Rights on Paper

Trace how Reconstruction ended and what followed.

8.C.13.4 "Assess the lasting impact of factors leading to the end of Reconstruction. Describe the result of a lack of enforcement of the 14th and 15th Amendments..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline two federal actions that protected rights and circle two conditions that weakened those protections. Number the steps from the disputed election to the end of Reconstruction.

When Protection Faded

1. In 1865, the Civil War ended, but the struggle over freedom did not. During Reconstruction, federal troops and officials helped protect new rights in the South. The Fourteenth Amendment promised equal protection under the law, and the Fifteenth barred denying voting rights because of race. Black men voted and held public office. Yet many white southern leaders opposed these changes. Black Codes, passed soon after the war, restricted the freedom and work choices of formerly enslaved people. Federal laws challenged these codes, but their goals did not disappear.

2. By the 1870s, support for Reconstruction was fading in the North. Some voters grew tired of the cost and conflict, while a financial crisis drew attention to the economy. White supremacist groups used threats and violence to keep Black citizens from voting. Federal laws could punish attacks on voting rights, but enforcement weakened over time. Southern Democrats regained control of state governments. Even where the Constitution promised equal rights, a right written on paper could mean little when officials refused to protect it and voters faced danger at the polls.

3. In the disputed presidential election of 1876, Congress accepted an electoral commission's decision that gave Republican Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency. Negotiations often called the Compromise of 1877 helped resolve the crisis. Hayes then withdrew the remaining federal troops from southern state capitals, signaling the end of Reconstruction. Without strong federal protection, southern lawmakers later passed segregation laws. Social customs also separated Black and white people in schools and public places. Officials often failed to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, allowing unequal treatment and barriers to Black voting to endure.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Black Codes and later segregation laws each help create an unequal society in the South?

2. Why did the Fifteenth Amendment alone not protect Black citizens' ability to vote?

3. How did changing priorities in the North affect federal protection of rights in the South?

4. How did the disputed election of 1876 lead toward the end of Reconstruction?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence newspaper analysis for readers in 1880. Connect the disputed election, the withdrawal of troops, and weak protection of amendment rights, then predict one effect on daily life in the South using evidence from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Rights on Paper

GRADE 8 · 8.C.13.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline two federal actions that protected rights and circle two conditions that weakened those protections. Number the steps from the disputed election to the end of Reconstruction. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Black Codes and later segregation laws each help create an unequal society in the South?	**Black Codes restricted formerly enslaved people's freedom and work choices soon after the war. Later segregation laws separated Black and white people in public life.**
2	Why did the Fifteenth Amendment alone not protect Black citizens' ability to vote?	**White supremacist groups threatened voters, and weakening enforcement meant officials often failed to protect voting rights.**
3	How did changing priorities in the North affect federal protection of rights in the South?	**Some northern voters grew tired of Reconstruction, and a financial crisis shifted attention to the economy. As support faded, enforcement of federal protections weakened.**
4	How did the disputed election of 1876 lead toward the end of Reconstruction?	**Congress accepted the electoral commission's decision giving Hayes the presidency. Negotiations helped resolve the crisis, and Hayes withdrew the remaining federal troops from southern state capitals.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After the disputed election of 1876, Congress accepted a decision giving Hayes the presidency as political leaders negotiated. Hayes then withdrew the remaining federal troops from southern state capitals, leaving fewer federal forces to protect rights. If officials do not protect equal rights or Black voting, threats at the polls can reduce Black citizens' political power. Over time, that loss of power could allow lawmakers to require separation in schools and other public places.

Accept different wording that accurately connects weakened enforcement to lasting limits on rights. Distinguish the early Black Codes from segregation laws passed later.