
Chapter 15

Reconstruction

1865–1877

Teaching Resources

Chapter Instructional Objectives

After you have taught this chapter, your students should be able to answer the following questions:

1. How did Presidents Lincoln and Johnson envision Reconstruction?
2. How and why did Republicans in Congress take control of Reconstruction?
3. What did African Americans expect after the Civil War? What were the realities they encountered during Reconstruction?
4. What was the southern response(s) to Reconstruction?
5. Why did a political crisis emerge in 1877? How did it shape Reconstruction?
6. What were the successes and failures of Reconstruction?

Chapter Annotated Outline

- I. Presidential Reconstruction
 - A. Presidential Initiatives
 1. Based on a **separation of powers**, the Constitution did not address the question of secession or any procedure for Reconstruction, so it did not say which branch of government was to handle the readmission of rebellious states.
 2. Lincoln offered general amnesty to all but high-ranking Confederates willing to pledge loyalty to the Union; when 10 percent of a state's voters took this oath—and abolished slavery—the state would be restored to the Union.
 3. Most Confederate states rebuffed the offer, assuring that the war would have to be fought to the bitter end.

4. As some African Americans began to agitate for political rights, congressional Republicans proposed the Wade-Davis Bill, a stricter substitute for Lincoln's Ten Percent Plan, which laid down, as conditions for the restoration of the rebellious states to the Union, an oath of allegiance by a majority of each state's adult white men, new state governments formed only by those who had never carried arms against the Union, and permanent disfranchisement of Confederate leaders.
5. The Wade-Davis Bill served notice that congressional Republicans were not going to turn Reconstruction policy over to the president.
6. Rather than openly challenge Congress, Lincoln executed a **pocket veto** of the Wade-Davis Bill by not signing it before Congress adjourned.
7. Lincoln also initiated informal talks with congressional leaders aimed at finding common ground; Lincoln's successor Andrew Johnson, however, held the view that Reconstruction was the president's prerogative.
8. Andrew Johnson, a Jacksonian Democrat, championed poor whites. A slave owner himself, he had little sympathy for formerly enslaved blacks.
9. The Republicans had nominated Johnson for vice president in 1864 in order to promote wartime political unity and to court southern Unionists.
10. After Lincoln's death, Johnson offered amnesty to all southerners, except high-ranking Confederate officials and wealthy property owners, who took an oath of allegiance to the Constitution.
11. Johnson also appointed provisional governors for the southern states and, as conditions for their restoration, required only

- that they revoke their ordinances of secession, repudiate their Confederate debts, and ratify the Thirteenth Amendment.
12. Within months, all the former Confederate states had met Johnson's requirements for rejoining the Union and had functioning, elected governments.
 13. Southerners held fast to the antebellum order and enacted **Black Codes** designed to drive the ex-slaves back to plantations; they had moved to restore slavery in all but the name.
 14. Southerners perceived Johnson's liberal amnesty policy as tacit approval of the Black Codes; emboldened, the ex-Confederates filled southern congressional delegation with old comrades, even including the vice president of the Confederacy, Alexander Stephens.
 15. Republicans in both houses refused to admit the southern delegations when Congress convened in early December 1865, blocking Johnson's Reconstruction program.
 16. In response, some Black Codes were replaced with nonracial ordinances whose effect was the same, and across the South a wave of violence erupted against the freedmen.
 17. Republicans concluded that the South had embarked on a concerted effort to circumvent the Thirteenth Amendment and that the federal government had to intervene.
 18. Congress voted to extend the life of the Freedmen's Bureau, gave it direct funding for the first time, and authorized its agents to investigate cases of discrimination against blacks.
 19. Lyman Trumbull, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, proposed a Civil Rights Bill that declared all persons—regardless of race—born in the United States to be citizens and gave them equal rights.
 20. Even the most moderate Republicans demanded that the federal government assume responsibility for securing the civil rights of the freedmen.
- B. Acting on Freedom
1. Across the South, ex-slaves held mass meetings and formed organizations; they demanded equality before the law and the right to vote.
 2. In the months before the end of the war, freedmen had seized control of land where they could; General Sherman had reserved tracts of land for liberated blacks in his March to the Sea.
3. When the war ended, the Freedmen's Bureau was charged with feeding and clothing war refugees, distributing confiscated lands to "loyal refugees and freedmen," and regulating labor contracts between freedmen and planters.
 4. Johnson's amnesty plan entitled pardoned Confederates to recover confiscated property, shattering the freedmen's hopes of keeping the land on which they lived.
 5. To try to hold onto their land, blacks fought pitched battles with plantation owners and bands of ex-Confederate soldiers; generally, the whites prevailed.
 6. A struggle took place over the labor system that would replace slavery; because owning land defined true freedom, ex-slaves resisted working for wages as it implied not freedom but dependency.
 7. To overcome any vestiges of dependency, formalizing marriage was an urgent matter after emancipation as was resisting planters' demands that freedwomen go back to work in the fields.
 8. Many freedpeople abandoned their old plantations in order to seek better lives and more freedom in the cities of the South; those who remained refused to work under the **gang-labor system**.
 9. Whatever system of labor finally might emerge, it was clear that the freedmen would never settle for anything resembling the old plantation system.
 10. The efforts of former slaves to control their own lives challenged deeply entrenched white attitudes and resulted in racial violence; the governments established under Johnson's plan only put the stamp of legality on the pervasive efforts to enforce white supremacy.
 11. Freedmen turned to Washington for help.
- C. Congress versus President
1. In February 1866, Andrew Johnson vetoed the Freedmen's Bureau Bill and a month later vetoed Trumbull's Civil Rights Bill, calling it discriminatory against whites.
 2. Galvanized by Johnson's attack on the Civil Rights Bill, Republicans enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1866; Congress had never before overridden a veto on a major piece of legislation.
 3. As an angry Congress renewed the Freedmen's Bureau over a second Johnson veto,

Republican resolve was reinforced by news of mounting violence in the South.

