

Day 1: Introducing Reconstruction–Yesterday and Today Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives or Essential Questions
<p><u>Lesson Objectives:</u> Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build schema and understanding of the basics of Reconstruction ● Explore the ending of chattel slavery, the rise of reconstruction, and the multiple moments of “Reconstruction” and “Backlash” Black Americans faced as they exercised freedom <p><u>Essential Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What was the Reconstruction period? ● What were some of the successes and challenges of the Reconstruction period? ● How did Black people build power during the Reconstruction period?
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p><u>Resources for this lesson:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introducing Reconstruction - Yesterday & Today Student Response Packet [.docx][.pdf] ● Slides (Accessible digitally or printed for Student Use) [.pptx][pdf] ● Reconstruction Timeline from <i>Padlet</i> (Accessible digitally or printed) ● Civil Rights and the 1950s: Crash Course US History #39 (11:57) <p><u>Excerpts from <i>The 1619 Project</i> from the following essays:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “The Idea of America” by Nikole Hannah-Jones Recommended excerpts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Black Americans had long called for...” to “...in local positions.” (p. 21) ○ “These Black officials joined...” to “...’regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” ○ “For this fleeting...” to “...not the Negroes.” ● “The Wealth Gap” by Trymaine Lee Recommended excerpts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Today’s racial wealth gap...” (p. 83) to “...lost much of their savings.” ○ ““The origins of the racial wealth gap...” to “...incalculable amount of wealth. <p><u>Differentiation Tips and Tools:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Graphic organizers ● ELL Translated Text for Emerging Students ● Adjust Lexile Level and/or Chunking of Text
Lesson Activities
<p><u>Lesson Plan Outline:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do Now, Discourse and Invest in the Question (10 minutes) 2. Background and Context (10 minutes) 3. Student Investigation & Independent Practice (30 minutes)

4. Exit Ticket (10 minutes)

Do Now, Discourse, and Invest:

1. **Do Now.** Give students 4 minutes to respond to the prompt: Someone tells you, “Racism ended when slavery ended. Racism is a thing of the past.” How might you respond to this person?
 - a. Teacher will lead a whole group discussion for 4 minutes.
 - b. Students will share responses to the Do Now.

Exemplar Response: Responses may vary. Teachers should connect shareouts to how slavery shaped American political, social, and economic institutions.

2. **Invest in the Essential Question.** Lead students to invest in the essential question.
 - a. Encourage students to name and circle the key terms and provide definitions to ensure everyone is aligned on the historical investigation.
 - b. Have students rewrite the essential question in their own words to stamp the learning.
3. **Framing.** Teachers can utilize the following personal connection questions to frame student thinking before launching into content:
 - Have you ever had to recover from an injury? What was challenging about it?
 - Have you ever gotten into a fight with a friend? Did you try to fix it? How?
 - How does it feel when someone breaks a promise they made to you?

Background and Content:

Teachers can use either or both of the two options to teach this portion of the lesson. The second option can also be assigned and/or modified for homework.

1. **Option 1 - Words and Images of Power-Building During Reconstruction Activity.** Students explore how Black people built power during the Reconstruction period.
 - a. In small groups, students use the Introducing Reconstruction - Yesterday & Today Student Response Packet to analyze excerpts from W.E.B. DuBois's *Black Reconstruction in America*, [“The Wealth Gap” by Trymaine Lee](#), [“The Idea of America” by Nikole Hannah-Jones](#), and [Jeneen Interlandi](#).
 - b. Students match the excerpts to images from the Reconstruction period and provide a rationale for the choice they made.

Exemplar Responses:

- *Excerpt A, Image 3 - Black people built power by forming schools to fight ignorance among themselves and, per the text, to avoid becoming like their former enslavers. They believed that education was a path to wealth and respect.*
- *Excerpt B, Image 5 - Black people built power by creating free public schools for all people in the South. Since educating Black people was illegal during slavery, freedpeople invested in education.*
- *Excerpt C, Image 1 - Black people built power by getting rid of unfair laws once they had political power from voting. These laws benefited all people in the South. For example, they abolished laws that prevented men from voting if they did not own property. They voted for public schools and for getting rid of unfair and brutal punishments.*
- *Excerpt D, Image 4 - Black people built power by voting for and supporting Black lawmakers and political candidates. Just a short time after slavery ended, there were*

already Black leaders in states where they had been in chains.

