

Resistance in Georgia

Read how opposition to civil rights law appeared in business and politics.

SS8H11.c "Explain the resistance to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, emphasizing the role of Lester Maddox."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every action that shows resistance to the Civil Rights Act, then circle one sentence that explains what Maddox's actions showed about resistance in Georgia.

A Law Meets Opposition

- ① In July 1964, the Civil Rights Act made racial discrimination illegal in many public places, including restaurants, hotels, and theaters. It also barred discrimination in employment. The law did not end unequal treatment overnight. Some white business owners and political leaders in Georgia opposed federal intervention and resisted integration. Their resistance took different forms: refusing service, challenging the law in court, closing businesses, or using speeches and campaigns to defend segregation. These actions showed that passing a federal law did not automatically change local practices or beliefs.
- ② Lester Maddox, owner of the Pickrick Restaurant in Atlanta, became a visible symbol of this resistance. Before and after the act's passage, he refused to serve Black customers. He displayed axe handles at the restaurant and used them as symbols of his opposition to integration. When a federal court ordered the Pickrick to serve Black patrons in 1965, Maddox closed the restaurant instead. His choice denied customers equal access and publicly challenged the new federal civil rights protections.
- ③ Maddox's actions brought him attention among Georgians who opposed integration. He later ran for governor and was elected in 1966, serving from 1967 to 1971. His campaign used his image as a defender of segregation, showing how resistance could move from a single business into state politics. Maddox could not cancel the federal law, and court decisions and federal enforcement continued. Still, his restaurant protest and political success demonstrated that the Civil Rights Act met organized, public resistance in Georgia.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What are two forms of resistance to integration named in the first paragraph?

2 What did Lester Maddox do at the Pickrick Restaurant that showed his opposition to integration?

3 Why was closing the Pickrick Restaurant an act of resistance after the federal court order?

4 How did Maddox's election as governor show that resistance went beyond one restaurant?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a five-sentence explanation of how Lester Maddox resisted the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Include the law's purpose, two actions Maddox took, and what his later political success showed about resistance in Georgia.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline every action that shows resistance to the Civil Rights Act, then circle one sentence that explains what Maddox's actions showed about resistance in Georgia. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What are two forms of resistance to integration named in the first paragraph?	Any two: refusing service, challenging the law in court, closing businesses, or using speeches and campaigns to defend segregation.
2	What did Lester Maddox do at the Pickrick Restaurant that showed his opposition to integration?	He refused to serve Black customers and displayed axe handles as symbols of opposition to integration.
3	Why was closing the Pickrick Restaurant an act of resistance after the federal court order?	The court ordered the restaurant to serve Black patrons, but Maddox closed it rather than comply. This denied equal access and challenged federal civil rights protections.
4	How did Maddox's election as governor show that resistance went beyond one restaurant?	His campaign used his image as a defender of segregation, and his election showed that resistance to integration had support in Georgia politics.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was meant to protect Black Americans from discrimination in places such as restaurants. Lester Maddox resisted the law by refusing to serve Black customers at the Pickrick Restaurant and displaying axe handles as symbols of opposition. After a federal court ordered integration, he closed the restaurant rather than comply. These choices denied equal access and openly challenged federal civil rights protections. His later election as governor showed that resistance to integration had support in Georgia politics.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations that identify resistance to federal integration requirements. For the open response, students should connect Maddox's business actions and political career to organized public resistance in Georgia.