

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Objectives of Reconstruction - Analysis of Two Speeches

Grade – 8th or 11th U.S. History

Length of class period – 1 X 46-50 minute period.

Inquiry – *(What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)*

What were the goals of post-Civil War Reconstruction?

Objectives *(What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)*

Students will know the goals of President Andrew Johnson and other lenient people (Presidential Plan).

Students will know the goals of Radical Republicans (Congressional Plan).

Students will improve their ability to read and understand primary source documents.

Materials *(What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)*

“Cleveland Speech” by President Johnson (September 3, 1866)

Speech to Congress by Thaddeus Stevens (December 18, 1865)

Activities *(What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)*

1. Introduction – Ask students what were the causes of the Civil War? Create a list. Some answers may be slavery, states vs. federal rights, economic differences, etc. Tell students there were two different plans on how to resolve these problems. The Presidential plan (more lenient plan) and the Congressional Plan (punishing plan). [3 minutes].

2. Students will read “Cleveland Speech.” The class can then discuss the following questions (or students can do this individually) [17 minutes]:

- A. How does Johnson argue against the Freedman Bureau?
- B. How does Johnson argue against the 14th amendment?
- C. How does Johnson argue for expanding who can serve in political offices?

3. Students will read Thaddeus Steven's speech (1867). While reading it, they will rewrite it in their own words. [24 minutes]

4. Conclusion – Have students summarize the arguments for Johnson's and Steven's either on the board, by themselves, or through a discussion. [4 minutes]

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

The transcription of Steven's speech can be handed in and graded. The conclusion activity can be written by students as an exit card.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards -

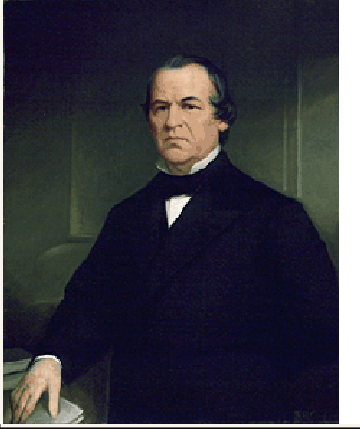
- formulate historical questions based on primary and secondary sources, including documents, eyewitness accounts, letters and diaries, artifacts, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams and written texts;

- gather information from multiple sources, including archives or electronic databases, to have experience with historical sources and to appreciate the need for multiple perspectives;

formulate historical questions and hypotheses from multiple perspectives, using multiple sources;

- gather, analyze and reconcile historical information, including contradictory data, from primary and secondary sources to support or reject hypotheses;

- use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives.



Andrew Johnson

Cleveland speech

September 3, 1866

[This speech was given to people in Cleveland, Ohio. The speech was intended to persuade people to be more lenient to the Southern states after the Civil War. This is a shortened version of the speech.]

I love my country, and I defy any man to put his finger upon anything to the contrary. Then what is my offence? Somebody says "Veto." Veto of what? What is called the Freedmen's Bureau bill, and in fine, not to go into any argument here tonight, if you do not understand what the Freedmen's Bureau bill is, I can tell you. Before the rebellion there were 4,000,000 called colored persons held as slaves by about 340,000 people living in the South. That is, 340,000 slave owners paid expenses, bought land, and worked the negroes, and at the expiration of the year when cotton, tobacco, and rice were gathered and sold, after all paying expenses, these slave owners put the money in their pockets - they put the property in their pocket. Well that is the way things stood before the rebellion. The rebellion commenced and the slaves were turned loose. Then we come to the Freedmen's Bureau bill. And what did the bill propose? It proposed to appoint agents and sub-agents in all the cities, counties, school districts, and parishes, with power to make contracts for all the slaves, power to control, and power to hire them out-dispose of them, and in addition to that the whole military power of the government applied to carry it into execution.

Now to the Freedmen's Bureau. What was it? Four million slaves were emancipated and given an equal chance and fair start to make their own support-to work and produce; and having worked and produced, to have their own property and apply it to their own support. But the Freedmen's Bureau comes and says we must take charge of these 4,000,000 slaves. The bureau comes along and proposes, at an expense of a fraction less than \$12,000,000 a year to take charge of these slaves. You had already expended \$3,000,000,000 [total cost of the Civil War] to set them free and give them a fair opportunity to take care of themselves -then these gentlemen, who are such great friends of the people, tell us they must be taxed \$12,000,000 to sustain the Freedmen's Bureau.

