

Reconstruction (1865 to 1877) Worksheet

I. Introduction

The process of rebuilding that followed the American Civil War (1861-1865). Since the United States had never before experienced civil war, the end of hostilities left Americans to grapple with a set of pressing questions over what to do with the South after the defeat of the Confederacy and the overthrow of slavery.

1. What war did Reconstruction follow?	
2. Why were Americans unsure of how the government should handle bringing the South back into the Union?	

II. Debate over Reconstruction

When Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) that freed all slaves in rebel-held areas, the North's war goals had shifted from preserving the Union to remaking the South. Central to this shift was the belief of increasing numbers of Northerners that the South should be remade into a society based on free labor, equal rights, and the republican form of government guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. Those Republicans who took the lead in pressing for a far-reaching restructuring of the South came to be known as Radicals, including Senators Charles Sumner of Massachusetts and Representatives Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania. In 1865 before the war was over, Congress passed the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which abolished slavery throughout the United States. Also in 1865, in order to help former slaves throughout the South in their transition to freedom, Congress established a new federal agency, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau. Designed as a relief agency for needy refugees, it provided food, clothing, and fuel for both blacks and whites. Its primary services, however, were for blacks; it established schools, supervised labor relations, and worked to protect blacks from intimidation and violence.

3. What did Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation do?	
4. Lincoln's goal during the Civil War was to "preserve the Union." What was his goal during Reconstruction?	
5. Name two Radical Republicans in the US Congress during Reconstruction.	1. 2.
6. What did the 13 th Amendment do?	
7. What was the Freedman's Bureau?	

II. Presidential Reconstruction

The assassination of Lincoln, whose death on April 15, 1865, moved Vice President Andrew Johnson into the presidency. A Tennessee Democrat, Johnson soon made it clear that he did not share the Republican commitment to remaking the South. Blaming a small number of wealthy aristocrats for the Confederate rebellion, Johnson pursued a policy of sympathy toward former rebels and one of neglect toward former slaves. For each state he appointed a provisional governor who was required to call a constitutional convention that would draft a new constitution outlawing slavery and disavowing secession. No further changes would be required. The new state governments also passed a series of acts known as black codes, which sharply restricted the rights of the newly freed slaves.

8. What happened to Abraham Lincoln after the Civil War?	
9. Who became president?	
10. How did Johnson try to treat the Southern states?	
11. What were the freed slaves subjected to under new Southern governments?	

III. Congressional Reconstruction

When Congress convened from a long recess in December 1865, President Johnson regarded his restoration policy as complete. However, the Republican majority in Congress refused to seat the representatives sent by the Southern states or to accept the legitimacy of the Southern state governments formed under Johnson's requirements. The heart of Congress' Reconstruction plan was laid out in two measures: The 14th Amendment was passed in June 1866 and ratified in 1868 which gave blacks born in the U.S. citizenship; barred states from abridging "the privileges or immunities of citizens" or depriving "any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law"; encouraged Southern states to allow blacks to vote, without actually requiring it; and barred former officials who had rebelled against the Union from holding public office. The southern states (minus TN which ratified the 14th Amendment) were divided into five military districts, each headed by a military commander.

Among the most important acts during Reconstruction were the impeachment proceedings against President Johnson, who in 1868 was spared conviction and removal from office by one vote in the Senate. In 1869, Congress passed the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, which was ratified in 1870, which broadened the 14th Amendment's protection of black suffrage by providing that no citizen could be denied the right to vote on the basis of "race, color or previous condition of servitude."

12. Did Congress accept Johnson's kind Reconstruction policies?	
13. What did the 14 th Amendment to the Constitution do?	
14. How did the Congress keep Southern officials out of government?	
15. What did Congress try to do to President Johnson?	
16. What did the 15 th Amendment to the Constitution do?	

IV. Republican State Governments & The End of Reconstruction

By far the most important participants in the new Republican governments of the South were blacks. Firmly committed to the party of Lincoln, blacks provided the bulk of Republican votes and served at almost every level of government, from the U.S. Congress (two senators and 14 representatives) to state legislatures, city councils, and county commissions.

Reconstruction's opponents called for white racial. In states with substantial white majorities, mainly those in the upper South, convincing most whites to vote Democratic was enough to defeat Reconstruction, a process that white Southerners called **redemption**. In the lower South, those states black voters were subjected to fraud, intimidation, and violence. Terrorist organizations—the Ku Klux Klan, which was formally suppressed in 1871, and other Klan-like bodies that emerged—played a major role in this campaign.

As Republicans had feared, Democratic victory in the South led to a massive scaling back of Reconstruction's accomplishments. Throughout the South, a campaign ensued to put blacks in "their place," which culminated around the turn of the century when one state after another passed laws providing for the rigid segregation of the races and for the disfranchisement of blacks through such devices as literacy tests, poll taxes, and political primaries that were open only to whites.

17. What people were finally able to participate in government in the South during Reconstruction?	
18. What did southern whites call the process of taking apart Reconstruction and putting blacks back "in their place"?	
19. What organization played a large role in violently intimidating southern blacks?	
20. What three ways did southern whites keep southern blacks from voting?	1. 2. 3.

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