A Ticket Divided

Examine the stated purpose and effects of Oklahoma's separate coach law.

OKH.C.6.3.A "Analyze the intent and effect of Jim Crow laws initiated by the passage of Senate Bill 1."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a reason supporters gave for Senate Bill 1, circle what the law required, and number two effects of that requirement. Use your marks to compare the law's stated purpose with its impact.

Separate Coaches in a New State

1. Imagine arriving at an Oklahoma train station in 1907 with a ticket in your hand. Statehood had just begun, but lawmakers quickly shaped who could use public spaces together. The first bill introduced in the new state senate, Senate Bill 1, became a law requiring separate railroad coaches and station waiting rooms for Black and white passengers. The law required railroads to provide accommodations for each group, but the rule did not give passengers a choice about where to sit. It used state power to make racial separation part of an ordinary trip, from waiting for the train to boarding it.

2. Supporters of the separate coach law described separate facilities as a way to maintain order and avoid conflict. They also claimed that accommodations for both groups made the rule fair. Yet the law's purpose was not simply to organize crowded trains. It placed Black travelers in a separate category and barred them from spaces reserved for white travelers. Railroads and station workers had to enforce that boundary, turning a racial preference into a legal requirement. A Black passenger who had paid for a ticket could not choose a coach on the same terms as a white passenger.

3. The effects reached beyond a single train ride. Separate waiting rooms and coaches made unequal treatment visible in everyday travel, even when the law called for comparable accommodations. Separate facilities did not guarantee equal conditions or equal access. Oklahoma lawmakers later adopted other Jim Crow measures, including a 1910 voting rule that exempted many white voters from literacy tests while burdening Black voters. These laws helped protect white political power while limiting Black Oklahomans' choices and opportunities. Senate Bill 1 did not create every later rule, but it set an early example of making racial exclusion routine.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What reasons did supporters give for separate coaches, and what part of the law did those reasons defend?

2. How did Senate Bill 1 change a Black passenger's choices, and what does that show about the law's intent?

3. Why did requiring accommodations for both groups not ensure equal treatment? Use two details from the passage.

4. How did Senate Bill 1 set an example for later Jim Crow laws? Compare its effect with the effect of the 1910 voting rule.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word fictional letter from a Black traveler to an Oklahoma newspaper in 1907. Explain what supporters said Senate Bill 1 would do, how it could affect your trip, and why the difference matters; include two details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.6.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a reason supporters gave for Senate Bill 1, circle what the law required, and number two effects of that requirement. Use your marks to compare the law's stated purpose with its impact. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What reasons did supporters give for separate coaches, and what part of the law did those reasons defend?	**Supporters said separate facilities would maintain order, avoid conflict, and be fair because both groups had accommodations. These claims defended requiring separate coaches and waiting rooms.**
2	How did Senate Bill 1 change a Black passenger's choices, and what does that show about the law's intent?	**A Black passenger could not choose a coach on the same terms as a white passenger. The law was intended to enforce racial separation, not just organize travel.**
3	Why did requiring accommodations for both groups not ensure equal treatment? Use two details from the passage.	**Black travelers were barred from spaces reserved for white travelers, and separate facilities did not guarantee equal conditions or access.**
4	How did Senate Bill 1 set an example for later Jim Crow laws? Compare its effect with the effect of the 1910 voting rule.	**Senate Bill 1 made racial separation a legal requirement in travel. The 1910 voting rule also used law to limit Black Oklahomans' opportunities while protecting white political power.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Editor, Supporters say separate coaches and waiting rooms will keep order and give both groups accommodations. But a ticket should let me choose a coach on the same terms as a white traveler. Under Senate Bill 1, station workers must direct me to a separate waiting room before I even board. Even if the rooms look alike, the state would still decide where I belong by race. That daily message is not fair treatment. Please ask lawmakers why a rule called orderly takes away a passenger's choice.

Accept responses that distinguish supporters' claims from the law's requirement and its effects. For the letter, check that both passage details are accurate and that the traveler explains why separate accommodations do not necessarily mean fair treatment.