

Promises and Practice

Tracing legal expansion and continuing debates over equal rights

12.G2d "The definition of civil rights has broadened over the course of United States history, and the number of people and groups legally ensured of these rights has also expanded. However..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline dated legal changes. Circle limits on equal access or continuing disagreements.

Rights on Paper, Rights in Practice

- ① Legal protections did not operate equally at the founding: slavery denied liberty, and voting rules excluded many people by race, sex, or property. The Fourteenth Amendment (1868) required states to provide equal protection to persons within their jurisdiction. The Fifteenth (1870) prohibited federal and state denial of citizens' voting rights because of race, color, or previous servitude. Discrimination and suppression persisted despite these constitutional rules.
- ② The Civil Rights Act (1964) prohibited race, color, religion, and national-origin discrimination in covered public accommodations. Its employment provisions also prohibited sex discrimination. The Voting Rights Act (1965) strengthened federal action against racial voting barriers. Title IX (1972) prohibited sex discrimination in federally funded education programs, subject to statutory exceptions. These changes expanded protections, but enforcement, resources, and local practices affected access. Formal protection and lived equality were not identical.
- ③ In *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), the Supreme Court required states to license and recognize same-sex marriages. In *Bostock v. Clayton County* (2020), it held that firing employees for being gay or transgender violates Title VII's sex-discrimination prohibition. That employment holding did not settle every dispute about rights in other settings. Debates about voting, accommodations, religious objections, and equal opportunity continued. Evaluating a claim requires identifying the governing law and evidence of its application. Constructive discussion distinguishes legal protections, practical barriers, and differing proposals for change.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What difference does the passage draw between a constitutional promise and equal treatment in daily life?

2 Use two dated examples from the passage to explain how legal civil rights protections expanded to more people or settings.

3 According to paragraph 2, name three factors that can affect whether people experience legal protection equally.

4 How do the passage's examples of Bostock and continuing debates show that civil rights remain a source of civic contention?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In four sentences, discuss a debated civil-rights issue from the passage. Distinguish legal protection from practical access, acknowledge another view, and propose a constructive use of evidence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline dated legal changes. Circle limits on equal access or continuing disagreements. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What difference does the passage draw between a constitutional promise and equal treatment in daily life?	A constitutional promise establishes a legal protection, but equal treatment in daily life may still be limited by enforcement, resources, or local practices.
2	Use two dated examples from the passage to explain how legal civil rights protections expanded to more people or settings.	Examples: the Fifteenth Amendment prohibited race-based voting denial; Title IX prohibited sex discrimination in covered education; Bostock applied Title VII's sex prohibition to firing gay or transgender employees.
3	According to paragraph 2, name three factors that can affect whether people experience legal protection equally.	Enforcement, resources, and local practices.
4	How do the passage's examples of Bostock and continuing debates show that civil rights remain a source of civic contention?	Bostock clarified employment protection but did not settle disputes in every setting. Debate continued about how rights and accommodations should operate in practice.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Voting protections do not automatically remove every access barrier. Some people favor identification requirements for election security, while others worry about burdens on eligible voters. The existence and size of those effects require evidence rather than assumptions. A constructive discussion would examine access, fraud, and administrative data while hearing affected voters.

Accept accurate examples of legal expansion and remaining disputes. Do not conflate Title II public-accommodation grounds with Title VII employment grounds, or treat Bostock as deciding all issues beyond employment. Different policy views are acceptable when supported fairly.