

TASK 1 – How ‘free’ were African Americans after the Civil War

You will have looked 5 themes in relation to the levels of freedom Black Americans faced after 1865.

For each one, write down a number on the scale of 1-10 for how free they were [1 being the lowest, and 10 the highest].

Then, EXPLAIN why you have chosen that particular number.

Theme 1: LEGAL RIGHTS

Score: THIS IS THE PERSONAL JUDGEMENT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

Explanation:

Students must ensure they make reference to the following points of information as outlined in the information slides to present their explanation for the score they gave of how free African Americans were as a result of this theme.

Positive Factors may include the following;

- *Equal civil rights* – The question of ‘how equal’ they actually were may be addressed but it enabled Black & White Americans to be viewed the same as under the Constitution.
- *The right to vote* – African Americans sought to have their voices heard and representation of their views in local and national government
- *The right to legally own land* – African Americans no longer had to rely upon the goodwill of land owners to rent them property
- *The right to marry and have children without fear of separation* – African Americans sought to enjoy the same civil liberties as other American citizens

Negative factors may include the following;

- **Racism strong in the south.** – Geographically life was different for African Americans across the USA, from state to state; the experiences of African Americans could be totally different. This was a long term result of the fall out of the Civil War and legacy of plantation life of slavery in the southern states of the USA
- **In 1877, Black people’s rights limited** – Their rights access to the same civil liberties were limited depending on each individual state – this affected their day to day lives and how they attempted to improve their experiences as ‘free’ citizens
- **1870, they took away the Black people’s right to vote** – Their right to vote was made more difficult as they often faced intimidation and legal barriers to registering to vote

Theme 2: The Freedman's Bureau

Score: THIS IS THE PERSONAL JUDGEMENT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

Explanation:

Students must ensure they make reference to the following points of information as outlined in the information slides to present their explanation for the score they gave of how free African Americans were as a result of this theme

Positive factors may include the following;

- *Helped freed slaves with any problems.* – African Americans now had legal assistance and opportunities to better their quality of life
- *It opened 400 free schools, educating 250,000 Black students.* – African Americans now saw the benefit of structured education to improve their quality of life and become informed citizens
- *By 1870, 21% of Black people could read.* – As literacy rates improved, African Americans were in a position to find employment in other areas outside of labour including the professional markets of the late 19th and 20th Century

Negative factors may include the following;

- **By 1877 schools were forced to close by white racists.** – African American students faced intimidation and there was a reluctance to allow these schools to continue and educate the African American school children
- **They burned many down and beat up Black students.** – African American students were also physically assaulted as well as intimidated. This was an attempt to discourage African American students of getting an education.

Theme 3: Sharecropping

Score: THIS IS THE PERSONAL JUDGEMENT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

Explanation: Students must ensure they make reference to the following points of information as outlined in the information slides to present their explanation for the score they gave of how free African Americans were as a result of this theme

Positive factors may include the following;

- *Introduced by white landowners in the south.* – This was an attempt to improve relations between White landowners and the African American community
- *They needed workers on the huge plantations.* – This ensured that African Americans were able to find work in which they were skilled and experienced in while also allowing business and landowners to continue to make a profit
- *Freed slaves work on the land in return for a share of the crops* – African Americans who were not skilled or educated could now be in a position to see a profitable return for their work and labour and also ensured that they were able to provide for their family.

Negative factors may include the following;

- **They had to buy their tools from the landowners** - This was dependant on the goodwill and good relations of the landowners who often ensured that workers could not go and work for anyone else and therefore controlled their workforce
- **Slaves got into debt if the crops failed.** – Workers were often punished for factors that were well beyond their control, this was a problem in the Southern States who often experiences seasons of drought
- **Spend more money than they made** – In order to maintain a good amount of work and productivity, workers were often buying tools and equipment and this was at a cost to the them rather than the landowners. Workers rarely made enough money to support their families and improve their quality of life to a great deal.
- **Under control of the landowners** – As African Americans had little to no other experiences of work and wealth, they were unwilling and unable to move for a 'new life'. They often found themselves still under the strict controls of the plantation land owners in order to just get by and provide food and shelter for their families.

Theme 4: The Ku Klux Klan

Score: THIS IS THE PERSONAL JUDGEMENT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

Explanation: Students must ensure they make reference to the following points of information as outlined in the information slides to present their explanation for the score they gave of how free African Americans were as a result of this theme

Negative factors may include the following;

- **Scared Black people** – African American people often lived in fear and intimidation was a regular occurrence for them
- **Whites who supported Blacks, were threatened** – Those white people who sought to support the movement for equality and integration were often themselves victims of attacks as they were seen to be mixing with the enemy.
- **They used violence** -Violence occurred in different ways from physical assault, to verbal abuse as well as attacks on property and houses.
- **Black people were beaten** – Lynching was a regular occurrence in which African Americans were kidnapped, tied up and often beaten up and / or tied to a tree or post. When at its worse, African Americans were hung to death from a tree and these murders often went unpunished due to the KKK having influence in the police and the courts of America.
- **The KKK was banned in 1872 but it continued illegally** – Although an illegal organisation, they KKK had influence across the legal and judiciary systems of America, particularly in smaller, rural communities and were able to carry out violence and intimidation with little to no opposition from the wider community.

Theme 5: Segregation

Score: THIS IS THE PERSONAL JUDGEMENT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

Explanation: Students must ensure they make reference to the following points of information as outlined in the information slides to present their explanation for the score they gave of how free African Americans were as a result of this theme

Negative factors may include the following;

- **It was law to keep black and whites separated** – White and Black people of America often had to use separate public facilities including parks, pools and transport
- **Black people lived in the poorer areas** – As suburban living developed and increased across America, African Americans were not in a position to buy these new developments and often found themselves living in the poorer inner city areas of the ghettos of America.
- **They had poorer schools** – African American schools did not enjoy the same financial support and often their facilities lacked the adequate standard for education in comparison to what of 'White' schools.
- **Separate seats on buses and in churches.** – African Americans often had to sit at the back of public transport and churches. The most notable case of this was Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat on a bus when a white person had sought to sit down.
- **Violence was used** – In order to enforce the segregation of the two communities, violence was used by the local communities as well as by the police and National Guard to enforce strict segregation between them.