Canal Change Makers

Trace what happened, how it happened, and why it mattered.

5.RI.1.B "Summarize events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in historical, scientific, or technical texts, including what happened, how, and why."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that tell what happened, circle details that explain how the canal was built, and number 1, 2, 3 beside events in time order. These marks will help you summarize the canal's story.

Building the Erie Canal

1 In 1817, workers in New York began building the Erie Canal, a waterway that would connect the Hudson River to Lake Erie. At that time, moving goods west of the Appalachian Mountains was slow and costly. Farmers could send crops by wagon, but rough roads and long trips made food expensive in eastern cities and towns.

2 Thousands of laborers dug the 363-mile route with shovels, picks, and wheelbarrows. Engineers planned locks, which are sections with gates that raise or lower boats between different water levels. Workers also built aqueducts, bridges that carried the canal over rivers. Disease, accidents, and hard physical work made construction dangerous, yet crews continued for eight years until it was finished.

3 The canal opened in 1825. Boats could carry heavy loads more cheaply than wagons, so goods such as flour, lumber, and tools traveled faster between inland farms and eastern markets. The canal helped New York City grow into a major trading center. It also encouraged people and businesses to move west because travel and shipping became easier.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What problem did the Erie Canal help solve? Summarize the problem and the canal's solution in 1 or 2 sentences.

2. How did workers and engineers build the canal? Include two details that show the work involved.

3. Why were locks and aqueducts important to the canal project?

4. Summarize two effects of the canal after it opened, and explain why those effects happened.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 3-sentence summary of the Erie Canal story in 45 to 60 words. Tell what happened, how the canal was built, and why it changed life and trade.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · 5.RI.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that tell what happened, circle details that explain how the canal was built, and number 1, 2, 3 beside events in time order. These marks will help you summarize the canal's story. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What problem did the Erie Canal help solve? Summarize the problem and the canal's solution in 1 or 2 sentences.	**Moving goods between inland farms and eastern cities was slow and costly because wagons traveled on rough roads. The canal gave boats a cheaper, faster route for carrying heavy loads.**
2	How did workers and engineers build the canal? Include two details that show the work involved.	**Laborers dug the route with shovels, picks, and wheelbarrows. Engineers planned locks to move boats between water levels, and workers built aqueducts over rivers.**
3	Why were locks and aqueducts important to the canal project?	**Locks raised or lowered boats between different water levels, and aqueducts carried the canal over rivers.**
4	Summarize two effects of the canal after it opened, and explain why those effects happened.	**Goods traveled faster and more cheaply because boats could carry heavy loads better than wagons. New York City grew as a trading center, and more people and businesses moved west because travel and shipping became easier.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

New York built the Erie Canal to lower the cost of moving goods between inland farms and eastern cities. Laborers dug the route, while engineers designed locks and aqueducts so boats could cross changes in water level and rivers. When the canal opened, cheaper shipping helped trade, New York City, and westward movement grow.

Accept summaries that accurately include the need for a cheaper route, key construction methods, and effects after the canal opened. Students may use different wording and may choose different accurate details from the passage.