When Values Clashed

Read how Americans debated change in the early 20th century.

USH.C.4.1.A "Explain how the era reflected change, characterized by clashes between modern and traditional values, exemplified by the passage of the 18th and 21st Amendments, the Scopes Trial, issues of women's rights..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one change in each paragraph. Circle words that show opposing views, then number the three conflicts 1, 2, and 3.

Arguments About Progress

1. In the 1920s, Americans debated what progress should look like. Supporters of Prohibition saw alcohol as a threat to families and public order. The 18th Amendment, ratified in 1919, banned the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquor nationwide. Yet illegal bars and alcohol sales persisted, and opponents argued that the ban limited personal freedom. In 1933, the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th. The reversal showed that a national law could not settle a conflict over values.

2. In a Tennessee courtroom in 1925, teacher John Scopes faced trial for teaching human evolution in violation of state law. Some religious traditionalists argued that the lesson challenged biblical accounts of creation. Defenders of the lesson argued that public schools should teach scientific ideas without that restriction. Scopes was found guilty, but the case drew national attention. Newspaper coverage carried this local dispute into homes across the country, making the classroom a stage for arguments about faith, science, and authority.

3. Arguments over women's voting rights also exposed competing views of women's place in public life. Carrie Chapman Catt organized state campaigns and lobbied lawmakers, while Alice Paul led pickets and pressed for a federal amendment. Both sought votes for women, despite different tactics. Their efforts helped win ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which barred denying the vote on account of sex. Yet discriminatory laws and practices still kept many women of color from voting, especially in the South.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What competing values shaped the debate over Prohibition, and what did the 21st Amendment change?

2. How did the Scopes Trial expose a disagreement about what public schools should teach?

3. How did Catt's and Paul's methods differ, and what change did both seek?

4. How did the 19th Amendment change voting rights, and why did it not give all women equal access to the ballot?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence newspaper letter set in 1925. Support one change in the passage but express concern about another, using a specific detail about each to explain your views.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.4.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one change in each paragraph. Circle words that show opposing views, then number the three conflicts 1, 2, and 3. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What competing values shaped the debate over Prohibition, and what did the 21st Amendment change?	**Supporters valued protecting families and public order, while opponents valued personal freedom. The 21st Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment's nationwide alcohol ban.**
2	How did the Scopes Trial expose a disagreement about what public schools should teach?	**Some religious traditionalists objected to teaching human evolution because it challenged biblical accounts of creation. Defenders argued that schools should be able to teach scientific ideas.**
3	How did Catt's and Paul's methods differ, and what change did both seek?	**Catt organized state campaigns and lobbied lawmakers; Paul led pickets and pressed for a federal amendment. Both sought voting rights for women.**
4	How did the 19th Amendment change voting rights, and why did it not give all women equal access to the ballot?	**It barred denying the vote on account of sex, but discriminatory laws and practices still prevented many women of color from voting.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I cheered when the 19th Amendment barred denying women the vote because of sex, since my sister should have a say in the laws that govern her. Yet I worry about the science lesson at the center of the Scopes Trial because I want my children taught the biblical account of creation. Some neighbors see women's voting rights as a break with tradition, but I believe women can vote without giving up our faith. To me, supporting one change does not mean accepting every new idea.

Accept accurate descriptions of competing values supported by passage details. For the letter, look for four sentences with a plausible 1925 viewpoint that supports one change while questioning another.