

Seats Taken Away

Analyze why Black legislators were removed and what changed afterward.

SS8H6.d "Examine reasons for and effects of the removal of African American or Black legislators from the Georgia General Assembly during Reconstruction."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the reasons Black legislators were removed, and circle the effects of their removal so you can trace how a political decision harmed representation.

Georgia's Removed Legislators

- ① During Reconstruction, Georgia adopted a new state constitution in 1868. It gave Black men the right to vote, and Black voters helped elect African American men to the Georgia General Assembly. These lawmakers included representatives and senators. Their election gave Black communities a voice in making laws about schools, taxes, and other public concerns. Many white Georgians, however, opposed racial equality and resented sharing political power with the new legislators they had elected in their state government.
- ② In September 1868, white members of the General Assembly voted to remove Black legislators from their seats. They argued that the constitution allowed Black men to vote but did not clearly say they could hold office. This claim ignored the voters who had chosen them. The removal was driven by racism and by a desire to keep political control in white hands. It was not a decision based on the Black legislators' work or conduct as lawmakers.
- ③ The expulsion changed more than individual careers. It weakened the political influence of Black Georgians and showed that voting rights could be undermined after an election. Black communities lost representatives who could speak for their interests in the lawmaking process. Congress responded by requiring Georgia to restore the removed legislators before the state could fully return to the Union. In January 1870, the legislature reinstated the expelled Black members, but racial violence and restrictions continued to threaten Black political participation across the state in later elections.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What argument did white members of the General Assembly use to justify removing Black legislators?

2 According to the passage, what were two reasons the Black legislators were removed?

3 What was one effect of the removal on Black communities in Georgia?

4 How did Congress and the Georgia legislature respond to the removal of Black legislators?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Respond in exactly five sentences to this claim: "Winning an election always protects a group's representation." Use at least two details from the passage to explain why the removal of Black legislators supports or challenges the claim.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the reasons Black legislators were removed, and circle the effects of their removal so you can trace how a political decision harmed representation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What argument did white members of the General Assembly use to justify removing Black legislators?	They claimed that the constitution allowed Black men to vote but did not clearly state that they could hold office.
2	According to the passage, what were two reasons the Black legislators were removed?	The removal was driven by racism and by a desire to keep political control in white hands.
3	What was one effect of the removal on Black communities in Georgia?	Black communities lost representatives who could speak for their interests in the lawmaking process. Their political influence was weakened.
4	How did Congress and the Georgia legislature respond to the removal of Black legislators?	Congress required Georgia to restore the removed legislators before full return to the Union. The legislature reinstated the expelled Black members in January 1870.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Election results did not protect Black representation in Georgia during Reconstruction. White lawmakers used an argument about the constitution to remove Black legislators, although Black voters had elected them. Racism and a wish to keep political control caused the removal. Black communities then lost voices in the lawmaking process. Congress required restoration, and the legislature reinstated the expelled members in January 1870.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the constitutional argument, racism, white political control, lost representation, and reinstatement. For the open response, accept either position on the claim if the student uses accurate passage evidence and clearly explains cause and effect.