

Rights and Barriers

Reconstruction changed Virginia, but equality was not fully protected.

VS.8 “The student will apply history and social science skills to explain the reconstruction of Virginia following the Civil War by describing what the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution accomplished...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three sentences that explain an amendment, then circle four details that show how life changed or stayed unfair for African Americans in Virginia.

Virginia After the War

- ① After the Civil War, three amendments changed the U.S. Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment said that people born in the United States were citizens and should receive equal protection of the laws. The Fifteenth Amendment said states could not deny citizens the right to vote because of race. These changes gave African Americans important new legal rights.
- ② During Reconstruction, Virginia returned to the Union and rebuilt its government after the war. Freedmen’s Schools gave many African American children and adults a chance to learn to read and write. In 1890, Congress seated John Mercer Langston as a representative from Virginia. He was the first African American to represent Virginia in Congress, showing that political progress was possible.
- ③ In 1896, the Supreme Court decided Plessy v. Ferguson. The Court said states could require racial separation in public places if facilities were “separate but equal.” This decision supported segregation and Jim Crow laws in Virginia. African Americans faced separate schools, train cars, and other public places. Laws and unfair practices also made voting harder for many African American men.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What did the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments accomplish?

2 How did Freedmen's Schools affect the lives of African Americans in Virginia?

3 Why was John Mercer Langston's seat in Congress important for Virginia?

4 How did Plessy v. Ferguson affect life for African Americans in Virginia? Name two effects described in the passage.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write three sentences explaining how Reconstruction brought both change and limits for African Americans in Virginia. Include one detail about new rights, education, or political progress and one detail about segregation or voting.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the three sentences that explain an amendment, then circle four details that show how life changed or stayed unfair for African Americans in Virginia. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments accomplish?	The Thirteenth ended slavery. The Fourteenth made people born in the United States citizens and called for equal protection. The Fifteenth said states could not deny citizens voting rights because of race.
2	How did Freedmen's Schools affect the lives of African Americans in Virginia?	They gave many African American children and adults a chance to learn to read and write.
3	Why was John Mercer Langston's seat in Congress important for Virginia?	He was the first African American to represent Virginia in Congress. His seat showed that political progress was possible.
4	How did Plessy v. Ferguson affect life for African Americans in Virginia? Name two effects described in the passage.	The decision supported segregation and Jim Crow laws. African Americans were separated in places such as schools and train cars, and voting was made harder for many African American men.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Reconstruction brought new rights because the Fourteenth Amendment made people born in the United States citizens with equal protection. Freedmen's Schools helped African Americans gain reading and writing skills. Later, Plessy v. Ferguson supported segregation, so Jim Crow laws separated African Americans and made voting harder.

Accept equivalent descriptions that use accurate details from the passage. For the open response, look for both a Reconstruction-era change and a later limit caused by segregation or voting barriers.