

Name: _____ Class: _____

Reconstruction Reading

DIRECTIONS: Read the passages bellowing regarding the Civil War and answer the corresponding questions. Highlight or underline the answers to the questions in each passage. Enjoy :)

After the Confederates surrendered at Appomattox Court House, the United States needed to start rebuilding after four years of fighting in the Civil War. Although the war was over, southerners were still resentful and angry with northerners. In 1865, the 13th Amendment was ratified, abolishing slavery in the United States. Over four million freedmen, men and women who had been slaves, were living in the south changing the dynamics of the southern society forever. In addition, the south was devastated from the Union's total war campaign, destroying the terrain and infrastructure. President Lincoln was extremely worried about how to rebuild the south and mend the country. Thus, the country entered an era focused on rebuilding the south known as Reconstruction.

1. What was the 13th Amendment?
2. Who were freedmen?
3. Define Reconstruction.

Lincoln wanted a moderate Reconstruction plan, which would allow the south to unite with the north under generous terms. This would allow the country to move forward from the four years of conflict without much resentment. The problem, however, was that Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth shortly after the Civil War and prior to implementing his Reconstruction plan. Thus, Reconstruction became a debate between Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, and the growing Radical Republicans in Congress. Despite Johnson's attempt to implement a lenient Reconstruction plan in the south, Radical Republicans were able to overpower his plan and implement a harsh Reconstruction plan with the Reconstruction Act of 1867. As part of the Reconstruction Act, the south was divided into five military districts. Within these districts, the United States military occupied the territory and enforced Reconstruction policies, including allowing African Americans the right to vote. With the ratification of the 14th Amendment, people born or naturalized in the United States were considered citizens, including African Americans. Thus, as citizens, they were entitled to their right to vote. The military occupation of the south further intensified the bitter resentment in the south.

4. Why did Lincoln want a lenient Reconstruction plan?
5. What was the 14th Amendment?
6. Under the Reconstruction Act, how were policies enforced?
7. What right did southerners attempt to deny to African Americans?

However, not all southerners resisted northern Reconstruction. Scalawags, a nickname given to southern Republicans, supported Reconstruction in the south. Many scalawags were businessmen that wanted to rebuild the economy and territory of the south, and mend their relationship with the north. In addition, many northerners actually moved to the south after the war. They were called carpetbaggers. Many carpetbaggers were looking for economic opportunity, and others were looking to help freedmen establish themselves in American society. They acquired their nickname because of their quick move to the south did not give them enough time to effectively pack; therefore, they just packed a few items into a cheap suitcase, or a carpetbag.

8. Who were scalawags?
9. Who were carpetbaggers?

In 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified, which made it unconstitutional for states to deny citizens the right to vote because of their “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” In reaction to the 15th Amendment, southern states did what they could to continue to deny African Americans the right to vote in the south. They did not want the African American vote to impact legislation and gain power in the United States government. Therefore, groups and policies emerged in the south to restrict African Americans from voting.

10. What was the 15th Amendment?

11. Why did southern want to stop African Americans from voting?

A conservative group called the Ku Klux Klan, emerged and used violence to keep African Americans from voting. During Reconstruction, they murdered hundreds of African Americans and/or white southerners that supported their equality. Despite an 1870 law passed by Congress that prohibited the use of violence to keep citizens from voting, the KKK's threat of violence maintained its influence to keep many African Americans away from the voting polls.

12. What was the Ku Klux Klan?

With protection of the 15th Amendment, the southern states could not deny African Americans the right to vote because of their race, therefore, they create new legislation to restrict African Americans from voting for different reasons. For example, southern states passed the poll tax. The poll tax required citizens to pay a fee every time they voted. This was a concern for African Americans, because many freedmen were struggling to find employment opportunities, and many could not afford the fees. Likewise, many states also passed literacy tests. Literacy tests required voters read and explain a section of the Constitution. Because of slave codes, the vast majority of freedman were unable to read or write, thus many were unable to vote. Consequently, many poor white southerners were also unable to pass the literacy test; therefore, the south passed grandfather clauses. These laws stated that if a voter's father or grandfather had been eligible to vote by January 1867, that they would be exempted from taking the literacy test to vote. In the south, no African American was given the right to vote before 1868.

13. Identify the poll tax?

14. Why was the poll tax effective?

15. What was the literacy test?

16. Why were most freedmen unable to pass the literacy test?

As the southern society continued to change and be plagued by racism and discrimination, the southern economy was also changing. Southern states understood that their economy could no longer be solely based on agriculture and trade, and that they also needed to focus on industrialization. Henry Grade, a southern journalist, described southern states as the “New South” after the war, because the south began to build textile mills and manufacture goods as well. The south was determined not to rely on the north for trade and manufacturing. The south continued to produce cash crops, but the production changed when slavery ended. Plantation owners no longer had a free source of labor. During Reconstruction, plantation owners divided their land into small plots of land and rented the land to freedmen or poor white southerners, called sharecroppers. Plantation owners provided the crop seeds and received a portion of the harvest profit.

17. Describe the “New South.”

18. Who were sharecroppers?

As Reconstruction came to an official end in 1877 and the military occupation was disbanded, southern states adopted many segregation laws. Segregation is the legal separation of races. Southern laws, known as Jim Crow laws, separated white and blacks in various public places such as, schools, restaurants, theaters, trains, and hospitals. In 1896 legal segregation was challenged in the



Supreme Court in the infamous case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. The decision of the Supreme Court stated that segregation was legal, as long as equal facilities were available for both whites and blacks. The reality in the south was that the government spent much less money funding black schools and providing for blacks in general. Segregation and the “separate but equal” decision made by the Supreme Court deemed controversial in the United States and was the basis for the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1900s.

19. What is segregation?

20. What was the decision of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*?