Three Kings, One Kingdom

Trace how Israel's tribes united and why that unity faced strain.

AWH.C.5.3 "Describe the unification of the tribes of Israel under Kings Saul, David, and Solomon, including David's founding of Jerusalem in 1000 BC and the building of the first temple by Solomon."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one way each king brought the tribes together. Circle one limit or strain on unity in each paragraph.

Building a United Kingdom

1. Before Israel had a king, its tribes had local leaders and could join forces when threatened, but they did not always act together. In biblical accounts, Saul became the first king over the tribes. His leadership helped them coordinate defense against enemies, especially the Philistines, who threatened their settlements. A shared commander could call fighters from different tribes instead of relying only on separate local groups. Yet Saul's authority remained vulnerable: wars continued, and his conflict with David divided loyalties. Saul's reign began a shift toward a single monarchy, but it did not make tribal differences disappear.

2. After Saul's death, David did not immediately rule everyone. He first ruled Judah, while Saul's surviving house held power over other tribes. After a struggle, elders of the northern tribes accepted David as king, joining them with Judah under one ruler. Around 1000 BC, David captured Jerusalem and founded it as his kingdom's capital. Jerusalem had been a Jebusite city, rather than the capital of an Israelite tribe, so David could use it as a new political center. David also brought the ark, a sacred chest, to the city, strengthening Jerusalem's religious importance.

3. David's son Solomon inherited a kingdom with a capital, an army, and a royal government. In Jerusalem, Solomon built the first temple, giving the tribes a permanent central place for worship of the God of Israel. Its construction tied royal power to a shared religious center and gave the capital a role beyond government. Solomon also organized officials to collect supplies and oversee building projects across the kingdom. Those projects demanded taxes and labor, which caused resentment in some communities. After Solomon died, disputes over these demands helped break the kingdom apart, showing that common institutions did not erase tribal interests.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Saul's leadership help the tribes act together, and what limited his unity?

2. How did David bring Judah and the northern tribes under one ruler, and why did Jerusalem help him govern them?

3. How did Solomon's temple add to the unity David had built around Jerusalem?

4. Why did the kingdom break apart after Solomon despite having a capital and a temple?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise the king who follows Solomon. In five sentences, propose two specific policies to keep the tribes united, and explain how one earlier success and one earlier strain from the passage support your ideas.

ANSWER KEY

Three Kings, One Kingdom

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.5.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one way each king brought the tribes together. Circle one limit or strain on unity in each paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Saul's leadership help the tribes act together, and what limited his unity?	**Saul coordinated fighters from different tribes against enemies such as the Philistines, but continuing wars and his conflict with David divided loyalties.**
2	How did David bring Judah and the northern tribes under one ruler, and why did Jerusalem help him govern them?	**After David first ruled Judah, northern elders accepted him as king. He made Jerusalem, which had not been an Israelite tribal capital, a new political center.**
3	How did Solomon's temple add to the unity David had built around Jerusalem?	**The temple gave the tribes a permanent central place for worship in Jerusalem, adding a shared religious center to David's political capital.**
4	Why did the kingdom break apart after Solomon despite having a capital and a temple?	**Solomon's projects demanded taxes and labor that caused resentment. After his death, disputes over those demands helped break the kingdom apart.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask each tribe to send a representative to a council in Jerusalem. David's choice of a new capital shows how a shared center can help unite groups with different loyalties. I would also reduce required labor and publish a clear plan for collecting supplies. Solomon's building projects caused resentment when people had to provide labor and taxes. A council and fairer demands could protect unity without giving up the capital or the temple.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of each king's role and the limits of unity. For Part 3, look for two distinct, plausible policies supported by one earlier success and one earlier strain.