Mail Mystery Questions

Turn details about the past into topics and questions.

3.P.4.2.A "Generate a list of topics of interest and individual questions about a specific topic in social studies."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three details that could become smaller topics to study. Circle the one you would most like to ask about.

How Mail Traveled Long Ago

1. Long ago, a letter could travel far without a car or plane. In the 1800s, mail in the United States moved on horses, wagons, boats, and trains. The route depended on where the letter was going. Rivers made boats useful in some places. Trains carried many bags of mail over long stretches of land. A letter might change vehicles before it reached its new town.

2. At a post office, people brought letters to be sent. In 1847, the United States began selling postage stamps. A stamp showed that the sender had paid to mail a letter. Postal workers sorted letters by where they needed to go. Some towns had mail carriers who brought letters to homes. In other places, people picked up their letters at the post office.

3. For a short time, the Pony Express carried mail between Missouri and California. It ran in 1860 and 1861. Riders took turns on the route and changed horses at stations. The service was quick for its time, but it was expensive. When a telegraph line reached across the country, people could send messages much faster. The Pony Express ended soon after.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. List two smaller topics you could study about mail in the 1800s. Use two different details from the passage.

2. Write one question about how mail traveled that the passage can answer.

3. Write one question about stamps or sorting letters that the passage can answer.

4. Write one question about the Pony Express that the passage can answer. Do not ask when it ran.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Pick a social studies topic about your town or the past that is not mail. Name your big topic, list three smaller topics you would like to study, then choose one smaller topic and write two different questions about it.

ANSWER KEY

Mail Mystery Questions

GRADE 3 · 3.P.4.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three details that could become smaller topics to study. Circle the one you would most like to ask about. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	List two smaller topics you could study about mail in the 1800s. Use two different details from the passage.	**Ways mail traveled; how postal workers sorted letters.**
2	Write one question about how mail traveled that the passage can answer.	**What vehicles carried mail in the 1800s?**
3	Write one question about stamps or sorting letters that the passage can answer.	**What did a postage stamp show?**
4	Write one question about the Pony Express that the passage can answer. Do not ask when it ran.	**Where did the Pony Express carry mail?**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Big topic: My town's parks. Smaller topics: park rules; park workers; changes to parks over time. Chosen smaller topic: park workers. Questions: Who takes care of the trees in our parks? How do park workers get ready for a big event?

Accept other smaller topics grounded in the passage and other questions the passage can answer. For Part 3, look for three distinct smaller topics and two different questions about the chosen one.