Mail on Horseback

Use details from a history text to answer supporting questions.

3.P.1.2.B "Develop responses to supporting questions relevant to specific social studies content knowledge."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail that helps you answer each numbered question, and write the question number beside it.

The Pony Express

1 In 1860, sending news across the United States could take weeks. There were no phones or internet. People in California wanted to hear from family and leaders in the East. The Pony Express began carrying letters between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California. Its goal was to move mail across the long route in about ten days, much faster than many other ways to send it.

2 The Pony Express used a chain of riders and stations. A rider carried a pouch of mail and changed to a fresh horse at stations along the route. Another rider took over after a longer stretch. This teamwork kept the mail moving, even when one horse or rider needed rest. Riders crossed wide plains and steep mountains. Rain, snow, and rough ground could make the trip hard.

3 Station workers cared for the horses and helped riders leave quickly. People who wrote letters paid a high price to use the fast service, so it was not a common way to send mail. In 1861, a telegraph line reached across the country. Telegraph messages could travel much faster than letters on horseback. Soon after, the Pony Express stopped running, but its riders had shown how much people valued quick news.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did people in California want a faster way to get mail from the East? Use a detail from the passage.

2. How did the stations help mail travel quickly? Use a detail from the passage.

3. What made the route hard for riders? How did working as a team help? Use details from the passage.

4. Why did the Pony Express stop running soon after 1861? Use a detail from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a new supporting question about the people who sent letters by Pony Express. Then answer your question in two sentences using two details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Mail on Horseback

GRADE 3 · 3.P.1.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail that helps you answer each numbered question, and write the question number beside it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did people in California want a faster way to get mail from the East? Use a detail from the passage.	**They wanted to hear from family and leaders in the East, but news could take weeks to arrive.**
2	How did the stations help mail travel quickly? Use a detail from the passage.	**Riders changed to fresh horses at stations, and station workers helped them leave quickly.**
3	What made the route hard for riders? How did working as a team help? Use details from the passage.	**Rain, snow, and rough ground made travel hard. Riders took turns so the mail could keep moving while a rider rested.**
4	Why did the Pony Express stop running soon after 1861? Use a detail from the passage.	**A telegraph line reached across the country, and its messages could travel much faster than letters on horseback.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Question: Why was the Pony Express not a common way to send mail? People paid a high price to send letters by Pony Express. Because it cost so much, the service was not a common way to send mail.

Accept responses that answer each question with a relevant passage detail. For Your Turn, look for a new supporting question and a two-sentence answer grounded in two details from the passage.