

Radical Reconstruction Lesson Plan

Central Historical Question:

Why was the Radical Republican plan for Reconstruction considered “radical”?

Materials:

- Reconstruction PowerPoint
- Copies of Thaddeus Stevens and Andrew Johnson Documents
- Copies of Radical Reconstruction Guiding Questions

Plan of Instruction:

1. Focus Activity. Show students Slide 2: Focus Activity of the Radical Reconstruction PowerPoint.

Students respond to following prompts in their notebooks:

- Describe this photograph.
- When and where do you think this photograph was taken?
- What are three things you think people living in this setting did in the years following the photograph?

Debrief: *This photograph was taken in April 1865 in Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederate States. Today you are going to learn about some of the major challenges that the United States faced after the Civil War.*

2. Interactive mini-lecture. The purpose of this mini-lecture is to briefly review the Civil War and to then highlight the major issues of Reconstruction. Feel free to pause and lead a discussion on any of the questions in the PowerPoint.
 - a. Slide 3: The Civil War, 1861-1865. *The American Civil War was fought between the United States and the Confederate States of America from 1861 to 1865. Disagreements about slavery were a central source of the increasing political unrest and disunity in the country that led to the war. These disagreements largely followed sectional lines. Many white Southerners, both slaveholding and not, supported slavery, while many Northerners opposed slavery. The United States defeated the Confederate States of America.*
 - b. Slide 4: Reconstruction Era, 1865-1877. *Reconstruction refers to the period following the Civil War between 1865 and 1877. John Wilkes Booth, a Confederate sympathizer, assassinated President Lincoln five*

days after the supreme commander of the Confederate army surrendered. As Lincoln's vice president, Andrew Johnson became the new president. Johnson was a Southern Democrat who opposed secession of the Confederacy but, compared to Northern Republicans, was relatively sympathetic to Southern states.

Many people in Congress opposed Johnson. His biggest opponents were called Radical Republicans. "Radical" means extreme, and "radicals" typically want to see extreme changes in society. In the 1860s the Radical Republicans wanted to punish the South for the Civil War and supported equal rights for freedmen.

- c. Slide 5: Major Questions After the Civil War. Slides 5-8 further elaborate questions facing the nation after the Civil War and pose questions directly to students. Students may either respond to questions in their notebooks, in small groups, or together as a group in a discussion format. *Some of the major questions following the Civil War included:*
 - i. *How should the South be rebuilt?*
 - ii. *How should the states that seceded be brought back into the Union?*
 - iii. *How should former slaves be incorporated into the country as freed men and women?*
- d. Slide 6: Reconstructing a Nation. *Hundreds of thousands of soldiers died during the Civil War. A recent study suggests that the total number of deaths was 750,000. At the start of the Civil War, there were nearly four million slaves in the United States.*
 - i. *After four years of war and over two hundred of years of slavery, could Northerners and Southerners rebuild the South together?*
 - ii. *Could they unify as citizens of the same country?*
- e. Slide 7: Punishment for the Confederate States? *Other questions were raised about what the consequences would be for the Confederate states.*
 - i. *Should people who fought against the United States be recognized as citizens? Should they be punished?*
 - ii. *What should be done to the Southern state governments that fought against the United States?*

- f. Slide 8: African Americans in the South. *Just before the Civil War, there were about four million enslaved people in the United States. For over two hundred years, black people in America had been systemically dehumanized. As slaves, they were considered property, and as such had no legal rights, and in 1857 the Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scott case that all African Americans, whether enslaved or free, could not be citizens.*
- During the Civil War, African Americans provided critical support to the Union's fight, acting as spies, cooks, soldiers, and launderers for the army. Black soldiers made up ten percent of the Union army, half of whom were free Northerners and half of whom were Southerners who escaped to Union lines. They were often assigned the hardest, most dangerous work, and usually suffered far worse than white soldiers when taken prisoner by the Confederate army.*
- i. *How would freed men and women be treated in the Southern states?*
 - ii. *How would Northerners address the issue of including former slaves as citizens in society?*
 - iii. *What were some major challenges that former slaves faced?*
- g. Slide 9: Central Historical Question. *Today, we're going to investigate this question: Why was the Radical Republican plan for Reconstruction considered "radical"?*
3. Hand out Thaddeus Stevens and Andrew Johnson Documents. Have students answer Guiding Questions. Sourcing questions should be answered *before* reading the document.
4. Review student responses. Be sure to ask students to point to evidence in the text to support their claims.
5. Discussion questions.
- a. *What are the major differences between the Radical Republicans and Andrew Johnson?*
 - b. *Which plan do you think would be more likely to unite the country after the Civil War? Why?*
 - c. *Why do you think the Radical Republican plan was considered "radical"?*
 - d. *What do you predict actually happened during Reconstruction?*
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Citations

