The Politics of Reconstruction

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read how the Union won the Civil War.

In this section, you will learn how political leaders set out to rebuild the nation after the war.

AS YOU READ

Use this chart to take notes about the Reconstruction plans of President Lincoln, President Andrew Johnson, and Congress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECONSTRUCTION PLANS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln’s Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern States were</td>
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<tr>
<td>to the Union, as soon</td>
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<td>as 10% of its voters</td>
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<td>swore allegiance to</td>
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<td>the Union.</td>
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<td>Johnson’s Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnson’s plan was</td>
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<tr>
<td>to Lincoln’s plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congressional Plan</td>
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<td>Reconstruction Act I</td>
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<tr>
<td>stated that Lincoln</td>
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<td>and Johnson’s plan were</td>
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<td>under control and</td>
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<td>called for new laws</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern states could</td>
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<tr>
<td>enter the Union until</td>
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<td>the 14th Amendment</td>
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Lincoln’s Plan for Reconstruction (pages 376–377)

What was Reconstruction?

Reconstruction was the period of rebuilding after the Civil War. It also refers to the process of bringing the Southern states back into the nation. Reconstruction lasted from 1865 to 1877.

During the war, President Lincoln made a plan for Reconstruction that was easy on the South. It included pardoning Confederates if they would swear allegiance to the Union. It also called for a state to be readmitted in the Union as soon as 10 percent of the state’s voters swore allegiance to the nation. Thus it was known as the Ten Percent Plan.

Four states applied for readmission under Lincoln’s plan. But a small group of Republicans, called Radical Republicans, blocked them. The Radicals thought Lincoln’s plan was too easy on the South. They wanted to punish the South for the war. They also wanted to give African Americans the right to vote. The Radical Republicans were led by Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania and Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts.
Congressional Reconstruction
(pages 379–382)

What was the congressional plan for Reconstruction?

Congress voted to override Johnson’s vetoes. It also passed the Fourteenth Amendment. This amendment gave African Americans full citizenship. Johnson urged Southern states to oppose the amendment. He argued that the amendment was too hard on the South. He added that states should not have to ratify an amendment that their legislators had little to do with. The amendment was not ratified until 1868.

The Radical Republicans won numerous seats in the 1866 Congressional elections. They now had enough votes in Congress to take control of Reconstruction.

In 1867, the new Congress passed the Reconstruction Act. The act declared that state governments created under Lincoln and Johnson’s plan were invalid. In addition, the act put the Southern states under military control and called for new state constitutions. The law also said that no state could re-enter the Union until it approved the Fourteenth Amendment and gave the vote to African-American men. Johnson vetoed the bill. Congress overrode his vetoes.

The fight between Congress and Johnson intensified. Congress began looking for a way to impeach the president in order to remove him from office. They soon found a way. Johnson had removed a cabinet member in 1867. Congress said he did it illegally. As a result, Congress voted to impeach Johnson. The President’s impeachment trial went to the Senate in 1868. The Senate found him not guilty. Johnson remained in office.

In 1868, Civil War hero Ulysses S. Grant was elected president. African-American votes in the South helped him win. Then, in 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified. It banned states from denying the vote to African Americans.

1. What was Lincoln’s plan for readmitting Confederate states to the Union?

**Johnson’s Plan** (pages 377–379)

**What was Johnson’s plan for Reconstruction?**

After Lincoln was killed, his vice-president, Andrew Johnson, became president. Johnson’s Reconstruction plan was similar to Lincoln’s. Many states met the plan’s terms. As a result, these states were readmitted to the Union. In December 1865, Southern members of Congress began arriving once again in Washington.

The Radical Republicans, however, refused to seat the new members. In addition, they passed a law creating the Freedmen’s Bureau. It gave food and clothing to former slaves and set up hospitals and schools.

Congress also passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866. The act declared that states could not enact black codes—laws that discriminated against African Americans. Johnson felt that the two bills made the federal government too powerful. So he vetoed both.

2. Why did President Johnson veto the bill extending the Freedmen’s Bureau and the Civil Rights Act of 1866?

3. How did the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments improve the lives of African Americans?
Reconstructing Society

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you learned about presidential and congressional Reconstruction plans. In this section, you will read how Reconstruction affected Southern society.

AS YOU READ

Use the chart below to take notes on the problems facing the South after the Civil War and the way people tried to solve these problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The South was in ruins</td>
<td>Public works programs were started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans faced many challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The South needed a new economy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terms and Names

- scalawag: White Southerner who joined the Republican Party
- carpetbagger: Northerner who moved to the South after the war
- Hiram Revels: First African-American senator
- sharecropping: System in which landowners leased a few acres of land to farmworkers in return for a portion of their crops
- tenant farming: Renting land from landowners for cash

Conditions in the Postwar South; Politics in the Postwar South (pages 383–387)

**What political groups existed in the postwar South?**

By 1870, all former Confederate states had been readmitted to the Union. Republicans—the party that had long opposed slavery—ran their governments.

