# Why Reconstruction Ended

Trace how national trends and regional violence worked together.

**SS24.US1.13e** "Develop an argument regarding how national and regional events and trends brought Reconstruction to an end."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two national developments and circle one regional action that weakened Reconstruction, then number your three marks in time order to trace how those forces built on one another.

### Rights Without Protection

1. After the Civil War, federal troops helped protect new governments in the South, and the Fifteenth Amendment barred denying voting rights on account of race. Black voters elected representatives, but these gains faced fierce resistance. In 1873, a nationwide economic depression shifted many northern voters' attention toward jobs and debt. In the 1874 elections, Democrats won control of the U.S. House of Representatives, making further federal action to defend Reconstruction less likely.

2. In Mississippi, white Democratic groups used threats and attacks to keep Black Republicans from voting in 1875. Local Democrats then gained control of the state government. This regional campaign of intimidation showed that legal voting rights could mean little without protection at the polls. Meanwhile, many white northerners had grown tired of using federal power in the South. Violence in one state and weakening national support together made Republican governments harder to sustain.

3. The contested presidential election of 1876 sharpened the conflict. Republicans and Democrats disputed electoral votes in several states, while Democrats controlled the House. A special commission awarded the disputed votes to Republican Rutherford B. Hayes. In 1877, Hayes ordered federal troops away from the statehouses in South Carolina and Louisiana, where Republican governments still claimed power. This marked the end of Reconstruction as a sustained federal effort to protect southern political rights, though its constitutional amendments remained in force.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the depression of 1873 and the election of 1874 combine to weaken federal defense of Reconstruction?

2. How does Mississippi in 1875 support the claim that legal voting rights alone were not enough?

3. Why did Hayes's 1877 troop order matter in light of the violence described earlier in the passage?

4. A classmate says the disputed election alone ended Reconstruction. Which two earlier developments challenge that claim?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word argument about which mattered more in ending Reconstruction: declining national support or regional intimidation. Use a specific fact about each, explain how they interacted, and address one reasonable objection.

ANSWER KEY

# Why Reconstruction Ended

GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.13e

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two national developments and circle one regional action that weakened Reconstruction, then number your three marks in time order to trace how those forces built on one another. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did the depression of 1873 and the election of 1874 combine to weaken federal defense of Reconstruction? | **The depression drew northern attention to economic problems, and Democrats' House victory made further federal action to defend Reconstruction less likely.** |
| 2 | How does Mississippi in 1875 support the claim that legal voting rights alone were not enough? | **Threats and attacks kept Black Republicans from voting despite their legal rights, and local Democrats gained control of the state government.** |
| 3 | Why did Hayes's 1877 troop order matter in light of the violence described earlier in the passage? | **The Mississippi violence showed that political rights needed protection. Removing troops from the two statehouses weakened federal support for the remaining Republican governments there.** |
| 4 | A classmate says the disputed election alone ended Reconstruction. Which two earlier developments challenge that claim? | **The depression shifted northern priorities, and intimidation in Mississippi kept Black Republicans from voting before the disputed election.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Declining national support mattered more because it determined whether the federal government would keep defending political rights. The depression of 1873 shifted northern attention to economic problems, and Democrats gained control of the House in 1874. In Mississippi, threats and attacks kept Black Republicans from voting in 1875, proving that rights needed protection. Someone might argue that intimidation was the decisive force because it directly changed who could vote. Yet without strong national backing, those attacks were less likely to be stopped, and Hayes withdrew troops from two southern statehouses in 1877.

Accept either factor as more important if the argument uses accurate evidence for both, explains their interaction, and addresses an objection. Do not require students to claim that the constitutional amendments ended in 1877.