Two Paths to Change

Trace the causes and effects of two constitutional amendments

USH.C.2.3.C "Trace the series of events leading to and the effects of the 16th and 17th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle an earlier problem for each amendment. For each amendment, number its proposal and ratification 1 and 2, then underline one effect.

Changing Taxes and Senate Elections

1. In the late 1800s, federal officials depended heavily on tariffs, taxes on imported goods. Reformers argued that a tax on income could raise money from people able to pay more. Congress passed an income tax in 1894, but in 1895 the Supreme Court struck down key parts of it in Pollock v. Farmers' Loan & Trust Co. During a 1909 fight over tariffs, Congress proposed the 16th Amendment to remove that constitutional obstacle. Ratified in 1913, it let Congress tax incomes without dividing the tax among states according to population. Congress soon enacted a new federal income tax.

2. Before 1913, state legislatures chose U.S. senators. This gave state lawmakers direct control over the choice, but rival factions sometimes failed to agree, leaving Senate seats empty. Reports of bribery and the influence of wealthy interests also fed demands for change. Reformers pushed for voters to choose senators themselves; some states tried advisory votes before the Constitution changed. Congress proposed the 17th Amendment in 1912, and states ratified it in 1913. From then on, voters elected senators directly. State legislatures no longer made the regular choice, but each state still sent two senators to Congress.

3. The two changes grew from different problems, yet both shifted power at the national level. The 16th Amendment gave Congress a firmer legal basis for collecting income taxes, expanding a source of federal revenue beyond tariffs. The 17th Amendment moved the choice of senators from state capitols to voters, making senators answer more directly to the public. Neither amendment appeared overnight: court decisions and tariff debates shaped one, while legislative deadlocks and reform campaigns shaped the other. Reading these chains of events shows how a complaint can lead to a proposal, a ratified amendment, and a lasting change in government.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the 1894 income tax and the 1895 Court decision lead toward the proposal of the 16th Amendment?

2. After ratification, how did the 16th Amendment change Congress's ability to raise revenue?

3. Trace how problems with choosing senators led to the 17th Amendment, including one step reformers took before Congress proposed it.

4. After the 17th Amendment was ratified, what changed about Senate elections, and what stayed the same?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph of 5 to 6 sentences tracing both amendments from an earlier problem through proposal and ratification to an effect. Use dates from the passage, and end by explaining how the amendments' effects differed.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.2.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle an earlier problem for each amendment. For each amendment, number its proposal and ratification 1 and 2, then underline one effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the 1894 income tax and the 1895 Court decision lead toward the proposal of the 16th Amendment?	**Congress passed an income tax in 1894, but the Court struck down key parts in 1895. Congress proposed the amendment in 1909 to remove that constitutional obstacle.**
2	After ratification, how did the 16th Amendment change Congress's ability to raise revenue?	**It allowed Congress to tax incomes without dividing the tax among states by population, providing a source of revenue beyond tariffs.**
3	Trace how problems with choosing senators led to the 17th Amendment, including one step reformers took before Congress proposed it.	**Deadlocks and concerns about bribery increased demands for change. Some states tried advisory votes before Congress proposed the amendment in 1912 and states ratified it in 1913.**
4	After the 17th Amendment was ratified, what changed about Senate elections, and what stayed the same?	**Voters, rather than state legislatures, made the regular choice of senators. Each state still sent two senators to Congress.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Tariffs supplied much federal revenue, but reformers wanted an income tax that could reach people able to pay more. After the Supreme Court struck down key parts of an 1894 tax in 1895, Congress proposed the 16th Amendment in 1909, and states ratified it in 1913. It allowed federal income taxes without dividing the tax among states by population. Meanwhile, deadlocks and bribery concerns raised objections to state legislatures choosing senators. Congress proposed the 17th Amendment in 1912, and states ratified it in 1913, giving voters the regular choice of senators. One change expanded federal taxing power; the other changed who chose senators.

Accept other problems and effects stated in the passage if students connect them accurately to the correct amendment. The paragraph should trace both sequences and distinguish a change in taxing power from a change in selecting senators.