The South faced terrible economic conditions throughout Reconstruction. Many plantations and small farms remained destroyed. The population of the South also was devastated. More than one-fifth of the adult white men of the Confederacy died in the war. Tens of thousands of Southern African-American men also died. The women and children who stayed home often suffered malnutrition and illness.

The Southern state governments began public works programs to repair the region’s physical damage. They also provided social services. State governments raised taxes to pay for these programs.

Three different groups made up the Republican party in the South. Scalawags were white Southerners. They were small farmers who did not want wealthy planters to regain power. Carpetbaggers were Northerners who had...
moved South. Some moved there to reform Southern society. Others moved there to make money. The third group was African Americans eager to vote and take part in politics.

The differences between the three Republican groups led to a lack of unity in the party. Meanwhile, the issue of African American rights divided Southern society as a whole. Some whites thought that the end of slavery would help the South. But most Southern whites refused to accept equal rights for African Americans.

1. What three groups made up the Republican Party after the war?

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**Former Slaves Face Many Challenges** (pages 387–389)

**How did former slaves improve their situation?**

African Americans worked hard to improve their lives during Reconstruction. Many African Americans moved to find family members who had been sold elsewhere in the South. The Freedmen’s Bureau worked to reunite African-American families. Once reunited, African Americans married and raised their families.

Thousands of African Americans of all ages sought an education. African-American groups organized schools, colleges, and universities. They raised money to buy land and to pay teachers’ salaries.

After the war, many African Americans founded their own churches. African-American ministers often became important community leaders. African Americans also formed thousands of volunteer organizations. These organizations provided financial and emotional support for their members.

After the war, many African Americans participated in government. Not only did they vote, but they organized conventions to demand equal rights and protection under the law. Some joined the new state governments. More than a dozen African Americans served in the U.S. Congress. Among these was Hiram Revels, the first African-American senator.

2. In what ways did African Americans participate in government after the war?

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**Changes in the Southern Economy** (pages 389–392)

**How did the Southern economy change after the war?**

African Americans wanted to own and farm their own land. They had been promised “forty acres and a mule” by General Sherman. Congress, though, did not honor this promise.

Meanwhile, Southern planters wanted to return to the plantation system. To regain their control of land and labor, Southern planters turned to two systems that kept African Americans under their control.

One system was known as **sharecropping**. To survive, many former slaves became sharecroppers. Sharecropping is a system in which landowners give a few acres of land to their farmworkers. The farmworkers keep a small portion of their crops and give the rest to the landowner.

Another system in which whites controlled the labor of African Americans was **tenant farming**. Tenant farmers rented land from the landowners for cash.

Another change in the Southern economy was the fact that cotton was no longer in great demand. The world demand for Southern cotton began to drop as other countries increased their cotton production. As a result, the price of Southern cotton fell dramatically.

3. How did planters regain control of the land and labor in the South?
CHAPTER 12  Section 3 (pages 393–401)

The Collapse of Reconstruction

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the effects of Reconstruction on the South.

In this section, you will learn how Reconstruction ended.

AS YOU READ

Use this timeline to take notes on the events that led to the end of Reconstruction.

Opposition to Reconstruction

(pages 393–395)

What was the Ku Klux Klan?

Many Southerners did not like the notion of greater rights for African Americans—especially the right to vote. Some Southern citizens formed terrorist groups that opposed rights for African Americans. One such group was known as the Ku Klux Klan. This group used violence to keep blacks from voting.

The Klan and other groups also tried to prevent African Americans from making economic progress. They killed livestock that belonged to African Americans. They attacked African Americans who owned their own land and forced them to work for white landowners.

In 1872, Congress weakened the power of the Republican Party in the South. Many white Southerners had complained about Republican abuses of power during Reconstruction. They claimed that Republicans kept many white Southerners from reaching public office. As a result, Congress passed the Amnesty Act in 1872. The act gave many former Confederates the right to vote. Southern Democrats began to regain power in the South.

1. What did the Ku Klux Klan attempt to do?
Scandals and Money Crises Hurt Republicans; Economic Turmoil (pages 395–397)

What weakened the Republican Party in the early 1870s?

Meanwhile, corruption and scandals hurt the Republican Party nationwide. General Ulysses S. Grant had been elected president in 1869. Though Grant was not corrupt, many people in his administration were.

