Home Front Choices

Daily pressures and wartime contributions during the Civil War

SS24.US1.12c "Describe the social, economic, and political conditions that affected citizens during the Civil War and explain how both citizens and enslaved people contributed to the war effort."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one economic pressure and one political pressure, circle one way civilians supported the war, and number two contributions by enslaved people, marking one F for forced and one C for chosen.

The War Beyond the Battlefield

1. In 1863, a family shopping for flour might find a higher price and less to buy. The war pulled workers from farms and factories, while armies demanded food, cloth, and horses. Blockades and damaged rail lines made supplies especially scarce in the Confederacy, where rapidly rising prices weakened the value of wages. Union families also faced higher costs and the loss of relatives at the front. Women and children took on farm work and paid jobs that absent men once did. Neighbors collected bandages, raised money for soldiers, and cared for wounded men, turning home life into part of the war.

2. Government decisions added new pressures. Both the Union and the Confederacy used drafts to fill their armies, and rules allowing some men to avoid service fueled anger over unequal sacrifice. In New York City in 1863, a draft riot turned into deadly attacks on Black residents and their homes. Union officials also suspended the right to challenge detention in court in some circumstances, arguing that rebellion threatened national security. In the Confederacy, some citizens protested draft rules and government seizures of supplies. Political conflict shaped daily life: a person might fear losing a relative to military service, losing property, or being jailed.

3. Enslaved people faced a different struggle because their work and freedom were controlled by others. Confederate authorities and slaveholders forced many to raise crops, build defenses, or support armies, contributions made under coercion rather than choice. Others escaped to Union lines, where they worked as guides, cooks, and laborers and shared knowledge of local roads and Confederate positions. After the Emancipation Proclamation took effect in 1863, Black men, including many who had escaped slavery, joined the Union Army. Their service strengthened Union forces and helped turn the war into a fight against slavery as well as a fight to preserve the nation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did wartime supply problems affect Confederate households, and what did some civilians do to support the war effort?

2. How did draft policies lead to resentment and harm to Black residents in the Union?

3. Why must forced work for Confederate armies be described differently from the help some escapees gave Union forces?

4. How did Black men's military service affect the Union war effort and the meaning of the war?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence newspaper report set in 1863. Connect one economic and one political pressure to people's actions, then compare how a civilian and an enslaved person helped the war effort, making clear whether the enslaved person's work was chosen or forced.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.12c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one economic pressure and one political pressure, circle one way civilians supported the war, and number two contributions by enslaved people, marking one F for forced and one C for chosen. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did wartime supply problems affect Confederate households, and what did some civilians do to support the war effort?	**Scarce supplies and rising prices made necessities harder to buy. Some civilians collected bandages, raised money, or cared for wounded soldiers.**
2	How did draft policies lead to resentment and harm to Black residents in the Union?	**Rules that let some men avoid service angered people over unequal sacrifice. During a New York City draft riot, attackers targeted Black residents and their homes.**
3	Why must forced work for Confederate armies be described differently from the help some escapees gave Union forces?	**Slaveholders and Confederate authorities forced enslaved people to work without a choice. Some escapees chose to aid Union forces as guides, laborers, or sources of information.**
4	How did Black men's military service affect the Union war effort and the meaning of the war?	**Their service strengthened Union forces and helped make ending slavery, along with preserving the nation, a purpose of the war.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

With flour prices rising, families bought less food and gathered bandages for soldiers. The draft angered neighbors who believed some men could avoid service while others could not. A woman took a paid job left open when a man joined the army. An enslaved man escaped to Union lines and shared information about Confederate positions. Unlike work that enslaved people were forced to do on Confederate defenses, his help came after he chose to escape.

Accept other accurate economic and political pressures from the passage. In the report, look for a clear distinction between forced labor and help given by someone who escaped slavery.