A Costly Settlement

The disputed election of 1876 and the end of Federal Reconstruction

6-12.US1.43 "Analyze the context and consequences of The Compromise of 1877 and the end of Federal Reconstruction."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details showing why leaders sought a settlement. Circle the troop decision, then number two later effects on Black Americans.

An Election and a Turning Point

1. In the winter of 1877, the country waited to learn who had won the presidency. Democrat Samuel Tilden led the popular vote, but disputed electoral votes could give Republican Rutherford B. Hayes the win. Republican and Democratic leaders argued over results from several states. Congress created a commission to review the returns. Its decisions favored Hayes, but some Democrats still threatened to delay the final count. With the inauguration near, both sides faced pressure to settle the crisis.

2. At the same time, Reconstruction was weakening. Federal soldiers still supported Republican state governments in Louisiana and South Carolina, where Democrats challenged their authority. In talks surrounding the election, Southern Democrats accepted Hayes as president, while Republicans signaled that federal troops would leave those statehouses. Historians debate whether these talks formed a single, formal deal called the Compromise of 1877. After Hayes took office, troops left those statehouses, and Democratic governments took control of both states.

3. The troop withdrawal did not erase federal laws protecting Black citizens, but it ended the last federal military support for Reconstruction governments in the South. Without that support, Black voters and officeholders faced greater danger from intimidation and violence. Over the following decades, Southern lawmakers imposed voting restrictions and segregation, weakening rights that Reconstruction had sought to secure. The election crisis had been settled, but the shift in power carried a lasting cost for Black Americans.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did leaders face pressure to settle the election dispute quickly?

2. How did the struggle over Louisiana and South Carolina shape the settlement?

3. What about the Compromise of 1877 is debated, and what action is certain?

4. How did the troop withdrawal help lead to weaker rights for Black Americans?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a museum display with a ballot box from 1876 and an empty guard post from 1877. Write a four-sentence caption explaining what each object represents and why settling one crisis created another problem.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.43

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details showing why leaders sought a settlement. Circle the troop decision, then number two later effects on Black Americans. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did leaders face pressure to settle the election dispute quickly?	**Disputed electoral votes left the winner uncertain, some Democrats threatened to delay the final count, and the inauguration was near.**
2	How did the struggle over Louisiana and South Carolina shape the settlement?	**Democrats challenged the Republican governments there. In the election talks, Republicans signaled that federal troops supporting those governments would leave.**
3	What about the Compromise of 1877 is debated, and what action is certain?	**Historians debate whether the talks formed one formal deal. After Hayes took office, troops left the Louisiana and South Carolina statehouses.**
4	How did the troop withdrawal help lead to weaker rights for Black Americans?	**It ended military support for the remaining Reconstruction governments. Black citizens faced greater intimidation and violence, and Southern lawmakers later imposed voting restrictions and segregation.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The ballot box represents an election whose disputed votes left the presidency uncertain. Leaders settled that crisis, and Hayes became president. The empty guard post represents the withdrawal of federal troops from the last two Reconstruction statehouses. Without that support, Black Americans faced greater intimidation, and Southern lawmakers later restricted their voting rights.

Accept answers that distinguish the debated nature of a formal deal from the documented troop withdrawal. Students should connect the election settlement to the loss of military support and its consequences, not claim that federal rights laws ended in 1877.