- *Excerpt E, Image 6* - Although Black people built power in the South in many ways, the US government stopped protecting these gains. Southern whites fought back against the gains Black Americans had made during Reconstruction.
- *Excerpt F, Image 2* - Black people had built power by putting their money in the Freedman's bank. They had invested over \$1 million. Although the bank failed, this history shows that Black Americans immediately started to build wealth and savings after they and their parents had worked without pay for years under enslavement.

- 2. Option 2 - Civil Rights as the Second Reconstruction.** Students view [Civil Rights and the 1950s: Crash Course US History #39](#) (start around 4:11 at the segment on segregation) about the Civil Rights period and respond to the following guiding question: *Why is the Civil Rights period sometimes called the U.S.'s Second Reconstruction?*

Exemplar Response: The Civil Rights period is sometimes called the second Reconstruction because although slavery was over, segregation and inequality existed across the country. Reconstruction is a process of making the US a more equal and equitable place. The Civil Rights Movement attempted to achieve this because it worked against segregation and discrimination. This movement was led by and mainly interested in liberating Black people, but all citizens benefited from the laws against discrimination that it caused.

Student Investigation:

Continue to utilize the presentation while leading this portion of the lesson plan.

- 1. Engagement.** Ask students to speculate:
 - What do you think freed Black people did immediately after learning of their freedom?
 - What opportunities and challenges might freed Black people have faced right after emancipation?
- Provide background information about the African diaspora in the Caribbean up to 1865 to set Reconstruction in a greater context. Cover the following important details:
 - a. The abolition of slavery in the British West Indies in 1834 and the subsequent oppression of Black people there into slavery-like conditions, leading to the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865.
 - b. The Dominican War of Independence of 1863-1865, where Afro-Dominicans fought with Haitian support to retake the country from Spanish control and the threat of the reinstatement of slavery.

- Have students summarize responses to: How free were Black people in the West Indies by 1865?

Exemplar Response: By 1865, Black people in the West Indies were free from the literal chains and some of the brutal punishments of slavery, but most remained at the bottom of the social pyramid because plantation owners retained most of the land and power in societies. Rebellions in the 1860s against the reinstatement of slavery and the plantation work regime show that although chattel slavery was over, true equity and equality did not yet exist.

- Define and introduce Reconstruction as a time period.
 - a. Reconstruction was the process of re-constructing the United States after the Civil War.
 - b. More generally, Reconstruction was the process of turning the U.S. from a slave society to a place of freedom and equal opportunity for all its people.

5. **Frame.** Lead engagement through the rest of the slide deck.
 - a. As they engage with the presentation, students should keep track of key dates and events including:
 - The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments
 - The development of the Black Codes
 - The creation of the Freedman’s Bureau
 - The arrival and eventual withdrawal of federal troops to enforce Reconstruction mandates
 - b. Students should categorize each event as either “Reconstruction” or “Backlash”.
 - “Reconstruction” is the process of creating freedom, equity, equality, and power for Black Americans (and all Americans)
 - “Backlash” is any step taken to limit freedom, equity, equality, and power for Black Americans (and all Americans)
 - c. Push students to explain their answers using Think-Pair-Share and whole-group responses. (*See slide deck notes for anticipated responses to these questions*).

Exit Ticket Assessment & Discussion:

1. Students complete a variation on a 3-2-1 exit ticket: 3 advancements made during Reconstruction, 2 examples of backlash during Reconstruction, and 1 question about Reconstruction.

Exemplar Response: Moments of Advancements include The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, Political Change, investment in Education, Rebuilding Families, and creating Black Communities and institutions. Moments of Backlash include The 13th Amendment and its legal loophole, White Terror, voting restrictions, and sharecropping

2. End class by discussing the question: Is Reconstruction truly over?
 - a. Prompt students to think about recent and current struggles for racial justice in the U.S.?
 - b. Use the following guiding/back-pocket questions to support your discussion...
 - What forms of Reconstruction do you see in the world today? What forms of backlash?
 - U.S. policing kills over 1000 people per year, of all racial and ethnic identities. The Movement for Black Lives has been leading the fight against police violence. In light of this information, is the Movement for Black Lives continuing the work of Reconstruction today? Why?
 - Is the U.S. in general, and your community in particular, in need of “reconstruction” amid the ongoing COVID pandemic? Why or why not? What do you think such reconstruction might/should look like?