Power to the People

How reformers challenged economic and political power

USH.C.2.3 "Evaluate the rise and reforms of Populism and the Progressive Movement. Describe how democratic processes (e.g., direct primary, initiative petition, referendum..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two problems, circle the reform offered for each, and label each problem and its matching reform with the same number to show cause and response.

Reform from Farms to Washington

1. In the 1890s, farmers faced railroad charges and debts that were hard to repay. Populists sought railroad regulation and more silver coinage to expand the money supply and ease debt. In his 1896 "Cross of Gold" speech, Democrat William Jennings Bryan attacked the gold standard as unfair to workers and farmers. The Populists endorsed Bryan for president, but he lost. His message brought Populist economic demands into a major party campaign, even though free silver did not become federal policy.

2. As giant trusts gained control of industries, they could curb competition, raise consumer prices, and weaken workers' bargaining power. Congress passed the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890 to prohibit monopolization and certain restraints on trade. The Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 barred specific business practices that could reduce competition and limited the use of antitrust law against labor unions. Progressives also fought political corruption: direct primaries let voters choose party nominees, initiative petitions proposed laws, referendums let voters decide laws, and recalls let voters remove officials before terms ended.

3. After the Supreme Court struck down a federal income tax in 1895, Congress proposed the Sixteenth Amendment in 1909. Ratified in 1913, it permitted federal income taxes without dividing them among states by population, expanding federal revenue. State legislatures once chose U.S. senators, but deadlocks and bribery charges fueled calls for change. Congress proposed the Seventeenth Amendment in 1912; ratified in 1913, it gave voters direct elections for senators. These changes expanded federal capacity and voter power, though neither ended corruption.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Bryan's message matter to the Populists even though he lost?

2. How did the Sherman and Clayton Acts respond to the power of trusts?

3. How did a direct primary and a recall give voters power at different points in an official's career?

4. What problem led to each amendment, and what changed after ratification?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine party leaders choosing candidates behind closed doors while lawmakers refuse to consider a popular food-safety law. In three sentences, recommend two different reforms from the passage and explain how each would shift power to voters.

ANSWER KEY

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two problems, circle the reform offered for each, and label each problem and its matching reform with the same number to show cause and response. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Bryan's message matter to the Populists even though he lost?	**His campaign brought their demands, including silver coinage, into a major party's national campaign.**
2	How did the Sherman and Clayton Acts respond to the power of trusts?	**Sherman prohibited monopolization and certain restraints on trade. Clayton barred specific practices that could reduce competition and limited antitrust action against labor unions.**
3	How did a direct primary and a recall give voters power at different points in an official's career?	**A direct primary let voters choose a party nominee before an election. A recall let voters remove an official before the term ended.**
4	What problem led to each amendment, and what changed after ratification?	**The Sixteenth followed the 1895 income-tax ruling and permitted federal income taxes without apportionment among states. The Seventeenth responded to deadlocks and bribery charges in state legislatures by giving voters direct elections for senators.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The state should use direct primaries so voters, rather than party leaders, choose party nominees. It should also allow initiative petitions so voters can put a food-safety proposal forward when lawmakers refuse to act. Together, these reforms would give voters more control over candidates and proposed laws.

For marking, accept any two accurately matched problems and reforms in the passage. For the open task, accept other relevant reforms if the response explains how each addresses the stated situation.