Mail on the Move

Use facts from two sources to support a written opinion.

4.P.4 "Develop a variety of evidence-based written products designed for multiple purposes. Summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create written products, research projects..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts from the National Park Service, circle one fact from the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, and write N and S beside the sentence that brings facts from both sources together.

The Pony Express

1. In 1860, sending a letter across the United States could take weeks. The Pony Express offered a faster way to carry mail. According to the National Park Service, its riders traveled between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, from April 1860 to October 1861. The route crossed plains and mountains. The National Park Service reports that mail could reach the other end in about ten days.

2. How did riders move so quickly? The Smithsonian National Postal Museum explains that riders changed horses at stations about every 10 to 15 miles. A fresh horse could run while a tired horse rested. Riders also passed the mail to other riders along the route. This relay worked like a team passing a ball, except the team carried letters across a vast stretch of land.

3. Speed alone did not keep the Pony Express in business. The National Park Service says the service ended after a telegraph line linked the East and West in 1861. A telegraph sent messages over wires instead of carrying paper letters on horseback. Taken together, the park service's dates and the museum's horse changes show how much work went into a service that lasted less than two years.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In your own words, explain how changing horses helped the mail move quickly. Name the source for this detail.

2. Which source supports the claim that the route reached both Missouri and California? Name the source and the two cities.

3. Use one fact from each named source to explain why this route took planning.

4. A writer claims that a new way of sending messages helped end the Pony Express. Which source should the writer cite? Explain its evidence in your own words.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Should a town in 1860 have paid to send an urgent message by Pony Express instead of waiting for regular mail? Write 4 or 5 sentences stating your opinion, using one fact from each named source, and explaining how the facts support your opinion.

ANSWER KEY

Mail on the Move

GRADE 4 · 4.P.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts from the National Park Service, circle one fact from the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, and write N and S beside the sentence that brings facts from both sources together. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In your own words, explain how changing horses helped the mail move quickly. Name the source for this detail.	**The Smithsonian National Postal Museum explains that riders got fresh horses about every 10 to 15 miles, so tired horses could rest.**
2	Which source supports the claim that the route reached both Missouri and California? Name the source and the two cities.	**The National Park Service names St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California.**
3	Use one fact from each named source to explain why this route took planning.	**The National Park Service describes a route from Missouri to California, and the Smithsonian National Postal Museum says riders changed horses about every 10 to 15 miles. Many horse changes had to be planned along the route.**
4	A writer claims that a new way of sending messages helped end the Pony Express. Which source should the writer cite? Explain its evidence in your own words.	**The writer should cite the National Park Service. It says the service ended after a telegraph line linked the East and West in 1861.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I think a town in 1860 should have paid to send an urgent message by Pony Express. The National Park Service says mail could cross the route in about ten days, so the news could arrive sooner than mail that took weeks. The Smithsonian National Postal Museum says riders got fresh horses about every 10 to 15 miles. Those changes helped riders keep the urgent message moving.

Accept either opinion if the student supports it with an accurate fact from each named source and explains how the facts support the opinion. Accept clear paraphrases rather than requiring the passage's exact wording.