4. Republicans moved to enshrine black civil rights in the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
 5. Johnson urged the states not to ratify the amendment and began to maneuver politically against the Republicans; the Fourteenth Amendment became a campaign issue for the Democratic Party.
 6. Republicans responded furiously by decrying Democrats as traitors, a tactic that came to be known as “waving the bloody shirt.”
 7. Johnson embarked on a disastrous railroad tour campaign and made matters worse by engaging in shouting matches and exchanging insults with the hostile crowds.
 8. Republicans won a three-to-one majority in the 1866 congressional elections, which registered overwhelming support for securing the civil rights of ex-slaves.
 9. The Republican Party had a new sense of unity coalescing around the unbending program of the radical minority, which represented the party’s abolitionist strain.
 10. For the Radicals, Reconstruction was never primarily about restoring the Union but rather remaking southern society, beginning with getting the black man **suffrage**—his right to vote.
- II. Radical Reconstruction
- A. Congress Takes Command
 1. The Reconstruction Act of 1867 divided the South into five military districts, each under the command of a Union general.
 2. The price for reentering the Union was granting the vote to the freedmen and disenfranchising the South’s prewar political class.
 3. Congress overrode Johnson’s veto of the Reconstruction Act and, in effect, attempted to reconstruct the presidency with the Tenure of Office Act, by requiring Senate consent for the removal of any official whose appointment had required Senate confirmation and the president to issue all orders to the army through its commanding general.
 4. After Congress adjourned in August 1867, Johnson “suspended” Edwin M. Stanton and replaced him with General Ulysses S. Grant; he then replaced four of the commanding generals governing the South.
 5. When the Senate reconvened, it overruled Stanton’s suspension, and Grant, by now Johnson’s enemy, resigned so that Stanton could resume office.
 6. On February 21, 1868, Johnson dismissed Stanton; the House Republicans introduced articles of **impeachment** against Johnson, mainly for violations of the Tenure of Office Act.
 7. A vote on impeachment was one vote short of the required two-thirds majority needed, but Johnson was left powerless to alter the course of Reconstruction.
 8. Grant was the Republicans’ 1868 presidential nominee, and he won out over the Democrats’ Horatio Seymour; Republicans retained two-thirds majorities in both houses of Congress.
 9. The Fifteenth Amendment forbade either the federal government or the states to deny citizens the right to vote on the basis of race, color, or “previous condition of servitude,” although it left room for **poll taxes**, property requirements or literacy tests.
 10. States still under federal control were required to ratify the amendment before being readmitted to the Union; the Fifteenth Amendment became part of the Constitution.
- B. Woman Suffrage Denied
 1. Women’s rights advocates were outraged that the Fifteenth Amendment did not address women’s suffrage.
 2. At the 1869 annual meeting of the Equal Rights Association, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony spoke out against the amendment.
 3. The majority, led by Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe of the American Women’s Suffrage Association, accepted the priority of black suffrage over women’s suffrage.
 4. Stanton’s new organization, the National Woman Suffrage Association, accepted only women, focused exclusively on women’s rights, and took up the battle for a federal woman suffrage amendment.
 5. Fracturing of the women’s movement obscured the common ground of the two sides, but the issues raised during radical Reconstruction planted the seeds of the modern feminist movement.
 - C. Republican Rule in the South
 1. Between 1868 and 1871 all the southern states met the congressional stipulations and rejoined the Union.

2. Southern white Republicans were called “**scalawags**” by Democratic ex-Confederates; white Northerners who moved to the South were called “**carpetbaggers**.”
 3. Some scalawags were former slave owners who wanted to attract northern capital, but most were yeoman farmers who wanted to rid the South of its slaveholding aristocracy; some carpetbaggers were motivated by personal profit and brought capital and skills with them, while others were attracted to the South’s climate, people, and economic opportunities.
 4. Although never proportionate to their size in population, black officeholders were prominent throughout the South.
 5. Republicans modernized state constitutions, eliminated property qualifications for voting, got rid of the Black Codes, and expanded the rights of married women.
 6. Reconstruction social programs called for hospitals, more humane penitentiaries, and asylums; Reconstruction governments built roads and revived the railroad network.
 7. To pay for their programs, Republicans introduced property taxes that applied to personal wealth as well as to real estate, similar to the taxes the Jacksonians had used in the North.
 8. In many plantation counties, former slaves served as tax assessors and collectors, administering the taxation of their onetime owners.
 9. Reconstruction governments’ debts mounted rapidly, and public credit collapsed; much of the spending was wasted or ended up in the pockets of state officials.
 10. Republican state governments viewed education as the foundation of a democratic order and had to make up for lost time since the South had virtually no public education.
 11. New African American churches served as schools, social centers, and political meeting halls as well as places of worship.
 12. Black ministers were community leaders and often political officeholders; they provided a powerful religious underpinning for the Republican politics of their congregations.
- D. The Quest for Land
1. The Southern Homestead Act of 1866 was mostly symbolic since the public land it made available to former slaves was in swampy, infertile parts of the lower South.
 2. After Johnson’s order restoring confiscated lands to the ex-Confederates, the Freedmen’s Bureau devoted itself to teaching blacks how to be good agricultural laborers.
 3. **Sharecropping** was a distinctive labor system for cotton agriculture in which the freedmen worked as tenant farmers, exchanging their labor for the use of land.
 4. Sharecropping was an unequal relationship, since the sharecropper had no way of making it through the first growing season without borrowing for food and supplies.
 5. Storekeepers “furnished” the sharecropper and took as collateral a **lien** on the crop; as cotton prices declined during the 1870s, many sharecroppers fell into permanent debt.
 6. If the merchant was also the landowner, the debt became a pretext for **peonage**, or forced labor.
 7. Sharecropping did mobilize black husbands and wives in common enterprise and shielded both from personal subordination to whites.
 8. By the end of Reconstruction, about one-quarter of sharecropping families saved enough to rent with cash, and eventually black farmers owned about a third of the land they farmed.
 9. The battle over the South’s land was exceptional because of the politics involved. Elsewhere, emancipation rarely meant civil or political equality for freed slaves, but in the United States, the civil rights, suffrage, and measure of political power for freedmen allowed the development of sharecropping.
 10. For ex-slaves, sharecropping was preferable to laboring for their former owners, but it was devastating to southern agriculture; it committed the South inflexibly to cotton because it was a cash crop and limited incentives for agricultural improvements.
- III. The Undoing of Reconstruction
- A. Counterrevolution
1. The undoing of Reconstruction was as much about northern acquiescence as it was about southern resistance.
 2. Democrats worked hard to get the vote restored to ex-Confederates, appealing to racial solidarity and southern patriotism and attacking black suffrage as a threat to white supremacy.

