Rules and Routines

How laws and customs shaped segregation in the South

8.C.13.4.B "Examine the development of segregated societies in the South as a result of social norms and legal statutes such as Black Codes."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two restrictions created by laws, circle two restrictions enforced by customs, and number the Black Codes, Fourteenth Amendment, and Jim Crow laws in the order they appeared.

From Black Codes to Jim Crow

1 At a Mississippi courthouse in 1865, freedom did not always mean control over work. After the Civil War, state lawmakers passed Black Codes aimed at newly freed African Americans. Mississippi required many Black workers to sign written labor contracts and punished people judged to be without lawful employment under vagrancy rules. A person unable to pay a fine could be hired out to pay it. These laws pushed freedpeople toward labor controlled by white landowners. Legal rules did not restore slavery, but they sharply limited the choices freedom was supposed to bring.

2 Laws were not the only barriers. In some Southern communities, white employers refused to offer fair wages, and white residents refused to sit beside Black neighbors in public spaces. Threats and violence could punish those who challenged these expectations. During Reconstruction, Congress tried to protect Black people's rights, and the Fourteenth Amendment promised equal protection under the law. Yet an amendment could not by itself make every employer pay fairly or stop every act of intimidation. Unwritten rules helped keep unequal treatment in place even when federal law challenged it.

3 After Reconstruction ended in 1877, state and local leaders gained more room to restrict Black citizens. In the following decades, Jim Crow laws required racial separation in places such as public schools and railroad cars. Some white citizens enforced separation through everyday habits, refusing to share facilities even where no sign or law required it. Earlier Black Codes had restricted work and movement; later segregation laws divided public life more openly. Together, legal rules and social pressure turned unequal treatment into a lasting system, though Black Southerners continued to resist it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could Mississippi's Black Codes limit a freed person's choice of work?

2. How could the unwritten expectations in the second paragraph make unequal treatment continue?

3. Why did the Fourteenth Amendment not end the barriers described in the passage?

4. How did the restrictions imposed by Black Codes differ from those imposed by later Jim Crow laws? What did they have in common?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a fictional Southern town in the 1890s. In four sentences, describe a plausible segregation law and a separate unwritten social rule in a setting not named in the passage, then explain how they worked together to limit Black residents' access.

ANSWER KEY

Rules and Routines

GRADE 8 · 8.C.13.4.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two restrictions created by laws, circle two restrictions enforced by customs, and number the Black Codes, Fourteenth Amendment, and Jim Crow laws in the order they appeared. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could Mississippi's Black Codes limit a freed person's choice of work?	**Written labor contracts and vagrancy rules pushed freedpeople toward jobs controlled by white landowners. Someone unable to pay a fine could be hired out to pay it.**
2	How could the unwritten expectations in the second paragraph make unequal treatment continue?	**White employers could refuse fair wages, while white residents could refuse to sit beside Black neighbors. Threats or violence could discourage people from challenging these practices.**
3	Why did the Fourteenth Amendment not end the barriers described in the passage?	**It promised equal protection, but it could not by itself stop unfair pay, intimidation, or other unwritten practices.**
4	How did the restrictions imposed by Black Codes differ from those imposed by later Jim Crow laws? What did they have in common?	**Black Codes restricted work and movement, while Jim Crow laws required separation in public places such as schools and railroad cars. Both used laws to limit Black Southerners' freedom.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In a fictional Southern town in the 1890s, a city rule required separate entrances at the public theater. White ticket sellers also followed an unwritten rule of giving Black customers the least desirable seats. The city rule divided people by race, while the sellers' custom made the unequal treatment worse. Together, they limited where Black residents could enter and sit.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of how laws and customs reinforced unequal treatment. For Part 3, look for a plausible law, a distinct unwritten rule, and a clear explanation of their combined effect.