

Day 3: Reconstruction Figures Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives & Essential Questions

Lesson Objective:

Students will...

- Identify how Black Americans used their power and agency during the Reconstruction era (1865-1877) and the Gilded Age of the late 1890s-early 1900s through close reading

Essential Questions:

Who were the key black figures during the Reconstruction Era and Gilded Age and how did they demonstrate power and agency?

Lesson Materials & Resources

Resources for this lesson:

- Reconstruction Figures Student Response Packet [[.docx](#)][[.pdf](#)]
- Reconstruction Figures Slides (Accessible digitally or printed) [[.pptx](#)][[.pdf](#)]
- [The Gilded Age | The Black Elite | HBO Clip](#)
- [The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story](#) (pages 269 - 269; selections excerpted in the SRP)

Differentiation Tips and Tools:

- Graphic Organizers
- ELL Translated Text for Emerging Students
- Adjust Lexile Level and/or Chunking of Text

Lesson Activities

Lesson Plan Outline:

- Do Now, Discourse and Invest in the Question (10 minutes)
- Background and Context (10 minutes)
- Scholar Investigation & Independent Practice (30 minutes)
- Exit Ticket (10 minutes)

Do Now, Discourse and Invest in the Question:

- Do Now.** Give students 4 minutes to respond to the prompt: Based on what you know from prior classes, do you believe that there was a point in time when black Americans began to grow in power? Explain.
 - Students will share their responses in a turn and talk.
 - Lead a whole group discussion for 4 minutes.

Exemplar Response: Responses may vary.

Yes - During enslavement, Black people resisted and fought against their oppressors through rebellion/education/music and dance/secret codes/escaping to freedom.

No- Due to enslavement and racism, Black people didn't have much power (If students say no, push them to think about if this consisted of ALL black people and think about the idea of resistance.)

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.

Background and Context:

1. Students will have 2 minutes to turn and talk with a partner and discuss/take notes on the following prompt: What do you think is a black elite? What characteristics do they possess?

Exemplar: Varies, Black Elite- Black people who were seen as role models or at the top within society/their community. Characteristics-Highly educated, leaders, wealthy, business owners, role models

- a. Ask students if they have heard of the word, elite.
 - b. If needed, have a student define the word then have students apply that definition to the question, thinking about what a Black Elite was specifically during a time when Black people were officially emancipated from enslavement
2. Screen and discuss [The Gilded Age | The Black Elite | HBO Clip](#).
 - a. Play from 0:22 to the end of the video.
 - b. Have students respond to the following questions as they watch the clip:
 - What kind of jobs were African Americans getting during this time in America?
Exemplar Response: Business owners, scientists, lawyers, politicians, newspaper owners and writers
 - Do you believe that African Americans gained power during this time? Explain.
Exemplar Response: Yes, because it was a moment of opportunity for black people where they had access to better jobs, business ownership, and were able to accumulate wealth.
 - Based on the featurette, what surprised you the most and what did you already know from past lessons? *Responses Vary*

Scholar Investigation & Independent Practice:

1. Use the slide deck to introduce historical figures amongst the Black Elite. Print out the slides for students or present them on the board for students to read.
2. **Group/Partner Activity.** Students will identify the key black contributors to the Reconstruction Era and utilize the slides to summarize the impact of each of the contributors connecting it back to power and agency.
 - Robert B Elliott. *Exemplar response: Political figure, general of the S.C. National Guard, and helped to fight the KKK with the creation of a militia.*
 - Ida B Wells. *Exemplar Response: Feminist and journalist who spoke out against racism and violence towards Black people through writing.*
 - Frederick Douglass. *Exemplar Response: Advocate and supporter of the creation of banks for Black people (generational wealth)*
 - Hiram Rhodes Revels. *Exemplar Response: Member of the U.S. Senate and was outspoken about racial segregation.*
3. **Student Independent Activity:** Students read and annotate a range of texts about either Ida B.

Wells or Hiram Revels and then answer questions based on their reading.

- a. Direct students to pages 3 - 7 of their student response packets.
- b. Have students select either Ida B. Wells or Hiram Revels. As they read, they should closely annotate the text.
- c. Students should answer questions on page 7 of the student response packet.

Source A: Hiram Revels Exemplar Responses & Key Ideas

- *Member of the U.S. Senate concerning the acceptance of Black senators and representatives from Georgia into Congress who were denied their seats.*
- *Advocating for the voices of Black people both dead and alive...now is the time for them to be heard. Specifically advocating for the Georgia elected men.*
- *These elected men should be allowed their seats in Congress and all black people be given their rights of “pursuit of liberty and happiness” as well as the right to vote and be a voice for their people.*
- *Revels is using his power and agency as a newly elected member of Congress to speak on behalf of his peers who are being denied the opportunity he has due to racism. He speaks to the entire U.S. Senate, a group of predominantly white men.*

Source B: Ida B. Wells Exemplar Responses & Key Ideas

- *The reading speaks to those who wronged Wells and discriminated against her because of her race as well as to her race of Black people who experience the same discrimination she does. The entire public is made aware of this injustice.*
- *To explain how Wells was a woman who rightfully bought a seat on the train car, and even though she may have “looked the part” of an elite, she was still discriminated against due to her race.*
- *Wells may not have been born a hero, but her simple act of denying being treated as a second-class citizen made her one.*
- *Wells used her power and agency by resisting oppression and defending herself on the train, suing the company that wronged her and bravely speaking out against it. This was rare and bold for not only a Black person, but a woman.*

Exit Ticket Assessment: Students should craft a written response to the following question: How did the Black elite demonstrate power and agency during the Reconstruction era?

- a. Student responses should include the following:
 - Background and context
 - Thesis statement
 - Two pieces of evidence and analysis
 - A conclusion

Exemplar Response: The Black Elite demonstrated power and agency using their newfound freedom to seek roles in politics, journalism, education, financial wealth, and business ownership. Despite racism still being a major obstacle, Black Elites did not let this hinder them from speaking out about the injustices targeting them in front of white and black audiences as well as taking action.