From Farms to Factories

How industrial growth changed work and city life

USH.C.2.1.A "Explain how the United States was transformed from an agrarian to an increasingly industrial, urbanized society and how this transformation created both new economic opportunities, as well as societal problems."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show how farm products became part of an urban industry, circle two economic opportunities, and number two social problems 1 and 2.

Cattle, Railcars, and Chicago

1 In 1885, a farmer in Iowa could raise cattle without ever seeing the people who ate the beef. Railroads carried cattle to Chicago, where large stockyards and packinghouses brought animals, workers, and machines together. Packinghouses divided meat processing into repeated tasks, so crews could prepare large amounts quickly. Refrigerated railcars then took chilled beef to distant markets. This system linked rural ranches and farms to city factories and customers. It also shifted some work once done by local butchers into giant urban businesses. As rail lines spread, Chicago grew into a major center for trade and industry.

2 Industrial growth drew people toward Chicago. Packinghouses offered regular cash wages to some people who had worked on farms, while immigrants also came seeking jobs. The wages could help families buy food, rent homes, and save money. Railroads, builders, and shops hired workers to serve the growing city, creating opportunities beyond meatpacking. Yet a steady paycheck was not guaranteed: employers could cut hours or fire workers when business slowed. Jobs also changed the rhythm of daily life. Instead of planning work around seasons and daylight, many laborers followed a factory schedule set by a supervisor.

3 The crowded city brought problems that a larger paycheck did not solve. Many workers lived in packed neighborhoods near the stockyards, where housing could be cramped and sanitation poor. Waste from packinghouses polluted nearby land and waterways. Inside plants, sharp tools, slippery floors, and fast-paced work put employees at risk of injury. Workers formed unions and demanded safer conditions and better pay, though employers often resisted. Chicago's growth therefore showed two sides of the same transformation: industry connected rural producers to national markets and created urban jobs, but it also concentrated danger, pollution, and unequal power in the city.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did railroads and packinghouses change the path from rural cattle to customers, and why did that help Chicago grow as an industrial center?

2. How did meatpacking's growth create economic opportunities beyond jobs inside the packinghouses?

3. How did Chicago's growth create or worsen problems for families living near the stockyards?

4. How did industrial work change workers' daily lives, and what problem led some workers to organize?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a shoe factory opens near a farming town in 1895. In 5 to 6 sentences, explain how it might change work and where people live, identify one economic opportunity and one social problem, and propose a realistic response to the problem.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.2.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show how farm products became part of an urban industry, circle two economic opportunities, and number two social problems 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did railroads and packinghouses change the path from rural cattle to customers, and why did that help Chicago grow as an industrial center?	**Railroads brought cattle to Chicago for processing in large packinghouses. Refrigerated railcars carried the beef to distant customers, making Chicago a center for processing and trade.**
2	How did meatpacking's growth create economic opportunities beyond jobs inside the packinghouses?	**Railroads, builders, and shops hired workers to serve the growing city.**
3	How did Chicago's growth create or worsen problems for families living near the stockyards?	**As workers moved to Chicago, nearby neighborhoods became crowded, housing could be cramped, and sanitation was poor. Packinghouse waste also polluted the area.**
4	How did industrial work change workers' daily lives, and what problem led some workers to organize?	**Many workers followed a supervisor's factory schedule instead of working around seasons and daylight. Injury risks and demands for better pay led some to form unions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1895, a shoe factory opens beside a farming town's new railroad stop. Young adults who might have stayed on farms move closer to the factory for paid work. The factory can send finished shoes to buyers in other cities, bringing money into town. As more workers arrive, rents rise and several families may have to share small rooms. Town leaders could work with builders to add more affordable homes. The factory brings new choices, but the town must plan for the people those jobs attract.

Accept other passage-supported causal links in Parts 1 and 2. For Part 3, look for a plausible connection between industrial work and settlement, a distinct opportunity and problem, and a response that addresses the stated problem.