What Changed at the Polls?

Use a data table and historical context to test a claim

USH.P.3.1.B "Analyze information from visual, oral, digital, and interactive texts (e.g., maps, charts, images, political cartoons, videos, artwork) in order to draw conclusions and defend arguments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details in the passage that help explain the table, circle one limit of the table, and number the two percentages. Use these marks to decide what claim the evidence can support.

Voting Registration in Mississippi

(1) In 1964, many Black citizens in Mississippi faced literacy tests, intimidation, and officials who refused to register them. Local civil rights groups organized registration drives despite these barriers. The table compares estimates of the share of eligible Black voters registered before and after Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Read the dates as carefully as the numbers.

MISSISSIPPI BLACK VOTER REGISTRATION, HISTORICAL ESTIMATES

Year	Share of eligible Black voters registered
1964	6.7%
1967	59.8%

(2) The 1965 law suspended literacy tests in covered areas and authorized federal examiners to register voters. In Mississippi, volunteers kept visiting homes, holding meetings, and helping neighbors complete registration forms. The table tracks the state as a whole, not individual counties. It also records registration, not how many people cast a ballot on Election Day.

(3) A 1964 campaign called Freedom Summer brought hundreds of volunteers to Mississippi, while local activists had been organizing for years. News reports could describe intimidation, and interviews could reveal why a particular person registered. Neither kind of source would count every new voter by itself. When sources answer different questions, a conclusion must match the evidence used.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What change does the table show from 1964 to 1967? Give the difference in percentage points.

2. A visitor says, "Nothing changed for Black voters after 1964." What evidence challenges that claim, and what does that evidence measure?

3. Can the table prove that the Voting Rights Act caused every new registration? Use one detail from the passage to defend your answer.

4. What additional data would you need to test whether other states had a similar change?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a headline and a four-sentence museum label responding to a visitor who says the 1965 law alone explains every new registration. Include both percentages, another action from the passage, and one limit of the table.

ANSWER KEY

What Changed at the Polls?

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.P.3.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details in the passage that help explain the table, circle one limit of the table, and number the two percentages. Use these marks to decide what claim the evidence can support. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What change does the table show from 1964 to 1967? Give the difference in percentage points.	**The share rose from 6.7% to 59.8%, an increase of 53.1 percentage points.**
2	A visitor says, "Nothing changed for Black voters after 1964." What evidence challenges that claim, and what does that evidence measure?	**The table shows that Black voter registration in Mississippi rose from 6.7% in 1964 to 59.8% in 1967. It measures registration, not votes cast.**
3	Can the table prove that the Voting Rights Act caused every new registration? Use one detail from the passage to defend your answer.	**No. Local activists and volunteers also organized registration drives, so the table cannot identify what caused each person to register.**
4	What additional data would you need to test whether other states had a similar change?	**Comparable Black voter registration rates from other states for years before and after the 1965 law.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Registration Rose, but One Cause Is Not Enough

In Mississippi, the share of eligible Black voters registered rose from 6.7% in 1964 to 59.8% in 1967. The 1965 Voting Rights Act removed barriers in covered areas. Local volunteers also continued to help people register. Because the table counts registration statewide, it cannot show which action helped each person.

Accept claims that distinguish the rise in registration from its possible causes. Students should not treat registration figures as a count of ballots cast or as evidence about other states.