3. The Ku Klux Klan first appeared in Tennessee in 1866 under Nathan Bedford Forrest; by 1870 the Klan was operating almost everywhere in the South as an armed force whose terrorist tactics served the Democratic Party.
 4. The Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 authorized federal prosecutions, military force, and martial law to suppress conspiracies that deprived citizens of the right to vote, hold office, serve on juries, and enjoy equal protection of the law.
 5. The Grant administration's assault on the Klan illustrated how dependent African Americans and the southern Republicans were on the federal government.
 6. But northern Republicans were growing weary of Reconstruction and the bloodshed it seemed to produce.
 7. Prosecuting Klansmen was an uphill battle with U.S. attorneys, who usually faced all-white juries and lacked the resources to handle the cases; after 1872 prosecutions began to drop off and many Klansmen received hasty pardons.
 8. Republican governments that were denied federal help found themselves overwhelmed by the massive resistance of their ex-Confederate enemies; between 1873 and 1875, Democrats overthrew Republican governments in Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi.
 9. In Mississippi, local Democrats paraded armed, kept assassination lists of blacks called "dead books," and provoked rioting that killed hundreds of African Americans.
 10. By 1876 Republican governments remained in only Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida; elsewhere the former Confederates were back in control.
- B. The Acquiescent North
1. Sympathy for the freedmen began to wane, as the North was flooded with one-sided, often racist reports describing extravagant, corrupt Republican rule and a South in the grip of a "massive black barbarism."
 2. The Civil Rights bill introduced by Charles Sumner in 1870 was a remarkable application of federal power against discrimination, but by its passage in 1875 it had been stripped of its key provisions. The Supreme Court finished its demolition when it declared the remnant Civil Rights Act unconstitutional in 1883.
3. The political cynicism that overtook the Civil Rights Act signaled the Republican Party's reversion to the practical politics of earlier days.
 4. Some Republicans had little enthusiasm for Reconstruction, except as it benefited their party, and as the party lost headway in the South, they abandoned any interest in the battle for black rights. They repudiated the wartime expansion of federal power and refashioned themselves as **liberals**, believers in free trade, market competition, and limited government.
 5. Grant won a second term overwhelmingly in 1872 against Horace Greeley in the 1872 election.
 6. Charges of Republican corruption came to a head in 1875 with a scandal known as the "Whiskey Ring"; the scandal implicating Grant's cronies and even his private secretary engulfed the White House.
 7. The economy had fallen into a severe depression, which was triggered in 1873 by the bankruptcy of the Northern Pacific Railroad and its main investor, Jay Cooke; many economically pressed Americans believed that Republican financial manipulation had caused the depression.
 8. Among the casualties of the poor economy was the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, which held the small deposits of thousands of ex-slaves. When the bank failed in 1874, Congress refused to compensate the depositors, and many lost their life savings.
 9. In denying the blacks' plea for help with their banking disaster, Congress signaled that Reconstruction had lost its moral claim on the country.
 10. Concerns about the economy and political fraud, not Reconstruction, absorbed the northern voter as another presidential election approached in 1876.
- C. The Political Crisis of 1877
1. Republicans nominated Rutherford B. Hayes as their presidential candidate, and his Democratic opponent was Samuel J. Tilden; both favored "**home rule**" for the South.
 2. When Congress met in early 1877, it was faced with both Republican and Democratic electoral votes from Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana.
 3. The Constitution declares that Congress regulates its own elections, so Congress

appointed an electoral commission; the commission awarded the disputed votes to Hayes by a vote of 8 to 7.

4. Democrats controlled the House and set about stalling a final count of the electoral votes, but on March 1 they suddenly ended their delaying tactics and Hayes was inaugurated. Reconstruction had ended.
5. By 1877, however, three rights-defining amendments had been added to the Constitution, there was room for blacks to advance economically, and they had confidence that they could lift themselves up.

