

Many Voices, One Nation

Analyze how groups have shaped ideas about the United States.

8.23.D “analyze the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to our national identity; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each group’s contribution, then circle the words that show how that contribution shaped an idea about U.S. national identity.

Contributions to National Identity

- ① From spirituals sung in Black communities to blues and jazz, African American artists created forms that became central to U.S. music. Writers and speakers such as Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, and Martin Luther King Jr. also challenged the nation to apply its stated ideals of liberty and equality to everyone. Their organizing, speeches, and writing helped change laws and public attitudes. These contributions made national identity more closely connected to creativity, protest, and the continuing struggle for civil rights.
- ② Religious communities have shaped national ideals as well. In 1883, Jewish American poet Emma Lazarus wrote “The New Colossus,” including words later placed on the Statue of Liberty. Her poem described the statue as a welcome to people seeking refuge and opportunity. The poem did not end debates over immigration, but it gave many Americans a lasting image of the United States as a place that can welcome newcomers. That image became part of national identity.
- ③ Asian American communities have also influenced what the nation remembers about work and rights. Chinese laborers were essential to building much of the western section of the first transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869, yet they faced discrimination and exclusion. During World War II, the U.S. government imprisoned many Japanese Americans without individual trials. Later, Japanese American activists sought a public apology and reparations, which Congress authorized in 1988. Their experiences remind the nation that belonging requires protecting rights as well as praising opportunity.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did African American artists and activists shape ideas about U.S. national identity?

2 How did Emma Lazarus’s poem influence an idea many Americans hold about the United States?

3 What do the experiences of Chinese and Japanese Americans show about the relationship between belonging and rights?

4 Use two details from different paragraphs to explain how groups can both challenge and shape national identity.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label that connects contributions from two groups in the passage. Name one specific contribution from each group, explain a shared idea about national identity, and include one challenge or tension the groups faced.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each group's contribution, then circle the words that show how that contribution shaped an idea about U.S. national identity. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did African American artists and activists shape ideas about U.S. national identity?	They made African American music central to U.S. culture and pushed the nation to connect its identity with creativity, civil rights, liberty, and equality.
2	How did Emma Lazarus's poem influence an idea many Americans hold about the United States?	It presented the United States as a place that can welcome newcomers seeking refuge and opportunity.
3	What do the experiences of Chinese and Japanese Americans show about the relationship between belonging and rights?	They show that people contributed important work to the nation while facing discrimination, and that belonging requires protecting rights.
4	Use two details from different paragraphs to explain how groups can both challenge and shape national identity.	Answers should cite two groups and explain their impact, such as Black activists pressing the nation toward equality and Japanese American activists helping the nation recognize the need to protect rights.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

African American musicians made blues and jazz important parts of U.S. culture. Jewish American poet Emma Lazarus gave many people an image of the United States as a welcome to newcomers. Together, these contributions connect national identity to creativity and hope. However, debates over immigration show that the idea of welcome has not always been fully accepted.

Accept accurate connections between any two groups discussed in the passage. A strong response names specific contributions, explains an idea about national identity, and identifies a passage-based challenge or tension.