

Reconstruction

Lesson 1

This lesson will introduce the main ideas of Reconstruction and examine the events that took place as the Civil War came to a close. Students will identify the problems facing the nation at this time, and evaluate different plans for dealing with these challenges.

- **Hook:** Have students respond to the following writing prompt, in order to get students thinking about Americans' feelings at the end of the Civil War. "Imagine that you have two sons. Your older son has been bullying and fighting your younger son. The older son says he is upset because the younger son gets more attention. You punish your son, and he responds by running away from home. Before he leaves, he steals \$500 from you. What would you do when your son returns? Would you punish him harshly so he won't do it again, or be lenient with him if he promises not to do it again? Explain your choice." After students have written their responses, give them an opportunity to share and have a class discussion. Explain to students the connection to how American leaders had to decide if the South should be punished for the Civil War.
- Show students images of life in the U.S. in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. As they look at the images, have them brainstorm a list of problems that the U.S. faced. Images include: the destruction of the South, the newly emancipated slaves, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and violence toward the freedmen. Encourage students to think about what problems might be caused by these events. After students have brainstormed, have them share their lists. Make one large list on poster paper. This can be referred back to throughout the unit to remind students of the many challenges facing the nation.
- Introduce Lincoln's plan of peaceful and forgiving reunification for the nation. Johnson's continuation of this plan can also be introduced here. A short textbook reading might be useful to set the scene. Then have students work together in pairs to make a pro/con list for the Presidential Reconstruction plan. Have them think about how the following groups would respond to this plan: former Confederates, other Southerners, Northerners, and freedmen. Have students share their responses and lead a class discussion about the merits and weaknesses of this approach to Reconstruction.
- **Wrap Up:** Have the students look again at the images of life at the end of the Civil War. Have them answer these questions:
 - _ Pick an image that shows a problem that you think would be improved by the President's plan. Explain why the plan will help.
 - _ Pick an image that shows a problem that will be made worse by the President's plan. Explain why.

Materials for Lesson 1

Images of the aftermath of the Civil War. These images are from the American Memory section of the Library of Congress website. Bibliographic information is included in the links if not otherwise noted.

- President Lincoln's funeral procession

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/cwar:@field\(NUMBER+](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/cwar:@field(NUMBER+)

@band(cwp+4a39661)):displayType=1:m856sd=cwp:m856sf=4a39661

- Richmond Ruins

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/reconstruction/section2/section2_21b.html

- Locomotive Ruins

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/cwar:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(cwp+4a40910\)\):displayType=1:m856sd=cwp:m856sf=4a40910](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/cwar:@field(NUMBER+@band(cwp+4a40910)):displayType=1:m856sd=cwp:m856sf=4a40910)

- Charleston Ruins

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/cwar:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(cwp+4a39791\)\):displayType=1:m856sd=cwp:m856sf=4a39791](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/cwar:@field(NUMBER+@band(cwp+4a39791)):displayType=1:m856sd=cwp:m856sf=4a39791)

- *Emancipation*: Thomas Nast. *Emancipation*. Philadelphia: S. Bott, 1865. Wood engraving.

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/05/0509001r.jpg>

- Emancipation Celebration: F. Deilman. *Celebration of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, by the colored people in Washington, April 19, 1866*. Wood engraving. From *Harper's Weekly*, May 12, 1866. Copyprint.

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/04/0411001v.jpg>

- Burning a Freedmen's Schoolhouse

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/reconstruction/section2/section2_33b.html

Lesson 2 (2 class periods)

This lesson will focus on the early developments of Reconstruction, including the 13th Amendment and the Freedmen's Bureau. Students will use primary sources, including letters and Bureau records, to describe conditions in the South and the work of the Freedmen's Bureau. Students will consider the successes of the Freedmen's Bureau, such as the building of schools and churches, as well as the ongoing struggles with labor relations, violence, and Black Codes.