Key Terms

separation of powers The constitutional arrangement that gives the three government branches—executive, legislative, and judicial—independent standing, thereby diffusing the federal government’s overall power and reducing the chances that it might turn tyrannical and threaten the liberties of the people. (458)

pocket veto Presidential way to kill a piece of legislation without issuing a formal veto. When congressional Republicans passed the Wade-Davis Bill in 1864, a harsher alternative to President Lincoln’s restoration plan, Lincoln used this method to kill it by simply not signing the bill and letting it expire after Congress adjourned. (458)

Black Codes Laws passed by southern states after the Civil War denying ex-slaves the civil rights enjoyed by whites and intended to force blacks back to the plantations. (459)

gang-labor system A system of work discipline used on southern cotton plantations in the mid-nineteenth century. White overseers or black drivers constantly supervised gangs of enslaved laborers to enforce work norms and secure greater productivity. (464)

suffrage The right to vote. The classical republican ideology current before 1810 limited suffrage to those who held property and thus “had a stake in society.” However, between 1810 and 1860, state constitutions extended the vote to virtually all adult white men and some free black men. Over the course of American history, suffrage has expanded as barriers of race, gender, and age have fallen. (466)

impeachment First step in the constitutional process for removing the president from office, in which charges of wrongdoing (articles of impeachment) are passed by the House of Representatives. A trial

is then conducted by the Senate to determine whether the impeached president is guilty of the charges. (468)

poll taxes A tax paid for the privilege of voting, used in the South (beginning during Reconstruction) to disfranchise freedmen. Nationally, the northern states used poll taxes to keep immigrants and others deemed unworthy from the polls. (469)

scalawags Southern whites who joined the Republicans during Reconstruction and were ridiculed by ex-Confederates as worthless traitors. They included ex-Whigs and yeoman farmers who had not supported the Confederacy and who believed that an alliance with the Republicans was the best way to attract northern capital and rebuild the South. (470)

carpetbaggers A derisive name given by Southerners to Northerners who moved to the South during Reconstruction. Former Confederates despised these Northerners as transient exploiters. Carpetbaggers actually were a varied group, including Union veterans who had served in the South, reformers eager to help the ex-slaves, and others looking for business opportunities. (470)

sharecropping The labor system by which freedmen agreed to exchange a portion of their harvested crops with the landowner for use of the land, a house, and tools. A compromise between freedmen and white landowners, this system developed in the cash-strapped South because the freedmen wanted to work their own land but lacked the money to buy it, while white landowners needed agricultural laborers but did not have money to pay wages. (473)

lien (crop lien) A legal device enabling a creditor to take possession of property of a borrower including the right to have it sold in payment of the debt. Furnishing merchants took such liens on cotton crops as collateral for supplies advanced to sharecroppers during the growing season. This system trapped farmers in a cycle of debt and made them vulnerable to exploitation by the furnishing merchant. (474)

peonage (debt peonage) As cotton prices declined during the 1870s, many sharecroppers fell into permanent debt. Merchants often conspired with landowners to make the debt a pretext for forced labor, or peonage. (474)

liberal, liberalism The ideology of individual rights and private property outlined by John Locke (circa 1690) and embodied in many American constitutions, bills of rights, and institutions of govern-

ment. See also *classical liberalism* and *social welfare liberalism*. (479)

home rule A rallying cry used by southern Democrats painting Reconstruction governments as illegitimate—imposed on the South—and themselves as the only party capable of restoring the South to “home rule.” By 1876, northern Republicans were inclined to accept this claim. (480)

Lecture Strategies

1. Reconstruction is a complex topic. Write two lectures to cover the subject of Presidential vs. Radical Reconstruction. Regarding the presidential phase, discuss why the executive branch preferred lenient plans for the South. Explore Lincoln’s early policies toward the South as well as his last speech, which moved toward an endorsement of freedmen’s suffrage. Examine Johnson’s policies as an attempt to build a coalition to oppose congressional Republicans. Consider Johnson’s hope of rooting southern politics in the independent yeomanry as a reflection of his own background and the principles of Jefferson and Jackson. Historians typically rate Johnson as one of our worst presidents and Lincoln as one of the best. Consider how Lincoln might have fared if he had lived. How would he have handled Congress and the South? Consider the degree to which Johnson’s problems were of his own making, and which were the product of a vengeful Congress.
2. Students are always interested in Johnson’s impeachment and hearing. Compose a lecture that examines this event in the context of Reconstruction. Begin with the reasons for Lincoln’s choice of Johnson as his vice president. Explain Johnson’s quarrels with congressional Republicans over Reconstruction, including his vetoes of the Civil Rights bill and extension of the Freedmen’s Bureau and his attempt to build an opposition party. Discuss the Tenure of Office Act and review the Supreme Court’s conclusion that it was a breach of constitutional separation of powers, referring to Article II of the Constitution. Explore the impeachment hearing and the decisions of the various congressmen. Discuss the precedent set by impeaching Johnson on criminal, not political grounds. Compare Johnson’s impeachment to Congress’s situation during the presidencies of Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton.
3. Write a lecture that traces the changing historiography of Reconstruction. Discuss the historical interpretation that black suffrage was a disaster for the South. Explain how this interpretation survived for so long because it fit with American prejudices as well as with social and political realities. Discuss the impact of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s on changing interpretations of Reconstruction. Consider whether the Radical Republicans were cynical, self-serving politicians or idealists. Thaddeus Stevens is a good example of the radical as idealist. Explore whether the Radicals’ programs were practical or unrealistically visionary. Discuss the Radicals’ linkage of political power for freedmen with economic independence. Explore why land distribution was unacceptable to many people in the North. Relate these issues to the present day, showing how political and economic power are linked today, as well as the extent of the American commitment to protecting private property.
4. The Freedmen’s Bureau is an interesting topic for students. Write a lecture that focuses on the development, impact, and demise of the bureau. Describe the conditions agents found in the South. Discuss what the bureau tried to do in education, employment, housing, and medical care and then explore its degree of success in those areas. Question whether the Freedmen’s Bureau was essentially radical or conservative, and why.
5. To help students understand the sociocultural development of the South following the Civil War, compose a lecture that focuses on the struggle for power among former slave owners, independent yeomen, and freedmen. Describe the goals of each group; show where they conflicted and where possible alliances existed between any two groups. Show how these groups struggled over labor control, race relations, and political power and how these three issues were interrelated. Discuss the crucial role played by white small-acreage farmers, and explain how and why the planters courted them. Explain how the resulting systems of sharecropping and segregation represented compromises among the three groups. Compare the situation in the southern states with the end of slavery in other countries, particularly in the Caribbean. Explain some of the factors that made the United States different, including demographics and the attempt to achieve political equality during Reconstruction.
6. Write a lecture that explores the political contributions of the African American community to southern Republican state governments. You may want to use a biographical approach and focus on the careers of men such as Blanche K. Bruce to illustrate how African Americans participated in politics. Describe the accomplishments of these governments, including the democratization of

