Terror Behind Parades

Trace how the Klan grew and used fear to limit rights.

OKH.C.6.3.D "Examine the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and its involvement in acts of intimidation and violence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline reasons the Klan gained members or influence, circle its methods of intimidation and violence, and put a star beside effects on the people it targeted.

The Klan's Growth and Use of Fear

1 After the Civil War, formerly enslaved people gained citizenship and voting rights, but many white supremacists resisted these changes. In 1865, former Confederate soldiers founded the first Ku Klux Klan in Tennessee. Its members attacked Black voters, teachers, and political leaders, as well as white people who supported equal rights. By threatening witnesses and murdering organizers, they tried to keep Black citizens from voting and holding office. Federal laws and prosecutions weakened this first Klan by the early 1870s. Its decline did not end the racist ideas or the use of terror to block political participation.

2 A new Klan formed in Georgia in 1915. The racist film *The Birth of a Nation* helped revive interest by presenting the earlier Klan as heroic. During the 1920s, recruiters exploited fears about immigration, religion, and changing social roles. They sold memberships and organized public parades, making the group seem powerful and respectable to some white Americans. The new Klan targeted Black Americans, Catholics, Jews, and immigrants. Its leaders also sought influence in elections and local government. At its peak, the organization claimed millions of members nationwide, although exact membership figures are uncertain.

3 In Oklahoma, Klan members used both public influence and secret attacks during the 1920s. Some marched openly, while others sent threats or seized people at night and whipped them. Such assaults warned victims and their neighbors that speaking out could bring more violence. Fear could silence witnesses, making attackers harder to prosecute. In 1923, Governor Jack C. Walton declared martial law in parts of Oklahoma, then statewide, as he tried to stop Klan violence. Investigations exposed accounts of floggings, but the struggle also revealed how hard it was to challenge an organization with allies in local communities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the first Klan's attacks serve its goal of limiting Black political participation?

2. What two things helped the new Klan gain members or influence in the 1920s?

3. How did open marches and secret attacks serve different purposes for the Klan in Oklahoma?

4. Why could intimidation make Klan attackers harder to prosecute?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum caption explaining how the Klan's rise helped it use intimidation and violence to limit rights. Include both the Reconstruction and 1920s periods, and connect at least one growth strategy to a tactic and its effect.

ANSWER KEY

Terror Behind Parades

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.6.3.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline reasons the Klan gained members or influence, circle its methods of intimidation and violence, and put a star beside effects on the people it targeted. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the first Klan's attacks serve its goal of limiting Black political participation?	**Threats against witnesses and attacks on voters and organizers were meant to keep Black citizens from voting and holding office.**
2	What two things helped the new Klan gain members or influence in the 1920s?	**Recruiters exploited fears about immigration, religion, and social change. Membership sales and public parades helped the group appear powerful and respectable.**
3	How did open marches and secret attacks serve different purposes for the Klan in Oklahoma?	**Open marches displayed the group's influence, while threats and nighttime assaults frightened people into silence.**
4	Why could intimidation make Klan attackers harder to prosecute?	**Victims and witnesses could fear more violence if they spoke out, so they might not report attacks or testify.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The first Klan formed after the Civil War because white supremacists opposed Black citizenship and voting rights. Its threats and killings aimed to stop Black citizens and their allies from taking part in politics. A second Klan expanded in the 1920s by using recruitment and parades to appear influential, even as members threatened and whipped people in Oklahoma. Public visibility and hidden violence worked together: the group could claim a place in civic life while fear discouraged victims and witnesses from challenging its attacks.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that connect the Klan's growth or public influence to intimidation, violence, and their effects on rights. Do not treat the public parades themselves as physical attacks.