Tracing the Migration

Use three sources to test a claim about Chicago's growth.

USH.P.3.1 "Comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize textual sources to acquire and refine knowledge in the social studies. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, evaluating features such as author, date..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each source's creator and date, underline one piece of evidence from each source, and number one limit of each source 1, 2, or 3. Use your marks to separate what the sources show from what they cannot prove.

Why Did Chicago Grow?

1. In 1917, the Chicago Defender, a Black-owned newspaper published in Chicago, urged African Americans in the South to move north. Its articles described job openings and warned of racial violence in the South. The paper's editors wanted readers to act, so their words reveal both conditions people faced and a campaign to change where people lived. But a newspaper printed in Chicago could not speak for every Southern family. Its reports also cannot show how many readers actually moved. When historians use this primary source, they must distinguish what the editors urged from what migrants did.

2. The U.S. Census Bureau counted 44,103 Black residents in Chicago in 1910 and 109,458 in 1920. These official counts offer evidence that the city's Black population grew sharply during the decade. They do not say which residents had moved from the South, why they chose Chicago, or whether they had read the Defender. A count from two dates also cannot pinpoint when the growth occurred. Unlike the newspaper's call to move, the census records population, not a persuasive message. Together, the sources suggest a rise in Chicago's Black population, but not that the paper caused it.

3. In The Warmth of Other Suns, published in 2010, journalist Isabel Wilkerson used interviews and historical research to tell the stories of people who left the South during the Great Migration. Her later account connects individual choices to unequal treatment, threats of violence, and hopes for work elsewhere. Because she wrote decades after the events, she could compare many accounts with other records. Yet the people whose stories survive cannot represent every migrant. Read beside the Defender and census counts, her work adds possible reasons for movement without proving why each new Chicago resident arrived.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the Chicago Defender's place of publication and purpose affect what you can learn from it?

2. What conclusion do the census counts support, and what claim about the Defender do they not support?

3. What does Wilkerson's 2010 account add to the census counts? Name one limit of her account.

4. What evidence from two named sources suggests that both work and safety mattered to some people who left the South?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 100 word exhibit label responding to this claim: “One newspaper caused Chicago's Black population to rise.” Cite evidence from at least two named sources, explain one limit of the evidence, and name an additional source you would seek to test the claim.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.P.3.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each source's creator and date, underline one piece of evidence from each source, and number one limit of each source 1, 2, or 3. Use your marks to separate what the sources show from what they cannot prove. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the Chicago Defender's place of publication and purpose affect what you can learn from it?	**The Chicago newspaper shows what its editors wanted Southern readers to know and do, but it cannot speak for every Southern family or show how many readers moved.**
2	What conclusion do the census counts support, and what claim about the Defender do they not support?	**They show that Chicago's Black population grew from 44,103 in 1910 to 109,458 in 1920. They do not show that the Defender caused that growth.**
3	What does Wilkerson's 2010 account add to the census counts? Name one limit of her account.	**It adds possible reasons people left the South, including unequal treatment, violence, and hopes for work. The surviving stories cannot represent every migrant.**
4	What evidence from two named sources suggests that both work and safety mattered to some people who left the South?	**The Chicago Defender described job openings and racial violence. Wilkerson's account connects migrants' choices to hopes for work and threats of violence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An exhibit should not say the Chicago Defender caused Chicago's population growth. The Chicago Defender, published in 1917, urged Southern readers to move north and described jobs and racial violence. U.S. Census Bureau counts show Chicago's Black population rose from 44,103 in 1910 to 109,458 in 1920. However, the census does not record who read the paper or why anyone moved. To test the newspaper's influence, I would look for letters from migrants that mention reading the Defender before leaving home.

Accept different conclusions if students cite two named sources and distinguish evidence of population growth from evidence of its causes. An additional source should be relevant to testing the newspaper's influence, such as a migrant letter or interview.