Ranks and Resolve

How immigrant troops strengthened the Union Army

8.C.12.2.D "Describe the value of immigrant troops drafted or recruited to fill Union ranks."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the ways immigrants entered Union ranks, and circle details that show why their service mattered.

More Than Names on a Roster

1. When the Civil War began in 1861, the Union needed soldiers to fight a long war across many states. Men born outside the United States were already living in Northern cities and towns. Recruiters invited them to join, and some immigrant communities formed units where neighbors could serve together. Irish and German immigrants were especially visible in Union ranks, though immigrants came from many places. Each new soldier helped fill a company that needed enough people to march, guard supplies, and fight. Their numbers helped the Union keep armies in the field.

2. Voluntary enlistment was not the only way immigrants entered the army. The federal draft law of 1863 included immigrant men who had declared their intention to become U.S. citizens, as well as citizens who met its rules. A declaration of intention was a first step toward citizenship, not citizenship itself. Some men called by the draft served, while others used legal ways to avoid service. Draft rules could bring eligible immigrants into the pool of men available to the Union. Yet many immigrant soldiers had already enlisted without being drafted.

3. Immigrant troops did more than add names to army rolls. The Irish Brigade, a group of mostly Irish immigrant soldiers, fought in the costly Union attack at Antietam in 1862. Its members faced deadly fire while helping the Union press its attack. In other units, officers who spoke the languages of new arrivals could help recruit and lead them. These contributions mattered because an army needed both people willing to serve and units able to act together. Not all immigrants supported the war, but those who served supplied manpower, effort, and courage.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did recruiting immigrants help the Union keep armies in the field?

2. How could the 1863 draft increase the number of immigrant men available to the Union?

3. How does the Irish Brigade's experience at Antietam show a value beyond adding soldiers to a roster?

4. How could officers who spoke new arrivals' languages help immigrant recruits contribute to the Union Army?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four- or five-sentence note to a neighbor who thinks immigrant soldiers only increased the size of Union armies. Explain another way they were valuable, use the Irish Brigade as an example, and explain how recruiting or the draft helped fill the ranks.

ANSWER KEY

Ranks and Resolve

GRADE 8 · 8.C.12.2.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the ways immigrants entered Union ranks, and circle details that show why their service mattered. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did recruiting immigrants help the Union keep armies in the field?	**Immigrant recruits helped fill companies with enough soldiers to march, guard supplies, and fight.**
2	How could the 1863 draft increase the number of immigrant men available to the Union?	**It included immigrant men who had declared their intention to become U.S. citizens, adding them to the pool of men who could be called to serve.**
3	How does the Irish Brigade's experience at Antietam show a value beyond adding soldiers to a roster?	**Its mostly Irish immigrant soldiers faced deadly fire while helping the Union press a costly attack.**
4	How could officers who spoke new arrivals' languages help immigrant recruits contribute to the Union Army?	**They could help recruit and lead the men, helping units act together.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Immigrant troops increased Union numbers, but that was not their only value. Recruiters brought immigrants into the army, and the 1863 draft also included eligible men who had declared their intention to become citizens. More soldiers helped the Union keep companies large enough to guard supplies and fight. At Antietam, the mostly Irish immigrant Irish Brigade faced deadly fire during a Union attack, showing that its members did difficult combat work. Officers who spoke new arrivals' languages could also help recruit and lead them, making units better able to act together.

Accept notes that explain both how immigrants filled Union ranks and how their service mattered beyond numbers. Students may discuss combat service or the role of officers who spoke recruits' languages.