- Hook: Have students respond to this question, either in writing or in a discussion format. "Imagine that you are a slave who has just been set free. Describe how you are feeling, what you will do next, where you will go, and any challenges you think you might face."
- Introduction: Describe the 13th Amendment to students, or have them read about it in their textbooks. Also discuss the Freedmen's Bureau and why it was created. Have students add these terms to their Reconstruction Vocabulary list. Discuss with the class the challenges that the 4 million emancipated slaves would face.
- Video Clip Introduction: Have students watch a **mini-documentary** on Marshall Twitchell, a representative of the Freedmen's Bureau working in Louisiana.
- Create charts to use for a Carousel Brainstorm. As a class, generate titles to put at the top of each chart. Each chart will focus on an issue facing the emancipated slaves and the Freedmen's Bureau. Examples: Labor, Churches, Schools, Violence, etc. As students are working on the primary sources analysis, hang charts up around the classroom.
- Primary Sources: Working in pairs or small groups, have students evaluate primary sources relating to the Freedmen's Bureau. Each group will have a different source to analyze. Students will use the Document Analysis Worksheet. When they have

finished, they will share their resource with the class. Variation: If time allows, or if some groups can handle it, have them analyze more than one primary source.

- Carousel Brainstorm: Each group will rotate through the posters. On each poster, they will list a piece of evidence or example that shows something they've learned about the topic through their primary sources.
- Wrap Up: Have students write a response from the Freedmen's Bureau to one of the people they've studied in their primary sources.

Materials for Lesson 2

- Document Analysis Worksheet from National Archives
http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/analysis_worksheets/document.html
- Letter from Jourdan Anderson to his former master asking for wages:
<http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6369>
- Marshall Twitchell's account of working for the Freedmen's Bureau:
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/carpetbagger/ps_twitchell.html
- Letter to the Bureau asking for workers:
<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu/HIUS403/freedmen/fb-contracts.html>
- Labor Contract for former slaves:
<http://www.freedmensbureau.com/georgia/contracts/georgiacontract.htm>
- Letters and Newspaper notices about building churches:
<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu/HIUS403/freedmen/fb-socialservices.htm>
- Letters about schools and other services for freedmen:
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/schools/ps_highgate.html
- Personal Narrative of a freedwoman: Library of Congress WPA Narrative. The document and a transcription are available.
<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=wpa3&fileName=33/3301/33011518/wpa333011518.db&recNum=11>
- Black Codes: Mississippi Black Code of 1865; will need to be excerpted for students.
http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/reconstruction/section4/section4_blackcodes.html
- PBS video or mini-documentary clip from PBS website

Lesson 3

In this lesson, students will learn about the period of Reconstruction that was led by the Radical Republicans. Students will identify leaders of the Radical Republicans and laws enacted by the Republicans. This lesson will also include the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Students will learn the provisions of these amendments and how they increased freedom and equality for African Americans.

- **Hook:** Have students look at this image from Harper's Weekly called "The First

Vote. Then have students answer questions about the image. Possible questions: What are the men in the picture doing? What changes must have taken place in the South to make this possible? Why was it important for African Americans to participate in elections?

- Students will work in pairs to complete graphic organizer notes comparing the Presidential Reconstruction plan with Radical Republican Reconstruction. A textbook or other secondary source can be used to find the information to complete the organizer.
- “The Road to Equality”: Students will create an illustrated timeline or road map of the events in Reconstruction. Students can use textbooks, notes, or the following online timelines to help them complete their timeline:
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/states/sf_timeline.html
<http://blackhistory.harpweek.com/4Reconstruction/ReconTimeline.htm>
<http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/122/recon/chron.htm>
- **Wrap Up:** Give students a copy of the Reconstruction word-splash, or project it on an overhead. Have them write four to five sentences using words from the word-splash.

Materials for Lesson 3

- Image to use for hook activity and questions to answer
- Graphic organizer notes
- Word-splash

Lesson 4 (2 days)

Students will focus during this lesson on how life changed for southerners, especially African Americans, during Reconstruction. Students will consider the political, social, and economic changes that came about, especially reforms that were enacted by the state legislatures during the period. The effects of the 14th and 15th Amendments will also be identified. Students will also describe white southerners’ reactions to these changes.

