Changing Alabama

Work, rights, and daily life in the late 1800s

SS24.4.16 "Describe how political and social changes of the late 1870s to 1900 affected Black and white Alabamians, including the introduction of Jim Crow laws, sharecropping, voting restrictions, and violence. 16a Describe how industry, trade..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two changes in work or trade, circle two limits on Black people's rights, and write 1 and 2 beside two effects these changes had on people's lives.

New Work, Unequal Rules

1. After the Civil War, Alabama's farms still grew cotton, but change was coming. In the late 1800s, workers mined coal and iron near Birmingham. Factories turned these materials into steel. Railroads carried farm crops and metal goods to other towns and states. New jobs drew people to growing towns. Yet many families stayed on farms, and the money from trade did not reach everyone equally.

2. On many farms, Black and white families worked as sharecroppers. They farmed land owned by someone else and paid with a share of their crop. When crop prices fell or store bills grew, families could end the year in debt. In the 1890s, some struggling farmers joined the Populist movement. They asked for changes that could help farmers earn a fairer living. Some Black and white farmers worked together, but racism often divided them.

3. At the same time, Alabama's leaders passed Jim Crow laws that separated Black and white people in public places, including railroad cars. White people kept better access to power and many public services. Voting rules, threats, and violence blocked many Black Alabamians from voting. Some white farmers also struggled with debt, but they were not barred from voting because of their race. These changes shaped who could earn money, travel freely, and help choose leaders.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did mining and railroads change work and trade in Alabama?

2. How could sharecropping affect both Black and white farm families?

3. How did Jim Crow laws and voting limits affect Black Alabamians differently from white Alabamians?

4. What brought some Black and white farmers together in the Populist movement, and what divided them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence letter from an Alabama resident in the 1890s to a cousin in another state. Explain how two changes in the passage affect your resident, and include one difference in how Black and white Alabamians experienced change.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 4 · SS24.4.16

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two changes in work or trade, circle two limits on Black people's rights, and write 1 and 2 beside two effects these changes had on people's lives. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did mining and railroads change work and trade in Alabama?	**Mining provided coal and iron for factories, while railroads carried crops and metal goods to other places. These changes also drew workers to growing towns.**
2	How could sharecropping affect both Black and white farm families?	**Both Black and white sharecroppers paid landowners with part of their crops. Falling crop prices or growing store bills could leave their families in debt.**
3	How did Jim Crow laws and voting limits affect Black Alabamians differently from white Alabamians?	**Jim Crow laws separated Black people from white people in public places, including railroad cars. Voting rules, threats, and violence blocked many Black Alabamians from voting, while white farmers were not barred because of their race.**
4	What brought some Black and white farmers together in the Populist movement, and what divided them?	**Struggling farmers wanted changes that could help them earn a fairer living. Racism often divided Black and white farmers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Cousin, I am a Black sharecropper in Alabama. Railroads carry cotton to other towns, but my family still gives part of our crop to the landowner. Jim Crow laws make us ride in separate train cars, and threats keep many Black neighbors from voting. White sharecroppers can owe money too, but they are not blocked from voting because of their race.

Accept other passage-based examples of economic change and unequal treatment. The letter should connect two changes to the resident's life and accurately compare an experience of Black and white Alabamians.