southern politics and the development of the southern infrastructure (schools, roads, railroads). Show how African Americans addressed the needs of their community. Explain, however, that this community was not always unified. Compare and contrast the interests and goals of freedmen with those of African Americans who had been free before the Civil War. Discuss how African Americans strengthened their family structures and built their social institutions on the local level.

7. Students sometimes become confused by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Create a lecture that examines the development of each amendment and its impact on American history. Discuss how the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments substantially changed the relationship between the federal government and state governments. Show how they created a national citizenship for the first time. Explain that these amendments shifted power toward the national government. Discuss how this process was a result of the Civil War as well as of the amendments. Discuss the difference between the pre-Civil War Union and the post-Civil War United States.
8. Women tend to be neglected in most histories of this period. Write a lecture that discusses the differing experiences of white women in the North and South and freedwomen. Note that although the end of war brought men home, it also led to the return of white women to traditional roles. Discuss how the high death rate in both the North and the South left a generation of widows and single women who had to survive without male breadwinners. Describe the experiences of freedwomen who chose to leave field work, drastically reducing the South's labor supply. Explore the activities of freedwomen in creating black communities in the South. End with a discussion of suffrage, and explain why woman suffrage leaders felt betrayed. Explore how the Fifteenth Amendment led the woman suffrage movement to change its strategies.
9. Compose a lecture that compares and contrasts the post-Civil War economic status of the South with that of the North. Show how the Republican Party's commitment of government assistance to industrial capitalism created a dynamic northern economy moving toward the Industrial Revolution. Explain the rationale for this government-business alliance, and show how the Civil War pension plan satisfied many workers and farmers in the North. Describe the state of the southern economy at the end of the war. Show how some Southerners attempted to bring industry to the region.

Describe how and why the South differed from the North. Describe how the South remained dependent on agriculture and why tenancy and sharecropping came to characterize southern farming. Explain the long-range effect of this situation.

Reviewing the Text

These questions are from the textbook and follow each main section of the narrative. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

Presidential Reconstruction (pp. 458–466)

1. Why can the enactment of southern Black Codes in 1865 be considered a turning point in the course of Reconstruction?
 - Newly seated anti-Reconstruction white Southerners created the Black Codes to stop black mobility, reducing the power of African Americans to improve their conditions.
 - Black Codes helped to create a Radical Reconstruction backlash against the attempts of white southern Democrats to reduce black rights and mobility.
2. Why was working for wages resisted by ex-slaves struggling for freedom after emancipation?
 - Working for wages meant that former slaves would engage in an unequal bargaining relationship with their former master, would suffer the fear of being re-enslaved, and would experience debasement. They wanted freedom and not dependency.
3. To what extent was President Johnson responsible for the radicalization of the Republican Party in 1866?
 - Johnson defied the will of the people on several occasions and acted against the wishes of and legislation passed by the majority party in Congress, which held a three-to-one ratio of seats over the Democratic Party. Johnson's unwillingness to compromise and his racism toward blacks alienated his administration from leading Republican stalwarts.
 - Johnson vetoed the Freedmen's Bureau Bill and other civil rights bills. Radical Republicans responded by passing the Civil Rights Act.

Radical Reconstruction (pp. 466–476)

1. Do you think it was predictable in 1865 that five years later the ex-slaves would receive the constitu-

tional right to vote? Or that, having gone that far, the nation would deny the vote to women?

- Giving the right to vote to free black people and former slaves just five years from servitude appeared unlikely in 1865 because free blacks and former slaves lacked formal education and stable incomes in a nation racially hostile to black equality.
 - Given the fact that black men, many of them former slaves, had been given the vote, it is surprising that it was not extended to white women, particularly in a race-based nation. However, men of both races controlled the political world, denying women the chance for increasing their rights.
2. What do you regard as the principal achievements of radical Reconstruction in the South? Do you think the achievements outweigh the failures?
- Achievements include passage of the Fourteenth Amendment and citizenship for blacks, the dispersal of aid through the Freedmen's Bureau, the creation of schools to educate former slaves, the passage of the Reconstruction Act, which nullified southern racist legislatures, federal occupation and protection of freedmen and women, the creation of Republican governments favoring free labor values in the South, and the increase of black politicians to organize the black community.
 - The achievements outweigh the failures given the major challenges of racism, white southern resistance, lack of enough funding, and the administrative mismanagement that characterized the functioning of the Bureau.
3. Why did the ex-slaves' struggle for land end in the sharecropping system?
- Sharecropping came about because most blacks were unable to own land, forcing them to rent land from whites. Blacks did not want to work the gang system, as former white masters wanted them to, because of the constant supervision and punishments.
 - Former masters lacked cash to pay for wages, so allowed blacks to rent land and grow a crop that would be paid for at the end of the season after cotton was sold.
 - Blacks wanted to be masters of their own time and be independent, so demanded that they pay for their rented land in shares of the cotton crop.

