

Equal Rights Promise Answer Key

Student responses may vary but should reflect the following ideas:

1. The law says that everyone born in the United States has the same rights as others to go to court, make legal agreements, and be protected by the laws.
2. It helped protect the rights of formerly enslaved people and ensured they were recognized as full citizens.
3. Formerly enslaved African Americans and other people of color.
4. Students may note that despite the law, discrimination continued and rights were not always protected, but the act was an important legal foundation.

Teacher's Guide

- Target Skill: Interpreting and paraphrasing primary source text
- Suggested Grades: 7-8

Teaching Tips

- Pre-teach difficult vocabulary: enforce, evidence, proceedings, security, property.
- Model paraphrasing a shorter phrase, showing how to simplify legal language.
- Encourage students to highlight key parts of the excerpt before rewriting it.

Differentiation

- Support: Provide a guided paraphrase frame or word bank for legal terms.
- Challenge: Ask students to identify one phrase that supports equal rights today and explain its relevance.

Engagement Ideas

- Compare the excerpt with a modern law protecting civil rights.
- Hold a short class discussion: "How might life have changed for freedmen after this act?"

Extension Ideas

- Students create a mini-bill of rights for a fair school community using clear language.
- Assign a quick writing task on how laws can shape equality in society over time.