Chicago Under Pressure

Social tensions in the 1910s and 1920s

9-12.US2.14 "Evaluate the social tensions of the era, including: • Race • Labor • Domestic Migration • Changing social values • The Rise of Political Extremism"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three causes of social tension and circle the groups involved. Number two places where fear turned disagreement into exclusion or punishment.

A City Facing Change

1. During World War I and afterward, thousands of Black Southerners moved to Chicago seeking industrial jobs and relief from Jim Crow laws. Their arrival offered opportunities, but many white residents treated the newcomers as rivals for jobs and housing. Restrictive practices kept Black families in crowded neighborhoods even as the city's Black population grew. In July 1919, a white beachgoer threw stones at a Black teenager whose raft had crossed an unofficial racial boundary at a Lake Michigan beach. He drowned, and days of violence followed. Migration did not cause the violence by itself; discrimination and competition shaped the city's response.

2. Factory work also brought conflict. In 1919, steelworkers in the Chicago area joined a nationwide strike over wages, hours, and the right to organize. Companies accused some union leaders of being radicals, a powerful charge during the first Red Scare. After the Russian Revolution, many Americans feared that communists would try to overthrow the U.S. government. Federal agents arrested suspected radicals in the Palmer Raids of 1919 and 1920; many detainees lacked strong evidence against them. Fear could make a wage dispute look like a threat to the nation, while harsh policing made workers less likely to trust authorities.

3. Disagreements about daily life sharpened these divisions. Prohibition, which began nationwide in 1920, banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks, yet illegal bars flourished in Chicago. Jazz clubs and new freedoms claimed by some young women excited many city residents and alarmed others who saw tradition slipping away. The revived Ku Klux Klan grew across the country in the 1920s, using intimidation to defend white Protestant supremacy and targeting Black Americans, Catholics, Jews, and immigrants. Chicago's tensions had different causes, but fear of change linked arguments about neighborhoods, work, and public morals. That fear also made promises of simple enemies appealing.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did migration and discrimination together intensify racial tensions in Chicago? Use two details from the passage.

2. What evidence shows that fear of political radicalism shaped responses to labor conflict and public dissent?

3. Compare housing restrictions with Ku Klux Klan intimidation. Whom did each target, and how did each limit people's freedom?

4. How did Prohibition and changing social habits reveal a conflict over values? What does the passage suggest could make that conflict worse?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise Chicago's city council in the 1920s. In 70 to 100 words, propose one city policy to ease two connected tensions in the passage. Support it with two distinct details from the text and explain one limit of your policy.

ANSWER KEY

Chicago Under Pressure

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three causes of social tension and circle the groups involved. Number two places where fear turned disagreement into exclusion or punishment. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did migration and discrimination together intensify racial tensions in Chicago? Use two details from the passage.	**Black Southerners moved to Chicago for jobs and relief from Jim Crow laws, while restrictive practices confined Black families to crowded neighborhoods. Some white residents treated the newcomers as rivals for jobs and housing.**
2	What evidence shows that fear of political radicalism shaped responses to labor conflict and public dissent?	**Companies accused some striking steelworkers' union leaders of being radicals. During the same period, federal agents arrested suspected radicals in the Palmer Raids, often without strong evidence against them.**
3	Compare housing restrictions with Ku Klux Klan intimidation. Whom did each target, and how did each limit people's freedom?	**Housing restrictions kept Black families in crowded Chicago neighborhoods. The Klan used intimidation against Black Americans, Catholics, Jews, and immigrants across the country.**
4	How did Prohibition and changing social habits reveal a conflict over values? What does the passage suggest could make that conflict worse?	**Illegal bars flourished despite Prohibition, while jazz clubs and some young women's new freedoms excited some residents and alarmed others. Fear of change could make people receptive to blaming simple enemies.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask Chicago to fund housing open to all residents regardless of race. Black Southerners arrived seeking industrial jobs, but restrictive practices crowded their families into a few neighborhoods. More housing could reduce competition for space and the belief that newcomers threatened established residents. Fair access would have to be part of the housing policy, or it would repeat the same discrimination. This plan could ease tensions tied to migration and race, but it could not end the nationwide intimidation carried out by the Ku Klux Klan.

Accept other evidence-based evaluations that distinguish a cause of tension from a response to it. For Part 3, the policy should address two connected tensions, use two distinct passage details, and acknowledge a realistic limit.