The Undoing of Reconstruction (pp. 476–481)

1. Why did the Redeemers resort to terror in their campaign to regain political control of the South?
 - They could not win at the ballot box; southern notions of honor included violence to restore it; and many white southern leaders had military experience, like Nathan Bedford Forrest, the founder of the Ku Klux Klan.
2. What changes in the North explain why the Republicans abandoned the battle for Reconstruction?
 - The North experienced a recession in 1873. In addition, an increase in Indian attacks in the West, an increase of racist anti-Reconstruction propaganda by private parties, an increase of Republican corruption scandals during Grant Administration, the deaths of Radical Republicans and replacement by moderates of a new generation disinterested in the South, and the passing of the abolitionist generation all signaled the wane of reform energies by the white middle class.
3. Explain how the contested presidential election of 1876–1877 brought an end to Reconstruction.
 - The contested presidential election ended Reconstruction by creating the conditions for a compromise between both parties to solve the crisis. Reconstruction became a bargaining chip. The Republicans agreed to pull troops out of the South and end Reconstruction in exchange for receiving the Hayes victory over Tilden.

Chapter Writing Assignments

These questions appear at the end of Chapter 15 in the textbook. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

1. Why did the debate over restoring the South to the Union devolve into an institutional struggle between the presidency and the Congress?
 - As a constitutional issue it was unclear whether or not the President or Congress held primary authority over restoring the nation.
 - Lincoln's assassination placed Andrew Johnson, a racist southerner, into office. He did not agree with his party in terms of its Reconstruction outlook and policies. Johnson prevented the Republican Party, which held a three-to-one majority over the Democrats in Congress, from passing

legislation into law. He used his veto power several times in an attempt to kill Reconstruction.

2. Do you believe that the failure of Reconstruction was primarily a failure of leadership? Or, to put it more concretely, that the outcome might have been different had Lincoln lived? Or chosen a different vice president?

- Reconstruction was primarily a failure of leadership at the congressional level. As Radical Republicans passed away or left office, their replacements were moderates who wanted to abandon the South and end Reconstruction in favor of industrial development and participation in big business.
- President Andrew Johnson's early policies served to prevent African Americans from achieving equal rights quickly after the Civil War.
- Reconstruction would have taken a different course if Lincoln had lived, in part because Andrew Johnson would not have attacked Reconstruction during the Presidential phase. But the civil rights movement created by the Radical Republicans in response to Johnson's measures may never have occurred if a more cautious Lincoln had remained as president.

3. Was there any way of reconciling the Republican desire for equality for the ex-slaves with the ex-Confederate desire for self-rule in the South?

- Slavery and the suffering of the Civil War prevented any reconciliation between former slaves and their masters.
- Slavery was based on the idea of abject servitude by one race, deemed inferior, to that of another, leading to violence, rape, and the sale of family members.
- White southerners and black slaves never understood one another because of the profound ideological differences created by slavery. Whites would never tolerate true equality, and blacks would never settle for anything but real equality and freedom.

Class Discussion Starters

1. How might Reconstruction have been different if Lincoln had not been assassinated?

Possible answers

- a. Lincoln would have allied himself with the moderate Republicans in support of a program

less lenient than what he initially wanted but not as severe as what the Radicals desired.

- b. Reconstruction would have been more consistent, without changes in policy. Southerners would not have been encouraged by battles between the president and Congress, which would not have occurred.
- c. Lincoln would have broken with congressional Republicans and would have had struggles with Congress similar to Johnson's, although with less personal hostility because of Lincoln's more tactful personality.
- d. Lincoln would have remained committed to full citizenship for ex-slaves; he would not have backed down before the Ku Klux Klan and would have used the force necessary to root it out. He could have co-opted Lee and other Southerners with genuine honor to help him rebuild the Union.

2. Lincoln is frequently considered our best president for his handling of the Civil War. How do you rate his early attempts at Reconstruction?

Possible answers

- a. Lincoln was too ready to give in to the South on slavery and was too soft toward the Confederates.
- b. Lincoln's moderate approach was exactly what the country needed to recover from the war.
- c. Lincoln had an easy time of it because of patriotic support for the president; after the war he would have had problems similar to Johnson's.

3. How would American political development have differed if President Johnson had been removed from office?

Possible answers

- a. Reconstruction would not have changed much, since Congress took control of policy anyway, and the North was ambivalent.
- b. Impeachment and conviction would have occurred more often in American history because they would have resulted from a lack of political support, not from criminal activity.
- c. Congress's power would have increased even more than it did in the late nineteenth century.

4. Did Reconstruction go too far, not far enough, or was change impossible to achieve?

Possible answers

- a. It went too far. The attempt to give African Americans political equality with white Southerners was fruitless. It could not, and did not, last.
- b. It did not go far enough. Land redistribution alone would have made a difference in the political and economic relationship between white Southerners and freedmen.
- c. It was an impossible task. The North was never prepared to support the extent of change that was necessary in the South.

5. Were the Radical Republicans astute when they abandoned woman suffrage to ensure that African American suffrage would be accomplished?

Possible answers

- a. Yes. Woman suffrage was considered so extreme that to insist on it might have led the moderates to abandon the movement to extend suffrage to blacks.
- b. No. Woman suffrage might not have passed, but it would not have damaged the movement for African American suffrage.
- c. No. Women's efforts in support of the war should have gained them suffrage.

6. Why didn't freedmen and poor whites form an alliance against the planters?

Possible answers

- a. Planters successfully appealed to white racism in order to prevent such an alliance.
- b. Freedmen and poor whites were in competition for land in the distressed southern economy after the war.
- c. Both groups distrusted each other and could not overcome latent racism.

