Name _____ Date _____

Northern Industry and Southern Cotton: Two Economies Before the Civil War

Directions: Read the passage and study the table comparing the two economies. Then answer each question.

Northern Industry and Southern Cotton

Factories and Fields

In the first half of the 1800s, the United States grew richer, but its two main regions grew rich in different ways. The free states of the North built an economy based more and more on factories, trade and cities. The slave states of the South built an economy based on farming, above all on cotton grown by enslaved people.

In the North, the change began with machines. By the 1820s, companies in New England were building large textile mills that used the power of rivers to run machines for spinning and weaving cotton into cloth. In Lowell, Massachusetts, many of the first mill workers were young women from New England farms. They earned wages, and their workdays often lasted 12 to 14 hours. Later, more of the workers were immigrants. Millions of newcomers arrived from Ireland and Germany in the 1840s and 1850s, and most settled in the North, where they found work in mills, in shops and on farms.

Northern farms changed too. Family farms in the Midwest grew wheat and corn to feed the growing cities. Canals and, later, railroads carried crops east and factory goods west. By 1860, most of the nation's railroad track ran through the North. Most Northern workers were free and earned wages, though many worked long hours for low pay.

The South took a different path. In 1793, Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, a machine that quickly pulled the seeds out of cotton. Growing cotton became far more profitable. Planters, the owners of large farms called plantations, spread cotton farming west into Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. By 1860, the South supplied about two-thirds of all the cotton grown in the world, and cotton brought in more money than every other American export put together.

Cotton depended on the forced labor of enslaved people. By 1860, nearly 4 million people were enslaved in the United States, almost all of them in the South. Historians estimate that about one million enslaved people were forced to move from older states such as Virginia and Maryland to the new cotton lands, many of them sold away from their families. Planters' wealth lay mostly in land and in enslaved people, whom the law treated as property. Yet most white Southerners did not enslave anyone. In 1860, about one in four white Southern families did, and most white families worked small farms.

The two economies were tied together. Mills in the North and in Britain turned Southern cotton into cloth. Northern merchants, banks and shipping companies made money from the cotton trade, and the South bought many of its tools and other goods from the North. Still, the differences grew. By 1860, the North had far more factories, railroads and

people, while the South remained a land of farms.

Comparing the Northern and Southern economies in the 1850s

Feature	North	South
Main ways of making a living	Factories, trade and family farms	Farming, above all cotton grown on plantations
Workers	Mostly free workers paid wages, including many immigrants	Enslaved people did most of the work on plantations; most white families worked small farms
Transportation	Canals and most of the nation's railroads	Fewer railroads; rivers carried crops to ports
Cities	Many large, fast-growing cities	Fewer large cities
Trade	Sold factory goods across the country	Sold cotton to textile mills in the North and in Britain

1. In what order does the passage present its information about the North and the South?

A. It describes the North first, then the South, and ends by showing how the two were linked.

B. It follows one family as it moves from a Southern farm to a Northern city.

C. It starts with the Civil War and then goes back to explain, step by step, how the war began.

D. It gives the arguments for and against slavery and then asks the reader to decide who was right.

2. According to the passage, what made growing cotton far more profitable after 1793?

A. Congress began paying Southern farmers to grow more cotton.

B. Northern mills stopped buying cloth from Britain.

C. New railroads were built across the whole South.

D. A new machine quickly pulled the seeds out of cotton.

3. What was one effect of the spread of cotton farming on enslaved people, according to the passage?

A. Many moved north to take paying jobs in the mills of Lowell.

B. Most were set free, because the new machines now did the field work.

C. About one million were forced to move to new cotton lands.

D. They began to earn wages for planting and picking cotton.

4. Which word bank terms belong in these two sentences about work in the North and the South?

Word bank
mills • banks • railroads • plantations • canals

In Lowell, many of the first workers in the textile _____ were young women from New England farms. In the South, enslaved people did most of the work on large farms called _____.

5. How does the table help a reader compare the Northern and Southern economies?

A. It lists the events of the 1850s in the order in which they happened.

B. It explains the reasons the Civil War began and how it ended.

C. It gives the exact number of factories and railroads in each state.

D. It places the North and the South side by side for each feature.

6. According to the table, how did transportation in the South differ from transportation in the North?

A. It had fewer railroads and used rivers to carry crops.

B. It built more canals than the North and used them for cotton.

C. It sent all of its goods to the North by wagon road.

D. It had most of the nation's railroads and very few rivers.

7. Match each description to North, South or Both regions. Choose Both regions only when the passage shows it was true of the North and the South.

Write the letter of the matching answer on each line.

1. _____ Grew most of the world's cotton by 1860
2. _____ Had farms that grew crops to sell
3. _____ Built large textile mills that ran on river power

A. South

B. North

C. Neither region

D. Both regions

8. Near its end, the passage sums up in one sentence how far apart the two regions had grown by 1860. Which sentence is it?

A. "Northern farms changed too."

B. "Mills in the North and in Britain turned Southern cotton into cloth."

C. "The two economies were tied together."

D. "By 1860, the North had far more factories, railroads and people, while the South remained a land of farms."

9. The passage says "The two economies were tied together." Which detail best explains what tied them?

A. The South built most of the railroads that ran through the North.

B. Both regions had about the same number of large, growing cities.

C. Both regions used enslaved workers in their mills and factories.

D. Northern and British mills turned Southern cotton into cloth.

10. Pick the two choices that are true of Northern workers in the 1850s, based on the passage and the table.

- ☐ A. Most lived and worked on cotton plantations.
- ☐ B. Most were free and earned wages.
- ☐ C. Many were immigrants from Ireland and Germany.
- ☐ D. Most were planters who owned large farms.
- ☐ E. Most were enslaved people who worked in the mills.