

Teaching American History Project

Lesson Title: Flags and Reconstruction From Peter Rodrigues

Length of Class Period: 45 minutes

Inquiry:

How do flags from historical periods incite emotions that contribute to an individual's understanding of a specific group and/or era?

Objectives:

Students will receive historical background on reconstruction (notes). Students will identify how the Nazi flag and Confederate flag mean different things to different people (example: emotions that the Confederate flag incites in Northerners vs. Southerners).

Materials:

“Flags and Reconstruction” worksheet and notes.

Activities:

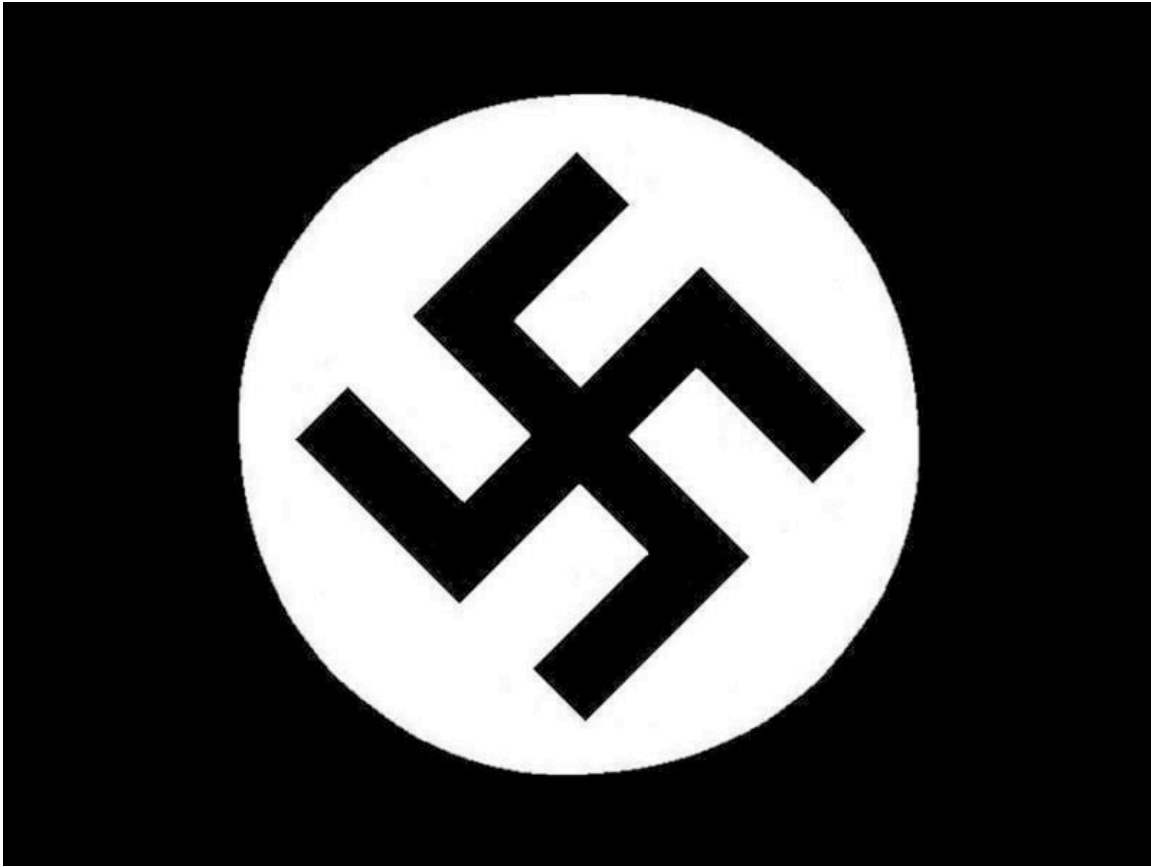
1. Each student is to receive a copy of the 2 flags attached (Nazi flag and Confederate flag). They are only instructed to answer the question underneath each flag. Allow 10 minutes for this.
2. Discussion: Students are to share their thoughts on each flag, preceded by a comparison of the two. What emotions do they incite? What is the historical background? Which flag is viewed in a more positive light?
3. Closure on discussion: How does each flag and your knowledge of it shape how you feel about its' historical context? Explain how each flag when used was a symbol of pride and nationalism to the people who followed it, not a symbol of evil.
4. Conclude with background notes on Congressional Reconstruction (this lesson is a great introduction to the Reconstruction Era in U.S. History).

Assessment:

Students are assessed formally on the completion of the discussion questions (worksheet). Students are assessed informally on their ability to make connections in class discussion regarding symbolism and the power of flags.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards:

- 2.1 – Access and gather information from a variety of primary and secondary sources (maps, charts, graphs, images and print materials).
- 2.2 – Interpret information from a variety of primary and secondary sources (maps, charts, graphs, images and print materials).



What do you think of/feel when you see this flag? Write down your thoughts.



www.flagsonline.it

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CONGRESSIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

The Amendments:

- 13th Amendment (Jan 1865)- Officially Abolished Slavery
- 14th Amendment (June 1866)- Required states to extend equal citizenship to African Americans and all others born in the U.S., and that no one can be deprived of these rights.
- 15th Amendment (Feb 1869)- The right to vote cannot be denied by any state due to race. African Americans could now vote.

Congress gets involved:

- Instituted the above amendments.
- Created the **Freedmen's Bureau**: Provided education for freedmen, settled land disputes, find employment for freedmen, and distributed food.
- **Civil Rights Act 1866**: 1st Civil Rights law in our history, which declared that everyone born in the U.S. was a citizen with full civil rights. Vetoed by Johnson, but veto is defeated by Congress.
- **Reconstruction Acts of 1867**: Divided the former Confederacy into 5 military districts in response to southern resistance. States were occupied by Federal troops, forced to follow 14th amendment.
- Go after Johnson, impeach him in 1868 for violating the Tenure of Office Act.
- Pass **Civil Rights Act of 1875** that prohibited businesses that served the public from discriminating, is widely ignored.
- Declared the KKK a terrorist organization.

The End of Reconstruction:

- Southern stubbornness and political pressure lead to the end of Congressional Reconstruction.
- **Compromise of 1877**: After the disputed election of Rutherford B. Hayes, the Democrats agree to accept Hayes as president in return for the removal of all Federal troops from the south. With this, the freedmen lose their protection, and reconstruction laws are overturned in southern states.