7. In what ways was the African American community in the South split after the war?

Possible answers

- a. African Americans who had been free before the war were more conservative in their goals for Reconstruction and were more protective of private property.

- b. Freedmen often sought the confiscation and redistribution of former Confederate estates.
- c. Freedmen enjoyed their new geographical mobility, often seeking out relatives who had been sold away.

8. Why do you think the Fifteenth Amendment's provision for reducing congressional representation in states that denied suffrage to their citizens was never enforced?

Possible answers

- a. Once southern states again had representatives in Congress, southern Democrats blocked political support for enforcement.
- b. Northerners and the Republican Party were not sufficiently unified to agree on a plan to enforce the amendment.
- c. Presidents after Grant did not want to risk reopening the war.
- d. The Republican Party was torn between reformers who wanted to abandon Reconstruction and a scandal-torn administration.
- e. Racism prevented Northerners from seeing African Americans as citizens whose right to vote had to be protected.

9. How did changes in the North during the war prepare the country for the postwar Republican economic program?

Possible answers

- a. The war accustomed Northerners to massive government spending.
- b. The war weakened Democrats, who traditionally opposed government expansion.
- c. Wartime spending led Northerners to look to the federal government as a customer for their products.

Classroom Activities

1. Ask students to form groups, or work individually, and read a series of short primary documents that you feel are symbolic of the major trends and themes of the Reconstruction era, such as Presidential and Radical Reconstruction, the Black Codes, sharecropping, education, violence, and so on. When you reconvene the class, ask a series of open-ended questions to probe their reactions to the passages. Draw upon the content in Chapter

15 to help your students to point out common themes in the documents that highlight the complexities of the era.

2. Ask students to think about the evolving social relationships on a cotton plantation farmed by a sharecropping black family on land owned by their former white master after the Civil War. Why did many former slaves remain with their masters? What did whites and blacks think of this relationship? Why did sharecropping arise and become a negative experience for blacks? After leading a general discussion of white and black perspectives, attitudes, and motives during Reconstruction, show a clip from the PBS American Experience documentary, *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War*. After the clip is over, ask the students how the film relates to the information they have compiled regarding Reconstruction.

Oral History Exercise

- Create an outside-of-class assignment that requires students to locate primary resources in the form of oral interviews to understand the black experience during Reconstruction. Ask them to bring in copies of the documents. Students should then comment in writing or orally about the limitations of oral interviews as well as the insights gleaned from these types of sources. What can oral interviews tell us about Reconstruction and African American people? You might want to design a checklist of items for the students to examine within the documents. For example, ask simple questions, such as What kind of a document is it? Who is the author? When was it written?

Working with Documents

COMPARING AMERICAN VOICES

Freedom (p. 462)

1. The South proved fiercely resistant to accepting the ex-slaves as citizens with equal rights. In what ways does Heyward's letter provide insight into that resistance and (despite Heyward's professed sympathy) help explain why so many blacks were beaten and killed when they tried to exercise their rights?
 - Southern whites believed that blacks were inferior and owed whites for the just and kind treatment and the support they had received under slavery. Now whites were impoverished, and assertions of black equality with the help of Yankees suggested more moral and economic debasement by ungrateful former slaves.
2. In what ways does Anderson's letter suggest that, despite Heyward's dire prediction, the best days of the freed slaves were not "behind them" and that, on the contrary, they were hungry for the benefits of freedom?
 - Blacks wanted more education, higher wages, control over their work conditions, the benefits of safety under the law, improved housing, and a chance to improve values, morals, and their class position.
3. Once emancipated, ex-slaves were free to go wherever they wanted. Yet they mostly stayed put and, despite the bitterness of their enslavement, often became sharecroppers for their former masters, as, for example, on the Barrows plantation (see Map 15.2). Does Anderson's letter suggest why they might have made that choice? Does it matter that his former master is also named Anderson?
 - Former slaves were destitute, had lived with white masters and their families often for their entire lives, had not ever left the home plantation, and some possessed feelings of sympathy toward their former masters, which induced many to remain on the home plantation and become sharecroppers.

VOICES FROM ABROAD

David Macrae: The Devastated South (p. 460)

1. In general, we value accounts by foreigners for insights they provide into America that might not be visible to its own citizens. Do you find any such insights in the Reverend Macrae's account of the postwar South?
 - Insights include the honor-based nature of the southern white reaction to the war and losing it; the high number of southern white men who returned physically damaged by the war; the long period of time it took to rebuild southern cities.
2. The South proved remarkably resistant to northern efforts at reconstruction. Can we find explanations for that resistance in Macrae's account?
 - According to Macrae's informants, resistance took place because southern whites felt extremely angry at losing the war, being wounded, seeing

cities destroyed by General Sherman, and losing their slaves and wealth.

3. The North quickly became disillusioned with Radical Reconstruction (see p. 466). Is there anything in Macrae’s sympathetic interviews with wounded southern gentlemen and destitute ladies that sheds light on the susceptibility of many northerners to propaganda depicting a South in the grip of “a mass of black barbarism”?
 - White southerner complaints of poverty, physical demise, and black freedom as a result of the Civil War increasingly, and over time, moved many northern whites to conclude that the white population should retake control of southern society as they had before the war.

