Beyond the Carpetbag

Examine why Northern newcomers came South during Reconstruction.

8.C.13.3.A "Identify the various motives of carpetbaggers including economic gain, exploitative aims, and genuine concern for the civil and political rights of freed Blacks."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that suggest earning money, circle actions that suggest taking unfair advantage, and number actions that support freed Black people's rights. Use the marks to compare the newcomers' possible motives.

Three Arrivals in Mississippi

1 In 1870, a train stopped near a Mississippi town rebuilding after the Civil War. Some Northern newcomers carried cheap bags made of carpet cloth. Critics called these newcomers "carpetbaggers," although the label did not reveal why any one person had come. One arrival, Mr. Vale, rented a vacant building and opened a lumber shop. Freed families and other customers bought boards to repair homes. He paid workers the wages he promised and kept the money left after expenses. If the shop failed, he would lose his savings.

2 A second arrival, Mr. Pike, rented land to freed farmers for a share of their cotton crop. At harvest, he recorded fewer pounds of cotton than the farmers had delivered. He also added fees that were not in their agreements. Farmers who challenged him were told they could leave, but they still owed him money. Pike used false weights and added charges to take more cotton than he had agreed to receive. His actions made it harder for those families to pay their debts and keep the rest of their harvest.

3 A third newcomer, Ms. Reed, taught reading at a school for freed children and adults. When local officials tried to keep Black men from registering to vote, she helped residents write complaints and brought their statements to state officials. She also asked the school to pay her a salary, since teaching was her work. Some townspeople pointed to that paycheck and insisted she must be there only for money. Yet she spent unpaid evenings helping families read voting rules and write letters. Her paid work and unpaid work made the town's arguments less simple.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does Mr. Vale appear to want from his lumber shop? Give one detail that supports your answer.

2. How do Mr. Pike's actions show a different motive from simply earning an agreed-upon share of the crop?

3. Which actions suggest Ms. Reed cares about freed Black people's civil or political rights, even though she earns a salary?

4. Why would calling both Mr. Pike and Ms. Reed “carpetbaggers” hide an important difference between them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a fourth Northern newcomer during Reconstruction who has a job not named in the passage. Show two possible motives through specific actions, including concern for freed Black people's civil or political rights, and explain what each action suggests.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond the Carpetbag

GRADE 8 · 8.C.13.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions that suggest earning money, circle actions that suggest taking unfair advantage, and number actions that support freed Black people's rights. Use the marks to compare the newcomers' possible motives. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does Mr. Vale appear to want from his lumber shop? Give one detail that supports your answer.	**He appears to want to earn a profit. He keeps the money left after paying expenses.**
2	How do Mr. Pike's actions show a different motive from simply earning an agreed-upon share of the crop?	**He appears to want more than his agreed-upon share. He records less cotton than farmers deliver and adds fees outside their agreements.**
3	Which actions suggest Ms. Reed cares about freed Black people's civil or political rights, even though she earns a salary?	**She helps residents challenge efforts to block Black men's voter registration and spends unpaid evenings helping families read voting rules and write letters.**
4	Why would calling both Mr. Pike and Ms. Reed “carpetbaggers” hide an important difference between them?	**The label says they came from the North but not why they came. Pike takes more cotton than agreed, while Reed helps residents defend voting rights.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1871, a Northern printer opens a newspaper in Louisiana and sells copies to support her business. She also prints notices about Black men's voting rights at no charge when officials refuse to post them. Her sales suggest she wants to earn a living. The free notices suggest she also cares about political rights.

Accept supported inferences about motives, including the possibility that a person had more than one motive. For the open-response task, look for four sentences, a new job, two distinct actions, and an explanation linking each action to a motive.