

Tracks and Crops

How farming and railroads helped Texas businesses grow

4.10.C “describe the development of the free enterprise system in Texas such as the growth of cash crops by early colonists and the railroad boom.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about cash crops and two details about railroads, then number the details that show how each change helped people sell goods or earn money.

Business Grows in Texas

- ① In the 1820s, many Anglo-American colonists came to Mexican Texas to farm. Families grew corn and vegetables for food, but they also planted cotton. Cotton was a cash crop, a crop grown mainly to sell for money. Farmers could use the money to buy tools, cloth, or land. When a crop had buyers, farmers had a reason to grow more of it.
- ② After the Civil War, railroads began linking Texas towns to faraway markets. Railroad companies laid tracks, and people invested money, worked jobs, and opened businesses near depots. A farmer could send cotton by train to a larger market instead of hauling it slowly by wagon. Stores and towns grew where trains stopped because goods and customers could arrive more easily.
- ③ These changes helped Texas develop a free enterprise system. In this system, people can own farms or businesses, choose what to make or sell, and try to earn profits. Cotton growers responded to buyers who wanted cotton. Railroad builders and shop owners saw chances to serve travelers and move goods. Their choices connected producers, workers, and customers across Texas.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did farmers have a reason to grow more cotton?

2 How did a railroad change the way a farmer could get cotton to a market?

3 Name two ways the railroad boom created business or work opportunities in Texas.

4 How did cash crops and railroads work together to help the free enterprise system grow in Texas?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine a railroad has just reached your Texas town. Write 3 or 4 sentences about a business you would start, what you would sell, and how the railroad could help you earn a profit.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details about cash crops and two details about railroads, then number the details that show how each change helped people sell goods or earn money. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did farmers have a reason to grow more cotton?	Cotton had buyers, so farmers could sell it for money.
2	How did a railroad change the way a farmer could get cotton to a market?	A farmer could send cotton by train to a larger market instead of hauling it slowly by wagon.
3	Name two ways the railroad boom created business or work opportunities in Texas.	People could invest in railroad companies, work laying tracks, or open businesses near depots.
4	How did cash crops and railroads work together to help the free enterprise system grow in Texas?	Farmers grew cotton to sell for money, and railroads helped move cotton and other goods to more customers and markets.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would open a store near the depot. I would sell cloth and tools that families need. Trains would bring the goods to my store and bring customers to town. If many people buy my goods, I could earn a profit.

Accept answers that accurately connect cotton or another cash crop to selling for money and railroads to moving goods, reaching markets, jobs, or new businesses. For the open response, accept a reasonable business idea that explains how railroad access could help it make a profit.