

Seats of Change

Tracing how Reconstruction elections reshaped representation in government

8.9.B “explain the impact of the election of African Americans from the South such as Hiram Rhodes Revels; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three details that show how the election of African Americans from the South changed government or political participation. Number the details 1, 2, and 3 to show three different impacts.

A New Voice in Government

- ① After the Civil War, the Constitution changed in ways that reshaped politics. The Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, and the Fifteenth Amendment barred states from denying voting rights because of race. During Reconstruction, many African American men in the South voted and ran for office. In 1870, Mississippi's legislature chose Hiram Rhodes Revels, a minister and educator, to fill a United States Senate seat. He became the first African American to serve in either house of Congress.
- ② Revels's election had an important symbolic impact. His presence in the Senate challenged the old belief that government should be led only by white men. It showed that formerly enslaved people and other African Americans could take part in public decision making at the national level. Revels also spoke against racial discrimination and supported education. His service gave Black citizens a visible representative in Congress and across the country while Reconstruction laws were being debated and enforced.
- ③ Revels was part of a larger change. African American voters in Southern states helped elect Black local officials, state legislators, and members of Congress. These officeholders brought new views to government and worked on issues such as public education and civil rights. Their elections did not end racism or guarantee lasting power. White supremacist violence, fraud, and restrictive laws weakened Black political participation. As Reconstruction ended, many African American leaders were forced from office, and Southern states limited Black voting for decades.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What made Hiram Rhodes Revels's service in the Senate historically significant?

2 How did Revels's election challenge an older belief about who should lead the government?

3 Explain one way Revels's service affected Black citizens during Reconstruction.

4 Why did the election of African American officials not guarantee lasting political power in the South?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence historical claim explaining the impact of electing African Americans from the South during Reconstruction. Include two details from the passage and explain one reason these political gains faced limits.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three details that show how the election of African Americans from the South changed government or political participation. Number the details 1, 2, and 3 to show three different impacts. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What made Hiram Rhodes Revels's service in the Senate historically significant?	He was the first African American to serve in either house of Congress.
2	How did Revels's election challenge an older belief about who should lead the government?	His presence in the Senate challenged the belief that only white men should lead government.
3	Explain one way Revels's service affected Black citizens during Reconstruction.	It gave Black citizens a visible representative in Congress and showed that African Americans could participate in national public decision making.
4	Why did the election of African American officials not guarantee lasting political power in the South?	White supremacist violence, fraud, and restrictive laws weakened Black political participation, especially after Reconstruction ended.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The election of African Americans from the South changed government by bringing Black representatives into offices from local governments to Congress. Hiram Rhodes Revels's Senate service challenged the idea that only white men should lead and gave Black citizens a visible voice in national decisions. However, violence, fraud, and restrictive laws weakened these gains after Reconstruction.

Accept equivalent claims that explain both expanded representation and the limits placed on it. For Part 3, look for two accurate passage details and one accurate explanation of why the gains did not last.