in the passage: organizing a union, striking, picketing, raising strike funds, seeking public attention, boycotting, negotiating, and asking officials for laws. Do not number a working condition or a goal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did workers form unions? Give two working conditions from the passage that helped cause this response.	Workers formed unions because they faced conditions such as long hours, low pay, crowded rooms, and dangerous machines. Any two conditions are acceptable.
2	How did the shirtwaist makers make their demands seen and heard during the 1909 strike? Name two strategies.	They picketed outside factories and shared news with newspapers to seek public attention.
3	What two tactics did Pullman workers and the American Railway Union use in 1894?	They used a strike and a boycott of trains carrying Pullman cars.
4	According to the passage, what was one risk of striking, and what was the larger purpose of using labor strategies?	A strike could bring serious risks, as shown when federal troops helped end the Pullman conflict. Labor strategies aimed to give workers more power over their conditions.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Workers could organize a union and choose leaders to speak for them. They could picket outside the factory so owners and the public see their demand for safer machines. These actions would give workers a stronger voice and make their safety goal visible.

Accept plans that use exactly two strategies named in the marking job and explain how each could support a demand for safer machines. Do not accept strategies not stated in the passage.