New Places to Learn

Education and community life in Reconstruction Alabama

SS24.4.15b "Describe the effects of Reconstruction on education and social institutions in Alabama."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two changes to education, circle two ways Black community institutions helped people, and write 1 and 2 beside two different challenges that made these changes harder.

Schools and Community Life After the War

1 In 1865, the Civil War ended, and Alabama began Reconstruction. Before the war, Alabama's public schools served few children, and enslaved people were often forbidden to learn to read. Now, many freed Black families wanted schools. They helped open classrooms in churches and other buildings. The Freedmen's Bureau, a federal agency, also helped support schools for formerly enslaved people. Children and adults came to learn new skills.

2 Alabama's 1868 constitution called for a statewide public school system. This meant the state took on a larger role in children's education. More schools opened for Black children and white children, though they attended separate schools. There were not enough school buildings, books, or teachers for everyone. Some white Alabamians fought against the new schools. Even with these problems, more children had a chance to learn.

3 Reconstruction changed places where people met and worked together, too. Freed Black Alabamians formed churches of their own. A church could be a place to worship, hold classes, and plan ways to help neighbors. Black communities also built groups that helped people in need. These new institutions gave families more control over community life, but threats and violence from opponents made their work difficult.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Alabama's 1868 constitution change the state's role in education?

2. How did freed Black families and the Freedmen's Bureau help change access to education?

3. How did churches formed by freed Black Alabamians affect community life?

4. What made it harder for new schools and Black community institutions to do their work?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a child in a freed Black family in Alabama during Reconstruction. Write a three-sentence note from that child's viewpoint describing one change in schooling, one change in a community institution, and how both changes might affect the child's neighbors.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 4 · SS24.4.15b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two changes to education, circle two ways Black community institutions helped people, and write 1 and 2 beside two different challenges that made these changes harder. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Alabama's 1868 constitution change the state's role in education?	**It called for a statewide public school system, giving the state a larger role in children's education.**
2	How did freed Black families and the Freedmen's Bureau help change access to education?	**Families helped open classrooms, and the Freedmen's Bureau helped support schools for formerly enslaved people.**
3	How did churches formed by freed Black Alabamians affect community life?	**They gave people places to worship, hold classes, and plan ways to help neighbors.**
4	What made it harder for new schools and Black community institutions to do their work?	**Schools lacked buildings, books, and teachers and faced opposition. Threats and violence made the work of Black community institutions difficult.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A new school has opened near us, so more children may get to learn to read. Our church holds meetings where families plan how to help their neighbors. The school and church give us more ways to learn and work together, even though some people oppose them.

Accept responses that accurately describe changes in schooling and Black community institutions, including their benefits and limits. The note should have three sentences in the child's voice and explain an effect on neighbors.