Markets on the Move

Trace how trade reshaped medieval towns.

AWH.C.10.5.D "Explain the emergence of a modern economy, the growth of commerce, towns, and a merchant class."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline changes that made trade easier, then circle their effects on towns and merchants.

From Farms to Fairs

1. In western Europe between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, improved farming methods helped many farms produce more food. Not every family needed to farm full time, so some people made cloth, worked metal, or sold food in growing towns. Farmers brought extra grain to town markets and bought tools or cloth with their earnings. As these exchanges became regular, towns gained customers, workers, and places to trade.

2. Consider the fairs held in Champagne, a region of France. Traders traveled there with wool cloth from northern Europe and goods such as spices brought from farther east. Large fairs connected sellers who might never meet in a local market. Coins made prices easier to compare than direct swaps. Some merchants used written promises to pay later, reducing the need to carry large amounts of money on dangerous roads. Trade could now reach beyond nearby towns.

3. People who earned a living by organizing trade formed a growing merchant class. Merchants paid for transport, rented stalls, and sometimes joined partnerships to share costs and risks. In some towns, wealthy merchants helped govern and won charters granting local rights from rulers. Their investments supported shops, warehouses, and more jobs. These changes did not create today's economy overnight, but they helped build one with specialized work, wider markets, and more money-based exchange.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did larger harvests help towns grow?

2. Why did the Champagne fairs expand trade beyond local markets?

3. How did coins and written promises make trade easier?

4. How did merchants affect both town economies and town government?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A town near a newly repaired mountain pass has a large grain surplus, but travelers fear theft. In four or five sentences, explain how the town could develop trade, jobs, and a merchant class, and propose a response to the danger.

ANSWER KEY

Markets on the Move

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.10.5.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline changes that made trade easier, then circle their effects on towns and merchants. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did larger harvests help towns grow?	**Extra food let some people work outside farming, while farmers sold surplus grain and bought goods in town markets.**
2	Why did the Champagne fairs expand trade beyond local markets?	**They brought together traders and goods from different regions, connecting sellers who might not meet locally.**
3	How did coins and written promises make trade easier?	**Coins made prices easier to compare, and written promises let merchants trade without carrying as much money on dangerous roads.**
4	How did merchants affect both town economies and town government?	**Their investments supported shops, warehouses, and jobs; in some towns, wealthy merchants helped govern and won local rights.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Farmers could sell their extra grain to traders crossing the repaired pass. Some townspeople could bake bread or build carts, creating jobs beyond farming. Merchants could organize shipments to other regions and earn income by linking buyers with sellers. To address theft, traders could pay for guards and travel together. As trade grows, merchants might fund a covered market where more people can buy and sell goods.

Accept other plausible cause-and-effect explanations grounded in the passage. For Part 3, look for a link from surplus and access to trade, jobs, and merchants, plus a workable response to theft.