

**The South****Section 2****MAIN IDEAS**

1. Southern society and culture consisted of four main groups.
2. Free African Americans in the South faced a great deal of discrimination.

**Key Terms and People**

**yeomen** owners of small farms

**Section Summary****SOUTHERN SOCIETY AND CULTURE**

Only about one-third of all southerners owned slaves. Far fewer were actually wealthy planters. However, those few planters were among the most influential southern citizens, and many were political leaders.

On the vast plantations, the planter ran the farm business. A wealthy planter would have overseers to help him. The planter's wife ran the household, which included many house slaves. She also was in charge of important social events such as dances and dinners.

Most southern farmers were yeomen. **Yeomen** owned small farms averaging about 100 acres, and often they worked side by side with the few slaves they might own.

Many white southerners were poor. They owned no slaves at all. Often they lived on land that could not grow crops. These farmers were at the bottom of the economic ladder.

Religion was central to southern life. One reason was its social impact. Often farm families only saw their neighbors at church functions. Some southerners also believed that Christianity justified slavery—a belief not shared by Christians in the North.

**How was a yeoman different from a planter?**

---



---



---

**Why was religion central to southern life?**

---



---

**Section 2, *continued***

---

The economy of the South also depended on the businesses conducted in its busy cities. As in northern cities, southern cities provided many services to residents, including water systems and street maintenance. Southern cities used slave labor, too. Businesses either owned slaves or hired them out from nearby planters.

**How were southern cities like northern cities?**

---

---

---

**FREE AFRICAN AMERICANS AND DISCRIMINATION**

Not all African Americans were slaves. Some were free. Some had been born free. Others had bought their freedom from their slave owners or had run away. About half of these free African Americans lived in the South.

**Circle the sentence describing how many of free African Americans lived in the South.**

The presence of free African Americans concerned some white southerners. They worried that those who were free would incite those who were enslaved to rise up against their owners. As a result, southern cities and states passed laws aimed at limiting the rights of these free African Americans.

**According to many southerners, how did free African Americans threaten the South's slave system?**

---

---

---

Free African Americans posed a threat to the institution of slavery. Many whites believed the African American could not survive outside of slavery. They used this as justification for slavery. The free African Americans could prove this theory wrong.

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Evaluate** How effective were the laws limiting the rights of free African Americans? Write five questions that could be answered by historical study and outline research that could help you answer your questions.

Section 2, *continued*

---

**DIRECTIONS** Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the word in the word pair that best completes the sentence.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ were the wealthiest members of southern society. (yeomen/planters)
2. Most white southerners were \_\_\_\_\_, or owners of small farms, and owned few slaves or none at all. (yeomen/planters)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ would often work side by side with slaves. (yeomen/planters)
4. In most southern cities, \_\_\_\_\_ did most of the work. (planters/slaves)
5. White southerners shared a common culture and \_\_\_\_\_ that was central to southern social life. (artisans/religion)
6. Free African Americans in the South often worked as skilled \_\_\_\_\_, or would hire out their services to plantations. (artisans/religion)
7. Some wealthy white southerners attempted to use \_\_\_\_\_ to justify their position in society and the institution of slavery. (artisans/religion)

**DIRECTIONS** On a separate sheet of paper use the vocabulary word **yeoman** to write a letter that relates to the section.