

Cities Under Pressure

Trace how growing cities made differences turn into conflicts.

8.23.B “explain how urbanization contributed to conflicts resulting from differences in religion, social class, and political beliefs;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that explain how city growth contributed to conflict, then write R, S, or P beside each detail for religious, social-class, or political conflict.

Conflict in Growing Cities

- ① During the 1800s, factories and railroads drew thousands of people into growing cities in the United States and Europe. Urbanization, the rapid growth of cities, placed wealthy owners, skilled workers, poor laborers, and new immigrants in crowded neighborhoods. Factory owners often lived in cleaner districts, while many workers rented cramped rooms near mills. Seeing these unequal conditions every day made differences in social class more visible. Workers organized for higher wages and shorter hours, while many owners resisted because reforms could reduce profits.
- ② Cities also brought religious groups into close contact. In many American cities, Irish Catholic immigrants settled near Protestant residents whose families had arrived earlier. Catholic parishes offered immigrants worship, schools, and mutual aid, but some Protestant nativists feared Catholic influence in politics. Nativist groups spread anti-Catholic claims and sometimes attacked Catholic churches or neighborhoods. Competition for jobs and housing added to the tension. Urban crowding did not create religious differences, but it made disagreements and prejudice easier to organize into open conflict.
- ③ Urban life also sharpened political disagreements. Some workers supported labor parties, unions, and laws that would regulate factories. Many business leaders favored limited government and argued that owners should control their businesses. In cities, workers could meet, print newspapers, and hold large demonstrations. Strikes sometimes led to clashes with police or troops when officials sided with employers or feared disorder. Thus, urbanization concentrated people with opposing beliefs, giving each side places to organize and making social, religious, and political conflicts more likely.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did urbanization make differences in social class more visible and more likely to cause conflict?

2 How did growing cities contribute to conflict between Irish Catholic immigrants and some Protestant nativists?

3 What political beliefs divided workers from many business leaders, and how did city life help each side act on those beliefs?

4 What was one way urbanization contributed to all three types of conflict described in the passage?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a rapidly growing 1800s city. In 3 or 4 sentences, describe two groups with different social classes, religious beliefs, or political beliefs, then explain how one feature of city life helps cause a conflict between them.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that explain how city growth contributed to conflict, then write R, S, or P beside each detail for religious, social-class, or political conflict. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did urbanization make differences in social class more visible and more likely to cause conflict?	It placed wealthy owners and poor workers in the same growing cities, where unequal housing and working conditions were easy to see. Workers organized for reforms, while many owners resisted them.
2	How did growing cities contribute to conflict between Irish Catholic immigrants and some Protestant nativists?	Cities brought the groups into close contact and concentrated Catholic parishes and Protestant nativists. Anti-Catholic prejudice, plus competition for jobs and housing, helped create conflict.
3	What political beliefs divided workers from many business leaders, and how did city life help each side act on those beliefs?	Workers supported unions, labor parties, and factory regulations, while many business leaders favored limited government and owner control. Cities gave people places to meet, print newspapers, and hold demonstrations.
4	What was one way urbanization contributed to all three types of conflict described in the passage?	Urbanization concentrated people with different backgrounds and beliefs in the same places, making disagreements more visible and giving groups ways to organize.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the growing city of Riverton, mill owners lived in a clean hill district, while mill workers crowded into rooms near the factories. Workers met after shifts to demand safer machines and higher pay, but owners opposed rules that would raise costs. Because the city concentrated these groups and gave workers places to organize, their class differences led to a strike.

Accept answers that identify a specific difference between groups and explain a city condition, such as crowding, unequal neighborhoods, job competition, or places to organize. The response should show a cause-and-effect link between urbanization and conflict.