The Panic of 1873 further upset the nation. Many investors had taken advantage of the expanding economy after the Civil War. Some took on more debt than they could afford. Many could not pay their debts and went bankrupt. As a result, many banks closed. A nation-wide depression soon followed.

2. What caused the Panic of 1873?

Judicial and Popular Support Fades; Democrats “Redeem” the South (pages 397–401)

What brought Reconstruction to an end?

In the mid-1870s, several Supreme Court decisions weakened the power of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. At the same time, more and more people in the North wanted to reconcile with the South. As time passed, the nation focused on the scandals and the economic problems of the nation. The country began to lose interest in the problems of the South.

As Republican power in the South weakened, Southern Democrats began to recapture many state governments. Democrats referred to their return to power as redemption.

In 1876, Republicans decided not to run Grant for a third term. Instead, they chose Rutherford B. Hayes. The Democrats ran Samuel H. Tilden. Tilden won the popular vote. However, he fell one vote short of the number of electoral votes needed to win.

Congress appointed a commission to settle the election. Democrats and Republicans made a political deal called the Compromise of 1877. Democrats allowed Hayes to become president and Republicans agreed to withdraw federal troops from the South, ending Reconstruction.

The 1876 elections also brought an end to Republican influence in Southern state governments. After the elections, Democrats, called Redeemers, controlled every Southern state government. Using the power of home rule—or the ability to run state governments without the interference of the federal government—the Democrats made sweeping changes. They restricted the rights of freed slaves. They wiped out social programs and got rid of public schools.

In the end, Reconstruction had failed to gain equal rights for African Americans. However, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments remained part of the Constitution. In later years, these amendments would be used to strengthen African Americans’ rights.

3. In what two ways did the 1876 elections signal the end of Reconstruction?

Skillbuilder

Use the cartoon to answer the questions.

1. How is President Grant shown in the cartoon?

2. What is Grant trying to do?
**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>allegiance</td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depression</td>
<td>Period when economic activity declines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invalid</td>
<td>Not acceptable according to the law or rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malnutrition</td>
<td>Condition caused by having too little food to eat or by eating the wrong kinds of food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>override</td>
<td>Reverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public works</td>
<td>Construction projects, such as highways, paid for by the government for the benefit of the general public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconcile</td>
<td>Settle differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social services</td>
<td>Services that help people improve their lives, such as schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AFTER YOU READ**

**Terms and Names**

**A.** Fill in the blanks with the letter of the term that best completes the sentence.

a. Reconstruction ✓

b. black codes ✓

c. scalawags ✓

**A.** Fill in the blanks with the letter of the term that best completes the sentence.

b. carpetbaggers ✓

c. Hiram Revels ✓

d. Ku Klux Klan ✓

e. Rutherford B. Hayes ✓

1. Congress outlawed ____ which were laws that discriminated against African Americans. p. 128

2. The ____ was a terrorist organization that used violence to prevent African Americans from voting. p. 128

3. The election of ____ as president in 1876 helped to bring Reconstruction to an end. p. 132

4. ____ was the first African-American senator. p. 130

5. ____ was the period of rebuilding the nation after the Civil War, which lasted from 1865 to 1877. p. 131

6. The ____ were white Southern Republicans who did not want wealthy planters to regain power. p. 129

**B.** Write the letter of the name or term that matches the description.

a. sharecropping ✓

b. Samuel J. Tilden ✓

c. Fourteenth Amendment ✓

d. home rule

e. tenant farming ✓

1. It gave African Americans citizenship. p. 128

2. It banned states from denying the vote to African Americans. p. 128

3. A system in which landowners give a few acres of land to their farmworkers and the farmworkers keep a small portion of their crops and give the rest to the landowners'. p. 130

4. A system in which farmers rented land from the landowners for cash. p. 130

5. The Democrat candidate in the 1876 presidential election. p. 130

6. The Southern Democrats' term for their return to power in the South. p. 130

7. The ability to run state governments without federal intervention. p. 130
Main Ideas

1. What did the Congressional plan for Reconstruction include? pg 128 (Congressional Reconstruction)

2. How did African Americans try to rebuild their lives after the Civil War? pg 130 (Former Slaves Face Challenges)

3. What systems replaced the plantation system in the South? pg 130 (Changes in the Southern Economy)

4. What did the Ku Klux Klan do to prevent African Americans from making political and economic progress? pg 131

5. How did Southern Democrats regain political power during Reconstruction? pg 132 (Judicial and Popular Support Fades)

Thinking Critically

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. How was Reconstruction undone?

2. Did African Americans come through Reconstruction better or worse off? Explain.
   I think African Americans came through Reconstruction [better/worse] off because