Rules and Routes

How government actions shaped the Great Migration

6-9.WH.4.1 "Describe the role of government in historical human migration, such as push and pull factors."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three government actions in the passage, then write P beside the action that pushed families to leave, L beside the action that pulled them toward jobs, and H beside the action that made finding a home harder.

A Train North

1 Imagine leaving a farm in Mississippi and boarding a train for Chicago in 1917. Between about 1916 and 1970, millions of Black Americans moved from the South to cities in the North and West. This movement is called the Great Migration. Families made their own decisions, but government rules helped shape their choices. Southern state and local governments enforced Jim Crow laws that separated Black and white people in schools, public places, and transportation. These laws limited daily freedom and helped push some families to leave.

2 Jobs were another part of the story. During World War II, northern factories needed workers to make planes, ships, and other supplies. In 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802. It banned discrimination in hiring for defense industries based on race, creed, color, or national origin. The order did not give every migrant a job, and unfair treatment continued. Still, this federal action made defense jobs more open to Black workers. That change could pull a family toward a city with war factories.

3 The same trip could involve both a push and a pull. A parent might want to escape laws that treated the family unfairly and also hope to find a defense job. Yet moving did not erase discrimination. Some northern cities had housing policies that kept Black families out of certain neighborhoods. Government actions could therefore make one place harder to stay in, another place more attractive for work, and a new home difficult to settle in. Migration was shaped by rules as well as personal hopes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did southern state and local governments help push some Black families to leave?

2. How could Executive Order 8802 pull a family toward a northern city?

3. How could a northern city's government make life harder for a family after it moved?

4. How could two government actions have opposite effects on a family hoping to settle near a war factory?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence letter from a Black teenager in a southern town during World War II to a cousin in a northern city. Explain how one government action pushes your family to leave, how another pulls it north, and how a government-related barrier there might affect your plan; end with a decision and a reason.

ANSWER KEY

Rules and Routes

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.4.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the three government actions in the passage, then write P beside the action that pushed families to leave, L beside the action that pulled them toward jobs, and H beside the action that made finding a home harder. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did southern state and local governments help push some Black families to leave?	**They enforced Jim Crow laws that separated Black and white people and limited Black families' daily freedom.**
2	How could Executive Order 8802 pull a family toward a northern city?	**It banned discrimination in defense-industry hiring, making jobs at war factories more open to Black workers.**
3	How could a northern city's government make life harder for a family after it moved?	**Its housing policies could keep Black families out of certain neighborhoods.**
4	How could two government actions have opposite effects on a family hoping to settle near a war factory?	**The federal hiring order could make a defense job more accessible, while a northern city's housing policies could make finding a home difficult.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Ruth, our town's Jim Crow laws make me sit apart from white passengers on the bus. Dad heard that the president's order bans race discrimination in defense hiring, so he wants to apply at a Chicago factory. But housing policies in your city might keep us out of some neighborhoods. We could ask you about places to live before Dad buys train tickets. I think we should go because a better chance at work is worth facing the challenge of finding a home.

Accept answers that connect a specific government action to leaving, seeking work, or finding housing. For the letter, look for a historically plausible decision that weighs all three effects.