Building New Paths

Education and enterprise in Black Alabama

SS24.AS.15b "Explain the role of individuals and communities in helping to expand educational and entrepreneurial opportunities for Black Alabamians at the turn of the twentieth century."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline people or groups who help, circle what they do, and number two places where their actions create opportunities to learn or earn a living.

From Classrooms to Businesses

1. In 1881, a new school for Black students opened in Tuskegee, Alabama, in borrowed church space. Its start depended on more than one famous leader. Lewis Adams, a formerly enslaved community leader, pressed for a school and helped bring Booker T. Washington to Tuskegee as its first principal. Washington organized classes and sought support, while teacher Olivia Davidson helped raise funds and develop the school. Families sent students even though segregation sharply limited their choices. Their combined efforts turned a local demand for schooling into Tuskegee Institute, a place where students could study academic subjects and learn useful trades.

2. Education at Tuskegee reached beyond the classroom. Students learned trades, including brickmaking, and helped construct campus buildings. The buildings gave the school more room, while the work gave students skills they could use to earn a living. In 1896, scientist George Washington Carver joined Tuskegee to teach agriculture. A decade later, an agricultural wagon carried lessons to farmers who could not regularly visit the campus. Carver and other educators demonstrated ways to improve soil and grow crops. Farmers could try these methods on their own land, increasing their chances to earn income in a difficult economy.

3. Learning a skill did not erase the barriers Black Alabamians faced when starting businesses. Segregation and unfair access to credit restricted where people could work and how they could borrow money. Washington responded in part by founding the National Negro Business League in 1900. Through its meetings and local chapters, Black business owners shared advice, made contacts, and drew attention to their enterprises. A Tuskegee-trained farmer or craft worker still needed customers, tools, and capital. Community networks could help people find partners and buyers, linking education to entrepreneurship even when discrimination blocked many paths.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Lewis Adams and Olivia Davidson each help turn the demand for schooling into an educational opportunity?

2. How did students' work on campus expand both the school's capacity and the students' opportunities?

3. How did Carver and other educators help farmers who could not regularly visit Tuskegee?

4. How could the National Negro Business League help a Tuskegee-trained worker become a business owner?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine an Alabama town around 1905. Write one paragraph proposing a partnership between a Black school and community members that would expand learning and business opportunities. Explain what at least two partners would do and one barrier they would face.

ANSWER KEY

Building New Paths

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.AS.15b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline people or groups who help, circle what they do, and number two places where their actions create opportunities to learn or earn a living. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Lewis Adams and Olivia Davidson each help turn the demand for schooling into an educational opportunity?	**Adams pressed for a school and helped bring Washington to Tuskegee. Davidson helped raise funds and develop the school.**
2	How did students' work on campus expand both the school's capacity and the students' opportunities?	**Students helped construct buildings that gave the school more room, while practicing trades they could use to earn a living.**
3	How did Carver and other educators help farmers who could not regularly visit Tuskegee?	**They took lessons to farmers by wagon and demonstrated methods for improving soil and growing crops that farmers could try to increase their income.**
4	How could the National Negro Business League help a Tuskegee-trained worker become a business owner?	**The league's meetings and chapters let Black business owners share advice and make contacts. Those networks could help a trained worker find partners or buyers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In a small Alabama town in 1905, a church group could lend a room for evening classes, and graduates of a nearby Black school could teach bookkeeping and crop planning. Local farmers could practice keeping accounts, then form a buying group to purchase tools at lower cost. A shop owner could offer the graduates paid work recording sales. These partners would turn lessons into skills, jobs, and stronger small businesses. Segregation and banks' refusal to lend fairly would still limit how much the group could grow.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of how a person's or community's actions created opportunities. For the open task, look for distinct roles for at least two partners, a clear link between learning and enterprise, and a plausible barrier.