The Civil Rights bill [The 14th Amendment] was more enormous than the other. I have exercised the veto power, they say. In bidding you farewell here tonight, I would ask you with all the pains Congress has taken to calumniate and malign me, what has Congress done? Has it done anything to restore the Union of the States? But, on the contrary, has it not done everything to prevent it?

While this gang-this common gang of cormorants and bloodsuckers, have been fattening upon the country for the past four of five years-men never going into the field, who growl at being removed from their fat offices, they are great patriots! Look at them all over your district? Everybody is a traitor that is against them. I think the time has come when those who stayed at home and enjoyed fat offices for the last four or five years -I think it would be more than right for them to give way and let others participate in the benefits of office.

I have been drawn into this long speech, while I intended simply to make acknowledgments for the cordial welcome; but if I am insulted while civilities are going on I will resent it in a proper manner, and in parting here tonight I have no anger nor revengeful feelings to gratify. All I want now, peace has come and the war is over, is for all patriotic men to rally round the standard of their country, and swear by their altars and their God, that all shall sink together but what this Union shall be supported. Then in parting with you tonight, I hang over you this flag, not of 25 but of 36 stars.

From <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa//D/1851-1875/reconstruction/cleveland.htm>

Name: _____

Speech to Congress by Thaddeus Stevens

December 18, 1865

Directions: Read each section of Thaddeus Steven's speech. This speech was given to the House of Representatives. Rewrite each section in your own words. The first section is done for you as an example.

The President assumes, what no one doubts, that the late rebel States have lost their constitutional relations to the Union, and are incapable of representation in Congress, except by permission of the Government. It matters but little, with this admission, whether you call them States out of the Union, and now conquered territories, or assert that because the Constitution forbids them to do what they did do, that they are therefore only dead as to all national and political action, and will remain so until the Government shall breathe into them the breath of life anew and permit them to occupy their former position. In other words, that they are not out of the Union, but are only dead carcasses lying within the Union. In either case, it is very plain that it requires the action of Congress to enable them to form a State government and send representatives to Congress.

In your own words: Congress must breath life into the late rebel States. The rebel states are dead and require action by Congress.

Nobody, I believe, pretends that with their old constitutions and frames of government they can be permitted to claim their old rights under the Constitution. They have torn their constitutional States into atoms, and built on their foundations fabrics of a totally different character. Dead men cannot raise themselves. Dead States cannot restore their existence "as it was." Whose especial duty is it to do it? In whom does the Constitution place the power? Not in the judicial branch of Government, for it only adjudicates and does not prescribe laws. Not in the Executive, for he only executes and cannot make laws. The future condition of the conquered power depends on the will of the conqueror. They must come in as new states or remain as conquered provinces.

In your own words: _____

There are no symptoms that the people of these provinces will be prepared to participate in constitutional government for some years, I know of no arrangement so proper for them as territorial governments. There they can learn the principles of freedom and eat the fruit of foul rebellion. Under such governments, while electing members to the territorial Legislatures, they will necessarily mingle with those to whom Congress shall extend the right of suffrage. In Territories Congress fixes the qualifications of electors;

and I know of no better place nor better occasion for the conquered rebels and the conqueror to practice justice to all men, and accustom themselves to make and obey equal laws.

In your own words: _____

They ought never to be recognized as capable of acting in the Union, or of being counted as valid States, until the Constitution shall have been so amended as to make it what its framers intended; and so as to secure perpetual ascendancy to the party of the Union; and so as to render our republican Government firm and stable forever. The first of those amendments is to change the basis of representation among the States from Federal numbers to actual voters. . . . With the basis unchanged the 83 Southern members, with the Democrats that will in the best times be elected from the North, will always give a majority in Congress and in the Electoral college. . . . I need not depict the ruin that would follow. . . . *[Remember Stevens is part of the Republic party, he is against the Democratic party]*

In your own words: _____

But this is not all that we ought to do before inveterate rebels are invited to participate in our legislation. We have turned, or are about to turn, loose four million slaves without a hut to shelter them or a cent in their pockets. The infernal laws of slavery have prevented them from acquiring an education, understanding the common laws of contract, or of managing the ordinary business of life. This Congress is bound to provide for them until they can take care of themselves. If we do not furnish them with homesteads, and hedge them around with protective laws; if we leave them to the legislation of their late masters, we had better have left them in bondage.

In your own words: _____

If we fail in this great duty now, when we have the power, we shall deserve and receive the execration of history and of all future ages.