

Justice Under Pressure

Analyzing prejudice, power, and due process in the Leo Frank case

SS8H7.d "Examine antisemitism and the resistance to racial equality exemplified in the Leo Frank case."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show antisemitism toward Leo Frank. Circle two details that show unequal treatment or resistance to racial equality, then compare the two kinds of injustice.

The Leo Frank Case

- ① In 1913, Mary Phagan, a 13-year-old white worker, was found dead in Atlanta's National Pencil Factory. Leo Frank, the factory superintendent, was arrested, tried, and convicted of her murder. Frank was Jewish, and newspapers and public crowds often used antisemitic language, treating his Jewish identity and background outside Georgia as reasons to distrust him. The trial drew intense attention. Jim Conley, a Black factory janitor, gave major testimony against Frank. The evidence and the fairness of the trial were debated from the beginning.
- ② After appeals, Governor John M. Slaton studied the record and in 1915 changed Frank's death sentence to life in prison because he had doubts about the verdict. A group of armed men then took Frank from prison near Milledgeville. They drove him to Marietta and lynched him. This mob acted outside the law. Its violence showed how public anger, antisemitism, and weak protection by authorities could deny a person a fair legal process, even after a court decision.
- ③ The case took place in a Georgia shaped by segregation and unequal power. Many white leaders and citizens defended a racial order that denied Black Georgians equal rights and safety. Conley's role in the trial also exposed this unequal system: some people dismissed him because he was Black, while others used his testimony to support a case against Frank. Examining the case means noticing more than one injustice. Antisemitism targeted Frank, and resistance to racial equality harmed Black Georgians through segregation, discrimination, and violence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What details from paragraph 1 show that antisemitism affected how some people viewed Leo Frank?

2 What action did Governor Slaton take in 1915, and what was his reason?

3 Why did the mob's action deny Frank a fair legal process?

4 According to paragraph 3, what conditions harmed Black Georgians, and how did Conley's role expose unequal power?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly four sentences explaining how the Leo Frank case reveals both antisemitism and resistance to racial equality. Use one detail about Frank and one detail about Black Georgians, and do not claim that the passage proves who committed the murder.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show antisemitism toward Leo Frank. Circle two details that show unequal treatment or resistance to racial equality, then compare the two kinds of injustice. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What details from paragraph 1 show that antisemitism affected how some people viewed Leo Frank?	Frank was Jewish, and newspapers and public crowds used antisemitic language that treated his Jewish identity and background outside Georgia as reasons to distrust him.
2	What action did Governor Slaton take in 1915, and what was his reason?	He changed Frank's death sentence to life in prison because he had doubts about the verdict.
3	Why did the mob's action deny Frank a fair legal process?	The armed group took Frank from prison and lynched him outside the law, replacing legal process with mob violence.
4	According to paragraph 3, what conditions harmed Black Georgians, and how did Conley's role expose unequal power?	Segregation, discrimination, violence, and denial of equal rights and safety harmed Black Georgians. Some people dismissed Conley because he was Black, while others used his testimony against Frank.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Leo Frank case shows how prejudice can shape public justice. Antisemitic language in newspapers and crowds helped create distrust of Frank because he was Jewish. When the mob lynched him after his sentence was commuted, it replaced law with violence. At the same time, segregation and discrimination denied Black Georgians equal rights, revealing a wider system of unequal power.

Accept responses that distinguish antisemitism directed at Frank from the broader denial of equal rights and safety to Black Georgians. Students should support their explanations with passage details and should not be required to decide Frank's guilt or innocence.