Stops That Matter

Weigh the benefits and costs of Oklahoma tourism

OKH.C.8.2.E "Evaluate the impact of tourism as an industry, boosted by the construction of Route 66, state parks, and museums."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number Route 66, state parks, and the museum when each first appears, underline one way each brings money or jobs, and circle one cost or limit in each paragraph.

More Than a Road Trip

1 When U.S. Route 66 was established in 1926, it linked Oklahoma towns to a cross-country stream of travelers. Road improvements over the following decades made long trips by car more practical. A family passing through might buy fuel in a town, eat at a diner, and spend the night at a motel. Each stop brought revenue to local businesses and supported jobs, including work for people who did not own tourist attractions. Yet a busy highway did not help every business equally. Shops on the route were easier to reach than those on distant streets, and traffic alone did not guarantee a profitable business.

2 State parks gave some travelers a reason to stay longer instead of simply driving across Oklahoma. At a park, visitors could camp, hike, or swim, then buy groceries, supplies, or meals in nearby communities. These purchases could spread tourism income beyond towns directly on Route 66. Parks also required staff, roads, restrooms, and upkeep, creating jobs but demanding public funding. Heavy use could wear down trails and increase litter. A park's economic value, then, depended partly on whether communities could attract visitors while protecting the place they came to enjoy.

3 The Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton offers another reason to stop: it tells the story of travel along the highway. A museum visit might lead a traveler to eat lunch or stay overnight nearby, adding spending beyond the price of admission. Museums can also preserve stories and objects that help visitors understand Oklahoma's past. But exhibits, buildings, and staff cost money, and visitors may spend little outside a museum if nearby businesses are closed or hard to find. Later interstate highways drew some traffic away from older Route 66 businesses, so parks and museums could help towns attract visitors deliberately rather than rely on passing cars.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could Route 66 support jobs in an Oklahoma town, and why might some businesses gain less than others?

2. How could state parks spread tourism income beyond Route 66 towns? Identify one cost that communities would need to weigh.

3. How might the museum in Clinton benefit nearby businesses, and what could keep that benefit small?

4. After interstates drew some traffic away from Route 66, why might a town invest in a park or museum instead of relying only on passing cars? Include one drawback.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Propose one new, specific action that links two of these: Route 66, a state park, or a museum. In four or five sentences, evaluate how it might affect visitor spending and jobs, identify one cost or risk, and explain whether you recommend it.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.8.2.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number Route 66, state parks, and the museum when each first appears, underline one way each brings money or jobs, and circle one cost or limit in each paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could Route 66 support jobs in an Oklahoma town, and why might some businesses gain less than others?	**Travelers could spend money at fuel stops, diners, and motels, supporting jobs. Businesses away from the route were harder for travelers to reach.**
2	How could state parks spread tourism income beyond Route 66 towns? Identify one cost that communities would need to weigh.	**Park visitors could buy groceries, supplies, or meals in nearby communities. Park upkeep requires public funding.**
3	How might the museum in Clinton benefit nearby businesses, and what could keep that benefit small?	**Museum visitors might eat or stay overnight nearby. If local businesses are closed or hard to find, visitors may spend little outside the museum.**
4	After interstates drew some traffic away from Route 66, why might a town invest in a park or museum instead of relying only on passing cars? Include one drawback.	**A park or museum could give travelers a reason to stop and spend money despite reduced highway traffic. It would also cost money to operate or maintain.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would add a weekend shuttle from a Route 66 stop to a state park, with a pickup at local restaurants. Visitors might buy meals before the trip and supplies for hiking, supporting restaurant and store jobs. Running the shuttle would cost money, and low ridership could make it a poor investment. I recommend testing it on busy weekends first, then continuing only if visitor spending justifies the cost.

Accept other passage-supported benefits and limits, including park jobs, trail damage, museum operating costs, and reduced traffic on older Route 66 businesses. For the open task, look for a specific new action linking two tourism resources and a reasoned judgment that weighs economic effects against a cost or risk.