Reading American Pictures

Why Sharecropping? (p. 475)

1. The cotton rows go right up to the house. Why would this family not have set aside land for a garden and for some livestock? And what does this suggest about the historians’ claim that sharecropping doomed the South to a cash-crop monoculture?
 - The growing of cotton reflects the sharecropping system, which compelled black families to grow cash crops while purchasing goods from the owner or local store, often at inflated prices.
 - Historians are correct in arguing that the sharecropping system created a monocrop agricultural system based on cotton, impoverishing most black and many white farmers who could not afford to diversify their farming system.
2. Note the man in the background—most likely the landowner—with his handsome horse and carriage. The family is posing for the photograph, yet he pays no heed and breaks into the frame. And he seems to feel, although he has rented it out, that he still has the run of the place. What does this suggest about the limits of sharecropping as a means of achieving independence by the freedmen?
 - Sharecropping provided a lot of power to the owner of the land, who prevented sharecropping families from achieving a level of independence by constantly supervising their activities, charging high prices for goods, and frequently cheating the family out of money.
3. In that struggle, of course, everything was relative. What elements in the photograph suggest that,

compared to what they had known as slaves or, after emancipation, would have faced as day laborers, this family might have thought they had not fared so badly? (Students are urged to consult Map. 15.2 on page 473, bearing in mind that of course this family did not actually live on the Barrows plantation.)

- Compared to slavery, this family has a larger and improved cabin, more and better clothing, and could also dictate their own work pace.

Electronic Media

Web Sites

- *Impeachment of Andrew Johnson*
www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/
This site includes images and text documenting the era of Reconstruction.
- *History of the Suffrage Movement*
www.rochester.edu/SBA
This site presents relevant images, documents, and commentary on the women’s rights movement.
- *Freedmen and Southern Society Project*
www.history.umd.edu/Freedmen
A University of Maryland, College Park, site that contains primary documents dealing with blacks and the Reconstruction era.

Films

- *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War* (2000, PBS documentary, 180 minutes)
Produced by WGBH, this documentary provides a solid and entertaining overview of the Reconstruction era. See also the companion web site www.pbs.org/amex/reconstruction.
- *Roots* (1997, Warner Bros. mini-series, 12 hours)
Directed by Marvin J. Chomsky, this multipart series covers emancipation and the Reconstruction era and its impact on the lives of several black families.
- *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow, Episode 1: Promises Betrayed (1865–1896)* (2002, PBS series, 60 minutes)
Directed by David Jersey, this documentary is part of a multipart series tracing the loss of legal rights by African Americans.
- *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1974, CBS Television, 120 minutes)
Directed by John Korty, this moving docu-

drama traces the life of a 110-year-old woman born into slavery and surviving into the 1960s.

Literature

- Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988)
A thorough and exhaustive account of Reconstruction from the perspective of a major historian in the field.

Additional Bedford/St. Martin's Resources for Chapter 15

FOR INSTRUCTORS

Transparencies

The following maps and images from Chapter 15 are available as full-color acetates:

- Chloe and Sam (1822)
- Map 15.1 Reconstruction
- Map 15.2 The Barrow Plantation, 1860 and 1881
- Sharecroppers in Georgia

Instructor's Resource CD-ROM

The following maps, figures, and images from Chapter 15, as well as a chapter outline, are available on disc in both PowerPoint and jpeg formats:

- Map 15.1 Reconstruction
- Map 15.2 The Barrow Plantation, 1860 and 1881
- Chloe and Sam
- Andrew Johnson
- Sharecroppers in Georgia
- Freedmen's School, c. 1870
- Nathan Bedford Forrest in Uniform, c. 1865
- "Grantism"

Using the Bedford Series with *America's History, Sixth Edition*

Available online at bedfordstmartins.com/usingseries, this guide offers practical suggestions for incorporating volumes from the Bedford Series in History and Culture into the U.S. History Survey. Relevant titles for Chapter 15 include

- *THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK* by W.E.B. DuBois, Edited with an Introduction by David W. Blight, *Yale University*, and Robert Gooding-Williams, *Northwestern University*

- *UP FROM SLAVERY* by Booker T. Washington with *Related Documents*, Edited with an Introduction by W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*
- *SOUTHERN HORRORS and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892–1900*, Edited with an Introduction by Jacqueline Jones Royster, *Ohio State University*

FOR STUDENTS

Documents to Accompany *America's History*

The following documents and illustrations are available in Chapter 15 of the companion reader by Melvin Yazawa, *University of New Mexico*:

1. Andrew Johnson, Plan of Reconstruction (1865)
2. Carl Schurz, Report on Conditions in the South (1865)
3. Phillip A. Bell, Reconstruction (1865)
4. The Mississippi Black Codes (1865)
5. The Civil Rights Act of 1866
6. Thaddeus Stevens, Black Suffrage and Land Redistribution (1867)
7. The Fourteenth Amendment and Woman Suffrage (1873, 1875)
8. Richard H. Cain, An Advocate of Federal Aid for Land Purchase (1868)
9. Thomas Nast, The Rise and Fall of Northern Support for Reconstruction (1868, 1874)
10. President Grant Refuses to Aid Republicans in Mississippi (1875)
11. The Slaughterhouse Cases (1873)
12. Susan Myrick Interviews ex-Slave Catherine Beale (1929)

Online Study Guide at bedfordstmartins.com/henretta

The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the text as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. The following map, visual, and documents activities are available for Chapter 15:

Map Activity

- Map 15.1 Reconstruction

Visual Activity

- Reading American Pictures: *Why Sharecropping?*

Reading Historical Documents Activities

- Comparing American Voices: *Freedom*
- Voices from Abroad: David Macrae: *The Devastated South*

Critical Thinking Modules at bedfordstmartins.com/historymodules

These online modules invite students to interpret maps, audio, visual, and textual sources centered on events covered in the U.S. history survey. Relevant modules for Chapter 15 include

- Who Freed the Slaves?: Frederick Douglass and the Freedman's Monument, 1876