- **Hook:** “Corners”. In this activity, students have to make a choice, give a reason to support their choice, and listen to other points of view. Label the four corners of the room with the following titles: “African Americans were no longer slaves”, “African Americans gained the right to vote”, “African Americans attended schools”, and “African Americans were elected to government offices.” Have students write down which of these reforms was the most important, and why. Then have them go to that corner. In the corners, students share with each other their reasons for making their choices. A spokesperson from each corner shares that group’s reasons with the class. After listening to each groups’ reasons, students may switch corners if they have changed their minds.
- **Jigsaw:** Each group investigates one aspect of change in the South after the Civil War. Then, new groups are formed with one person from each group. The “experts” on each topic share what they’ve discovered.
- **Group 1:** Reforms enacted by Republican Governments. As students read this account, have them make a list of new laws or responsibilities for the government.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/activism/ps_lynch.html

- Group 2: Sharecropping. Have students go through the photo gallery. They should define “sharecropping” and look for other examples of work done by free African Americans.

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/reconstruction/section3/section3_01.html

For a first-person account of sharecropping, use excerpts from this document:

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6377>

- Group 3: Community, Family, and Church. Select a few images from the photo gallery. Have students study the images and read the information. Students should identify how these institutions became stronger after the end of slavery.

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/reconstruction/section2/section2_01.html

- Group 4: White Southern Responses. Have students read this account of an African American legislator’s experience of threats and violence. Have students consider the source of and reason for the violence, as well as African American responses to it.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/kkk/ps_colby.html

Excerpts from this Louisiana account could also be used:

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/kkk/ps_colby.html

- Video: Mini-documentary of John Roy Lynch, a former slave from Mississippi who was elected to the House of Representatives.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/activism/index.html>

- Processing questions for during or after the video clip:
 - _ Why did Lynch think it was important to pass a new Civil Rights bill?
 - _ As a Congressman, what issues facing African Americans in the South did Lynch try to solve?
 - _ What did Lynch think were the positive aspects of Reconstruction?
 - _ If you could meet John Roy Lynch, what questions would you ask him?
- **Wrap Up:** 3-2-1. Write down 3 ways that life improved for African Americans during Reconstruction, 2 problems that African Americans still faced, and 1 reason that white southerners were upset.

Materials

- Labels for Corners during hook activity
- Copies of primary sources listed for each group in the jigsaw
- Copies of questions for each group to answer
- PBS video or mini-documentary clip from PBS website

Lesson 5

In this lesson, students learn about the developments that brought Reconstruction to an end, including the Amnesty Act and the Compromise of 1877. They will also explore how the progress made during Reconstruction was reversed by Jim Crow laws, voting restrictions, and *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

- Walking Tour: Students will visit exhibits around the classroom. Each exhibit will

give information about an event that brought Reconstruction to an end or a new law passed after Reconstruction ended. Sites on the walking tour will include: the Amnesty Act, the Compromise of 1877, Jim Crow, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and voting restrictions. Each chart will have pictures and written information about the event. As students visit each section of the walking tour, they will answer these questions:

- _ What was the event/item?
- _ How did it change life for African Americans?
- _ How did it contribute to the end of Reconstruction?
- Wrap Up: Display several images from the Civil Rights movement, such as the March on Washington, the bus boycott, school desegregation, and sit-ins. Ask students to consider why the Civil Rights movement was necessary, even though the 14th and 15th Amendments guaranteeing equality and the right to vote had been passed 100 years before.

Materials

- Walking Tour exhibits: Print out materials related to walking tour topics and attach to poster paper. Sample sets of materials included: *Jim Crow, Plessy v. Ferguson*
- Questions to answer during Walking Tour
- Images for wrap-up activity:
 - _ Greensboro Lunch Counter Sit-In
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/09/0909001r.jpg>
 - _ March on Washington
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/09/0913001r.jpg>
 - _ School Desegregation, Little Rock
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/images/br0130bs.jpg>

Lesson 6 (2 days)

In the final lesson, students will evaluate the successes and failures of Reconstruction. They will compile items they have used during the unit, along with new items they create, to make a museum exhibit about Reconstruction. In the culminating project, they will explain the significance of these items and analyze if Reconstruction was a success or failure for the United States and for African Americans.