Thaddeus Stevens, Speech to House of Representatives, March 19, 1867. Retrieved from <http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/122/recon/stevens.htm>

Andrew Johnson, Speech in Cleveland, Ohio, September 3, 1866. Retrieved from <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa//D/1851-1875/reconstruction/cleveland.htm>

Andrew Johnson, Speech to Congress, March 2, 1867. Retrieved from <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa//D/1851-1875/reconstruction/veto.htm>

Reference

Gugliotta, Guy. "New Estimate Raises Civil War Death Toll." The New York Times. April 2, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/03/science/civil-war-toll-up-by-20-percent-in-new-estimate.html>

Thaddeus Stevens (Modified)

Thaddeus Stevens was a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. He was a leader of the Radical Republicans within the Republican Party during the 1860s. This is a series of excerpts from a speech he delivered to Congress on March 19, 1867.

The cause of the war was slavery. We have liberated the slaves. It is our duty to protect them, and provide for them while they are unable to provide for themselves.

None will deny the right to **confiscate** the property of the Southern states, as they all made war as the Confederate States of America. The bill provides that each freed slave who is a male adult, or the head of a family, will receive forty acres of land, (with \$100 to build a house). **Homesteads** are far more valuable than the immediate right of **suffrage**, though they should receive both.

Four million people have just been freed from slavery. They have no education, have never worked for money, and don't know about their rights. We must make the freed slaves independent of their old masters, so that they may not be compelled to work for them upon unfair terms, which can only be done by giving them a small **tract** of land to farm.

Source: *Thaddeus Stevens, speech to Congress, March 19, 1867.*

Vocabulary

confiscate: take or seize someone's property

homestead: a piece of land gifted by the government to a citizen who lives on and farms it

suffrage: the right to vote

tract: an area of land

Andrew Johnson (Modified)

Andrew Johnson was a Democrat who served as President of the United States from 1865 to 1869. The following is a series of excerpts from a campaign speech that Johnson gave in September 1866 in Cleveland, Ohio. In the speech he discusses the Freedmen's Bureau, which was a federal agency designed to help former slaves with jobs and education. Radical Republicans, like Thaddeus Stevens, supported additional funding for the Freedmen's Bureau.

Before the Civil War there were 4,000,000 black people held as slaves by about 340,000 people living in the South. That is, 340,000 slave owners paid all the living expenses of the slaves. Then, the war began and the slaves were freed . . . Now to the Freedmen's Bureau bill. What was it? Four million slaves were emancipated and given an equal chance and fair start to work and produce . . . But the Freedmen's Bureau comes and says we must take charge of these 4,000,000 slaves. The bureau comes along and proposes, at a cost of \$12,000,000 a year, to take charge of these slaves. You had already spent \$3,000,000,000 to set them free and give them a fair opportunity to take care of themselves - then these [Radical Republicans], who are such great friends of the people, tell us they must be taxed \$12,000,000 to sustain the Freedmen's Bureau.

Source: *Andrew Johnson, campaign speech, September 3, 1866.*

(Johnson documents continue on the next page.)

Andrew Johnson (Modified)

Andrew Johnson delivered the following speech to Congress on March 2, 1867, after he vetoed legislation that would have given freedmen the right to vote.

The purpose and object of the bill is to change the entire structure and character of the State governments. Blacks have not asked for the privilege of voting. The vast majority of them have no idea what it means. The Federal Government has no **jurisdiction**, authority, or power to regulate such subjects for any State. To force the right of **suffrage** out of the hands of the white people and into the hands of the blacks is an arbitrary violation of this principle.

Source: *Andrew Johnson, speech to Congress, March 2, 1867.*

Vocabulary

jurisdiction: the official power to make legal decisions

suffrage: the right to vote

Guiding Questions

Name _____

Thaddeus Stevens

1. (Sourcing) Thaddeus Stevens was a Radical Republican. What did Radical Republicans stand for?
2. (Close reading) Based on this document, what were three policies that the Radical Republicans proposed for Reconstruction?
3. (Context) Given what was going on in the country at the time, why might Democrats have opposed these plans?

Andrew Johnson

1. (Close reading) What reason did Andrew Johnson give for opposing funding to help the freed slaves?
2. (Contextualization) The first Johnson document is a campaign speech. How might this influence what he says?
3. (Close reading) What were two reasons why Andrew Johnson opposed giving African Americans the right to vote?

