Threads of Change

Trace how industry connected regions, workers, and cities

8.C.10.1 "Explain the impact of the Industrial Revolution on American culture and its economy. Describe major technological improvements and inventions that contributed to industrial growth in the North..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three cause-and-effect links in the passage, circle the cause in each, and number the links 1 to 3 to trace how industrial growth changed American life.

From Cotton Field to Mill Town

1 In the early 1800s, a merchant in Lowell, Massachusetts, could watch cloth leave a mill and travel toward distant buyers. Water-powered machines spun thread and wove cloth faster than workers using hand tools at home. Improved steam engines powered factories and boats, while canals and railroads moved raw materials and finished goods more cheaply and quickly. Factories and transportation links attracted workers and businesses to Northern towns, turning some into crowded manufacturing centers. New jobs and store-bought goods changed how many Americans worked and shopped.

2 But the mills depended on cotton grown in the South. Eli Whitney's cotton gin removed seeds from short-staple cotton much faster than hand cleaning, making the crop more profitable. Plantation owners expanded cotton fields and forced more enslaved people to grow and pick the crop. Southern growers sold cotton to Northern textile mills, which turned it into cloth and earned profits from the supply. In New England mills, young women made up the main workforce. Some organized petitions and strikes against long hours and low pay, becoming leaders in efforts to improve working conditions.

3 Industrial growth also drew immigrants, especially from Ireland and Germany, to Northern cities. Many found work in factories or helped build railroads, adding labor that businesses needed. Some native-born Americans feared that immigrants would take jobs for lower wages, refuse to adopt local customs, or gain too much political power through voting. These fears fueled nativist movements, which sought to restrict immigrants' rights and influence. Workers and neighbors argued over whose labor built the cities and who should have a voice in them. Industrialization created opportunity, but its benefits and burdens were uneven.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did machines and transportation improvements help turn some Northern towns into crowded manufacturing centers?

2. Trace how the cotton gin affected both Southern plantations and Northern textile mills.

3. How did women's place in New England mills lead some of them to seek changes in working conditions?

4. Why did industrial growth lead to both a demand for immigrant labor and the rise of nativist movements?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 5- to 6-sentence letter to a Northern town council deciding whether to expand its mill district. Recommend one action that would help workers or newcomers, and connect at least two facts from the passage to explain how the South, Northern mills, and growing towns affect one another.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · 8.C.10.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three cause-and-effect links in the passage, circle the cause in each, and number the links 1 to 3 to trace how industrial growth changed American life. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did machines and transportation improvements help turn some Northern towns into crowded manufacturing centers?	**Machines made cloth faster, while canals and railroads moved supplies and goods more cheaply and quickly. Factories and transportation links then attracted workers and businesses.**
2	Trace how the cotton gin affected both Southern plantations and Northern textile mills.	**The gin made cotton more profitable, so plantation owners expanded fields and forced more enslaved people to produce it. Northern mills bought Southern cotton and made profitable cloth.**
3	How did women's place in New England mills lead some of them to seek changes in working conditions?	**Young women were the main mill workforce. Some responded to long hours and low pay by organizing petitions and strikes.**
4	Why did industrial growth lead to both a demand for immigrant labor and the rise of nativist movements?	**Factories and railroad building needed workers, and immigrants filled those jobs. Some native-born Americans feared competition for jobs, differences in customs, and immigrants' political influence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear council members, expand the mill district only if you require shorter workdays and fair pay. Cotton grown by enslaved people in the South feeds Northern mills, so more cloth production could increase demand for that cotton. Railroads could carry the cloth to buyers and attract more people to our town. Young women in the mills have protested unfair hours, and their concerns should guide the new rules. Immigrants also help build railroads and work in factories, so they should have a voice in town decisions.

Accept other accurate cause-and-effect chains supported by the passage. For the letter, look for a specific recommendation and connected explanations, not just a list of facts.