Rebuilding by Rail

Trace how Marshall Plan aid affected Western Europe's recovery.

USH.C.6.1.A "Analyze the effect of massive aid given to Western Europe under the Marshall Plan on the rebuilding of Europe."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways aid met immediate needs, circle two ways it supported longer-term rebuilding, and write 1 beside a sentence that identifies another cause of recovery.

From Shipments to Recovery

1 In 1947, a freight train could not rebuild a factory if its tracks, engines, or fuel were missing. Across Western Europe, war damage and shortages slowed production and trade. The United States responded with the Marshall Plan, formally the European Recovery Program, which delivered about $13 billion in aid from 1948 to 1952. Much of the aid came as grants rather than loans. It helped countries buy food, fuel, raw materials, and machinery, often from abroad. Food and fuel addressed urgent needs, while imported materials and equipment helped factories begin producing more goods.

2 Consider a port waiting for coal and replacement equipment. Marshall Plan funds could pay for imports when a country lacked enough dollars to buy them. Coal could power trains that carried steel; machinery could help factories turn that steel into tools and building supplies. Those supplies, in turn, could repair transport links and workplaces. Aid also encouraged participating countries to coordinate purchases and reduce barriers to trade with one another. As shipments and trade moved more reliably, businesses could hire workers and sell goods. This chain of effects made rebuilding less dependent on emergency shipments alone.

3 The plan did not rebuild Western Europe by itself. Europeans repaired roads and plants, changed economic policies, and supplied most of the labor and investment. Recovery had begun in some places before the first aid shipments arrived. Still, the aid eased shortages at a crucial time and gave governments more room to invest in long-term recovery. The Soviet Union rejected participation and pressed countries under its influence to stay out, so this assistance did not reach Eastern Europe through the plan. By the early 1950s, Western European production and trade had risen sharply, but the gains came from both outside aid and local efforts.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did food and fuel aid support recovery differently from machinery and raw materials?

2. Trace how imported coal could lead to repairs beyond the port.

3. Why could coordination among participating countries make aid more effective than separate shipments alone?

4. Why is it inaccurate to say the Marshall Plan alone caused Western Europe's recovery?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a Western European government received Marshall Plan food and fuel but no machinery or raw materials. In one paragraph, predict one immediate benefit and two likely limits on rebuilding, then explain how local efforts might reduce one limit.

ANSWER KEY

Rebuilding by Rail

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.6.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways aid met immediate needs, circle two ways it supported longer-term rebuilding, and write 1 beside a sentence that identifies another cause of recovery. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did food and fuel aid support recovery differently from machinery and raw materials?	**Food and fuel met urgent needs, while machinery and raw materials helped factories increase production.**
2	Trace how imported coal could lead to repairs beyond the port.	**Coal could power trains carrying steel. Factories could turn the steel into tools and building supplies used to repair transport links and workplaces.**
3	Why could coordination among participating countries make aid more effective than separate shipments alone?	**Coordinated purchases and fewer trade barriers could make shipments and trade more reliable, allowing businesses to hire workers and sell goods.**
4	Why is it inaccurate to say the Marshall Plan alone caused Western Europe's recovery?	**Some recovery began before aid arrived, and Europeans supplied labor and investment, made repairs, and changed economic policies.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Food and fuel would ease hunger and help keep trains and factories running in the short term. Yet without imported machinery, damaged factories might take longer to increase output. Without raw materials, even working factories could struggle to make tools and building supplies, slowing repairs to rail lines and workplaces. Local workers and governments could repair tracks and change policies to make trade easier, but they would still need enough supplies to keep production growing. Aid would help, but its narrower form would limit recovery.

Accept other passage-supported chains of effects. For Part 3, look for a clear distinction between immediate relief and longer-term production, plus a realistic role for local efforts.