

# Explain pick-up

## Black Americas in the Civil War era, 1860-90

**This revision activity works best if you do it with a friend, and talk about it as you do it.**

The 36 cards below all describe some aspect of Black Americans' lives in the Civil War era, 1860-90.

Cut up the cards and place them face down. In turn, pick up a card, explain whose life it might affect, how, and how much, then place it face up in one of two piles: 'made life better', and 'made life worse'.

When you have finished 'weigh' the two piles – did life get better, or worse, for Black Americans, 1860-90?

Repeat the game from the point of view of specific groups – e.g. the Black American women, White Southerners, Black American children etc. Is the answer the same for EVERYONE, or did different groups fare differently?

Divide the cards into three piles – before 1861; 1861-77; after 1877. Again, split the piles into two piles: 'made life better', and 'made life worse'. Did life get better for Black Americans in the Civil War era, 1860-90?

Reconstruction gave most former Confederates' land back to them	The health of enslaved people was poor, due to lack of sanitation, poor food and unrelenting hard labour	Contrabands were made to do non-fighting tasks such as labouring and nursing. They were not always paid.
The Southern States were required to set up public schools, and Black illiteracy gradually declined	Emancipated Black people were forced to sign up for a one-year contract working for the Union Army or employer	In 1865, General Sherman set aside more than 400,000 acres of plantations for settlement by the formerly-enslaved
Enslaved people could not buy or sell goods; own a gun; or leave the plantation without permission	The 14th Amendment (Civil Rights Act) guaranteed citizenship and "equal protection of the laws"	On rice plantations, malaria was rampant and child mortality was generally around 66%
Captured Black Union soldiers were not taken prisoner, but were shot as runaways	In April 1864 a Senate Act abolished slavery, which became the 13 <sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1865	The Confederate Army also used Black people, for non-fighting tasks

After 1877, groups such as the KKK, the White League, and Red Shirts terrorised Black communities	The first regiment of freed Black men was the South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment, formed in 1862	The condition of sharecroppers was in some ways worse than slavery
The 15th Amendment granted African American men the right to vote.	Not all slave-holders were cruel, but enslaved people were at their 'owner's' whim	Freedmen and Missionary Societies brought some relief to contrabands
Contrabands were not welcome to the Union Army, and were put into camps; mortality in the camps ran at 25%	After the 1877 Compromise, State Legislatures enacted Jim Crow laws to maintain white supremacy	Most land confiscated during the war went to speculators
More than 1,000 Black Schools and hundreds of Black Churches were built after 1865	In 1865, Congress created the Freedmen's Bureau	Some 400,000 Black Americans were 'free Blacks' in 1860
In the 25% of Southern homes which held enslaved people, they did most (often ALL) the work	In 1870 Hiram Revels became the first Black Senator and Joseph Rainey the first of seven Black Congressmen	The Union Army was segregated. Black units were less well-supplied, and had white officers
Before 1860, vigilante militias would patrol the local area, raiding Black gatherings	The Freedmen's Bureau gave freed enslaved people the right to lease 40 acres of confiscated land	Enslaved labour in the antebellum South generated great wealth and influence for the plantation owners
Formerly-enslaved people could apply for land under the Homestead Act and 70,000 'Exodusters' moved west	<i>Plessy v Ferguson</i> (1896) declared segregation legal	After 1877 State Legislatures enacted measures such as literacy tests to deprive Black Americans of the vote
Freed enslaved people were free to marry, and formed families	Intersecting with racism and class, slavery was an essential element of the South's antebellum identity	Contrabands following a Union Army into Kentucky were seized and sold as slaves