Rights Under Threat

Investigate the Klan's goals and methods during Reconstruction.

8.C.13.3.C "Examine the political and social goals of the Ku Klux Klan, including its acts of intimidation and violence against African Americans."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline phrases that show the Klan's political goals, circle phrases that show its social goals, and number each different act of intimidation or violence you find. Use your marks to connect actions to goals.

The Klan During Reconstruction

1. In 1865, former Confederate soldiers founded the Ku Klux Klan in Tennessee. During Reconstruction, the United States had ended slavery, and Black men gained the right to vote under the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. Black voters could help elect leaders who supported their rights. The Klan wanted to keep white people in power by stopping Black men from voting or holding office. Its members sometimes threatened voters on the way to the polls or attacked Black candidates. Such attacks were not random fights: they aimed to shape who could take part in government.

2. The Klan also tried to control daily life beyond elections. Black families opened schools, bought land, and built churches as they claimed freedom in their communities. Klan members sought a society in which white people dominated Black people. They burned schools, attacked teachers, and terrorized families in their homes. Violence against a school could warn parents that educating their children might bring danger. Violence at home could push families to leave a town. These acts aimed to limit Black independence and make unequal social rules seem impossible to challenge.

3. The Klan's methods often served both aims at once. A night raid against a Black community leader could frighten that person's neighbors away from elections and public meetings. Klan members also attacked white people who supported Black civil rights. Many attackers hid their identities, making it harder for victims to seek safety or justice. Federal laws in 1870 and 1871 gave the government tools to prosecute Klan violence, and federal action weakened the first Klan. Yet its attacks had already denied many people the freedom to participate fully in public life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could threatening voters on the way to the polls help the Klan's political goal?

2. How could burning a school help the Klan's social goal, even for families whose children did not attend that school?

3. How could a night raid against a Black community leader affect both elections and public meetings?

4. Why might the Klan attack white supporters of Black civil rights, and how could hidden identities help its members keep control?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a fictional 1870 neighborhood meeting where Black residents plan to vote and open a school. Show how two different Klan tactics from the passage could threaten these plans, and explain the political and social goals behind them.

ANSWER KEY

Rights Under Threat

GRADE 8 · 8.C.13.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline phrases that show the Klan's political goals, circle phrases that show its social goals, and number each different act of intimidation or violence you find. Use your marks to connect actions to goals. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could threatening voters on the way to the polls help the Klan's political goal?	**The threats could keep Black men from voting, helping white people remain in political power.**
2	How could burning a school help the Klan's social goal, even for families whose children did not attend that school?	**It could warn other families that educating their children might bring danger, limiting Black independence.**
3	How could a night raid against a Black community leader affect both elections and public meetings?	**It could frighten neighbors away from voting and from meeting publicly, limiting Black participation in government and community life.**
4	Why might the Klan attack white supporters of Black civil rights, and how could hidden identities help its members keep control?	**Attacking supporters could discourage them from helping Black people claim their rights. Hidden identities made it harder for victims to seek justice.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a fictional 1870 neighborhood meeting, Black residents plan to vote and open a school. The Klan's political goal of keeping white people in power could lead members to threaten voters on the way to the polls. Its social goal of limiting Black independence could lead members to attack the school's teachers. Together, these tactics could make both voting and education dangerous for the neighborhood.

Accept explanations that connect a passage-based tactic to its intended political or social effect. For the open task, look for four sentences, two distinct tactics, and both goals.