

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did the 15th Amendment do?

- A. It aimed to overcome legal barriers within states that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote.
- B. It prohibited states from denying a male citizen the right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
- C. It aimed to create legal barriers within states that would prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote.
- D. It allowed states to deny a male citizen the right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

2. As described in the text, the Voting Rights Act was a solution created to address what problem?

- A. African Americans did not yet have the right to vote.
- B. Women did not yet have the right to vote.
- C. African Americans were being prevented from exercising their right to vote.
- D. Women were being prevented from exercising their right to vote.

**3. Read these sentences from the text:**

"After the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865), the 15th Amendment, ratified in 1870, prohibited states from denying a male citizen the right to vote based on 'race, color or previous condition of servitude.' Nevertheless, in the ensuing decades, various discriminatory practices were used to prevent African Americans, particularly those in the South, from exercising their right to vote.

[...]

"Although the Voting Rights Act passed, state and local enforcement of the law was weak and it often was ignored outright, mainly in the South and in areas where the proportion of blacks in the population was high and their vote threatened the political status quo."

Based on the evidence in the text, what inference can you make about the reaction many southern states have had to civil rights laws?

- A. Many states in the South did not agree with civil rights laws, but followed them.
- B. Many states in the South encouraged and supported civil rights laws.
- C. Many states in the South did not respect nor comply with civil rights laws.
- D. Many states in the South did not care about or object to civil rights laws.

**4. Why might the number of African American members in the House and Senate have increased between 1965 and 1971?**

- A. The 15th Amendment required a higher number of African Americans in the House and the Senate.
- B. The Voting Rights Act encouraged more white voters in the South to vote for African American representation in the House and Senate.
- C. The Voting Rights Act required a higher number of African Americans in the House and the Senate.
- D. More African Americans were able to vote for the people that represented them in the House and Senate, including more African Americans, due to the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. After the Civil War, the 15th Amendment prohibited states from denying a male citizen the right to vote based on race.
- B. Many states used various discriminatory practices to prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote.
- C. The Voting Rights Act gave African American voters the legal means to challenge voting restrictions, and the act vastly improved voter turnout.
- D. The Voting Rights Act has been amended to include such features as the protection of voting rights for non-English-speaking Americans.

6. Read these sentences from the text:

"During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, voting rights activists in the South were subjected to various forms of mistreatment and violence. One event that outraged many Americans occurred on March 7, 1965, when peaceful participants in a voting rights march from Selma, Alabama, to the state capital in Montgomery were met by Alabama state troopers who attacked them with nightsticks, tear gas and whips after they refused to turn back. Some protesters were severely beaten, and others ran for their lives."

Based on this evidence, what is the meaning of the phrase "subjected to" in this excerpt?

- A. protected from
- B. exposed to
- C. taught about
- D. encouraged by

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ African American men were given the right to vote by the 15th Amendment, various discriminatory practices still prevented them from exercising this right.

- A. Although
- B. However
- C. Primarily
- D. Including

8. What did the Voting Rights Act aim to do?

9. Describe at least two ways blacks were prevented from exercising their right to vote before the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. Why might the Voting Rights Act be considered to be among the most farreaching pieces of civil rights legislation in U.S. history? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

1. What did the 15th Amendment do?

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**B. It prohibited states from denying a male citizen the right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.**

C. It aimed to create legal barriers within states that would prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote.

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A. Although

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C. Primarily

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8. What did the Voting Rights Act aim to do?

The Voting Rights Act aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote under the 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

9. Describe at least two ways blacks were prevented from exercising their right to vote before the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Students should generally describe two of the following ways blacks were prevented from voting: Blacks attempting to vote often were told by election officials that they had gotten the date, time, or polling place wrong, that they possessed insufficient literacy skills, or that they had filled out an application incorrectly. Blacks were often forced to take literacy tests, which they inevitably failed. Voting officials had been known to force black voters to "recite the entire Constitution or explain the most complex provisions of state laws," a task most white voters would have been hardpressed to accomplish. In some cases, even blacks with college degrees were turned away from the polls.

10. Why might the Voting Rights Act be considered to be among the most farreaching pieces of civil rights legislation in U.S. history? Support your answer with evidence from the text.



Answers may vary but should be supported by the text. For example: The Voting Rights Act may be considered among the most far-reaching pieces of civil rights legislation in U.S. history because it vastly improved voter turnout and gave African American voters the legal means to challenge voting restrictions. Although state and local enforcement of the law was weak at first, the act significantly widened the franchise. In Mississippi alone, voter turnout among blacks increased from 6 percent in 1964 to 59 percent in 1969. Additionally, the years after the law was passed saw an increase in African-American representation. In 1965, at the time of the passage of the Voting Rights Act, there were six African American members of the U.S. House of Representatives and no blacks in the U.S. Senate. By 1971, there were 13 black members of the House and one black member of the Senate.