

Rights Under Pressure

Trace how Reconstruction rights were challenged and weakened.

8.1c "Federal initiatives begun during Reconstruction were challenged on many levels, leading to negative impacts on the lives of African Americans."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each federal initiative or right, circle each challenge to it, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside details that show negative effects on African Americans.

Promises and Pushback

- ① After the Civil War, the federal government tried to redefine freedom. The Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, and the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed citizenship to U.S.-born formerly enslaved people. The Fifteenth Amendment barred states from denying a citizen the vote because of race. Congress also created the Freedmen's Bureau, which helped formerly enslaved people find schools, jobs, and legal aid. These initiatives offered new rights, but laws alone could not guarantee that local officials or white citizens would respect them.
- ② In 1865–1866, Southern governments passed Black Codes, laws that restricted African Americans' choices of work, movement, and daily life. Later, poll taxes required voters to pay money before voting. Because many freedpeople had little cash, this rule reduced African American voting. Terror groups, including the Ku Klux Klan and White Leagues, used threats and violence to frighten Black voters and leaders. Although federal laws allowed action against such violence, enforcement weakened as national attention shifted away from Reconstruction.
- ③ In 1896, the Supreme Court decided *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The Court said that racial segregation in public facilities could be legal if facilities were "separate but equal." Southern states used this ruling to support Jim Crow laws that separated Black and white people in schools, railcars, waiting rooms, and other public spaces. In practice, facilities for African Americans were often inferior. Segregation, disfranchisement, violence, and weaker federal protection limited rights that Reconstruction had promised.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 Name two constitutional amendments in the passage that expanded the rights of African Americans. What right did each protect?

- 2 How did Black Codes and terror groups challenge the new rights of African Americans in different ways?

- 3 Explain how a poll tax could reduce African American voting.

- 4 What did the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision allow, and what was one result for African Americans?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write three sentences that trace one Reconstruction right or federal initiative, one challenge to it, and a negative effect on African Americans. Use your own words and show how the challenge weakened the right.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each federal initiative or right, circle each challenge to it, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside details that show negative effects on African Americans. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two constitutional amendments in the passage that expanded the rights of African Americans. What right did each protect?	The Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed citizenship to U.S.-born formerly enslaved people. The Fifteenth Amendment barred states from denying a citizen the vote because of race. Accept any two.
2	How did Black Codes and terror groups challenge the new rights of African Americans in different ways?	Black Codes restricted choices about work, movement, and daily life. Terror groups used threats and violence to frighten Black voters and leaders.
3	Explain how a poll tax could reduce African American voting.	A poll tax required voters to pay money before voting. Many freedpeople had little cash, so they could not pay and were less able to vote.
4	What did the <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> decision allow, and what was one result for African Americans?	It allowed racial segregation in public facilities under “separate but equal.” Facilities for African Americans were often inferior, and Jim Crow laws separated Black and white people in public spaces.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Fifteenth Amendment aimed to protect African American men’s voting rights. Poll taxes challenged that right because many freedpeople could not afford the required payment. As a result, fewer African Americans could vote and influence their governments.

Accept any accurate three-sentence cause-and-effect chain using an initiative or right and a challenge from the passage. The response should clearly state a negative effect on African Americans.