Assessment: African Americans in the Mid-1800s

Mastering the Content

Circle the letter next to the best answer.

1. Which is true of free African Americans living in both the North and the South?
   A. They faced discrimination and racism.
   B. They lived side by side with white Americans.
   C. They had the same rights as everyone else.
   D. They preferred living only with African Americans.

2. What was the legal status of slaves in the United States?
   A. citizen
   B. property
   C. dependents
   D. immigrants

3. What was the purpose of the National Council of Colored People?
   A. to provide jobs for freed slaves
   B. to encourage immigration from African nations
   C. to protest the treatment of African Americans
   D. to teach African Americans how to blend into white society

4. What was an effect of segregation policies in the North?
   A. People shared their culture with others.
   B. People were separated by race in public places.
   C. People were forced to live with different races.
   D. People were not allowed to practice their religion.

5. Why did Southerners who did not own slaves support slavery?
   A. They feared the power of the slaveholders.
   B. They believed they would be able to own slaves someday.
   C. They knew that the Southern economy depended on slave labor.
   D. They understood that the Constitution did not ban slavery in the South.

6. How did the cotton gin affect slaves?
   A. It made their lives easier.
   B. It increased the demand for slaves.
   C. It decreased the need for slave labor.
   D. It was the first step toward abolishing slavery.
7. What did Harriet Tubman’s work with the Underground Railroad involve?
   A. As a freed slave, she led others to take a stand against slave owners.
   B. As a freed slave, she bought slaves and then gave them their freedom.
   C. As an escaped slave, she guided slaves from the South to freedom.
   D. As an escaped slave, she opened a school for those who traveled to Canada.

8. Who was Denmark Vesey?
   A. a slave who escaped to Canada
   B. a Northern African American abolitionist
   C. a slavebreaker who punished spirited slaves
   D. a free African American who lead a slave revolt

9. Who resisted slavery by organizing a violent rebellion?
   A. Nat Turner
   B. Edward Covey
   C. Sojourner Truth
   D. Frederick Douglass

10. How did Southern states respond to slave rebellions?
    A. They gave slaves some freedom.
    B. They passed even stricter slave codes.
    C. They began to understand that slavery was wrong.
    D. They refused to take slaves back when they were captured.

11. What did slaves most fear?
    A. being sent back to Africa
    B. being forced to learn new skills
    C. being sold away from their families
    D. being disrespectful to their owners
12. How did the “invisible church” benefit slaves?
   A. It helped keep African languages alive.
   B. It provided a place for slaves to plot escape.
   C. It provided a means for slaves to comfort each other.
   D. It helped teach children the value of silence.

13. Which of these was the most common way slaves resisted slavery?
   A. by killing their owners
   B. by escaping to the North
   C. by organizing slave uprisings
   D. by finding ways to quietly rebel

14. Where did free African Americans in the South most often find work?
   A. on plantations
   B. in low-paying jobs
   C. in government jobs
   D. on land they owned

15. Which of these best describes the Underground Railroad?
   A. a series of tunnels used to move slaves to free states
   B. people who secretly helped slaves escape to the North
   C. a transportation system that moved slaves to freedom at night
   D. people who caught fugitive slaves and returned them to owners

16. Slaves expressed African cultural traditions in all of the following ways except
   A. through art.
   B. through music.
   C. through fieldwork.
   D. through folk tales.
Applying Social Studies Skills
Use the excerpt and your knowledge of history to answer the questions.

The real feelings and opinions of the slaves were not much known or respected by their masters... and in this respect Col. Lloyd was no exception to the rule. His slaves were so numerous he did not know them when he saw them. Nor, indeed, did all his slaves know him. It is reported of him, that riding along the road one day he met a colored man and addressed him...

"Well, boy, who do you belong to?"
"To Col. Lloyd," replied the slave.
"Well, does the Colonel treat you well?"
"No, Sir," was the ready reply.
"What, does he work you hard?"
"Yes, Sir."
"Well, don't he give you enough to eat?"
"Yes, sir, he gives me enough to eat, such as it is."

The Colonel rode on; the slave also went on about his business, not dreaming that he had been conversing with his master. He thought and said nothing of the matter, until two or three weeks afterwards, he was informed by his overseer that for having found fault with his master, he was now to be sold to a Georgia trader... This was the penalty of telling the simple truth.

- Frederick Douglass, in Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, 1881

17. How might Colonel Lloyd have interpreted this incident?
   A. "Slaves are of no value to me."
   B. "He should be grateful that I feed him well."
   C. "It is important to me that my slaves like me."
   D. "I must try to treat my slaves better so they are happier."

18. Why might this passage be considered a primary source?

19. Which of these describes an overseer as the word is used near the end of the passage?
   A. a person who helped slaves escape
   B. a person who was a slave supervisor
   C. a person who bought and sold slaves
   D. a person who was a spy for the slaves
Exploring the Essential Question
How did African Americans face slavery and discrimination in the mid-1800s?

Follow the directions to complete the item below.

20. In the lesson, African Americans of the 1800s were described this way: “That African Americans were neither humbled nor crushed by prejudice and discrimination was evidence of their courage and spirit.”

Write a short essay about this idea. In your essay, give four examples from the lesson that support or provide evidence of this description of the endurance of African Americans. Also make sure to convey your ideas clearly, using standard English.