

# Reconstruction

**Designed by: Emily Green**

**Content Area: U.S. History**

**Grade Level Options: 11**

## **Summary of Lesson**

Students will brainstorm various measures of success for evaluating Reconstruction. They will then utilize their criteria to analyze sources about Reconstruction to evaluate its effectiveness. This lesson allows students to examine several documents at a time to emphasize the importance of analyzing multiple sources in evaluating historical events while also noting the importance of sourcing documents for facts and interpretations.

**Estimated Time to Complete:** Two 50 minute periods or one 85 minute period

## **Resources Needed:**

- [Resource One: Reconstruction: Lest You Forget Letter](#)
- [Resource Two: Governor Saulsbury's Message to Legislature](#)
- [Resource Three: National Archives, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands](#)
- [Resource Four: Transcriptions](#)
- Access to technology for each student.

## Desired Results

What students will know, do, and understand

### Delaware Content Standards:

- **History 1A 9-12a:** Students will analyze historical materials to trace the development of an idea or trend across space or over a prolonged period of time in order to explain patterns of historical continuity and change. **Grade 11 and 12**
- **History 9-12b:** Students will examine and analyze primary and secondary sources in order to differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations. **Grade 11 and 12**

### Common Core Literacy Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

### Lesson Essential Questions

- How can we use primary sources to evaluate change over time in the era of Reconstruction?
- Why is it important to distinguish between fact and interpretation in historical documents?

### Essential Knowledge

- This lesson is meant to follow classroom instruction about Reconstruction.

### Students will be able to...

- Organize events through chronologies to suggest and evaluate cause-and-effect relationships among those events.
- Develop the skills of gathering, examining, analyzing, and interpreting data.
- Understand that, before choosing a position or acting, research needs to be accomplished in order to understand the effect of historical developments and trends on subsequent events.

## Learning Plan

### Warm Up:

- Ask students to individually brainstorm a list of problems that needed to be addressed at the end of the Civil War.
  - What needed to be reconstructed?
  - Why would the North want to help the South?
- Have students categorize their responses into *economic*, *social*, and *political* issues with a partner. Then go over the chart as a whole group.
- Ask students to work in pairs to create a set of *economic*, *social*, and *political* criteria by which to evaluate the policies of Reconstruction based on the chart.
- Have students join with another pair to compare criteria. Tell students they will be using this criteria to analyze sources to determine the success of Reconstruction.

### Procedure:

- Have students analyze *Governor Saulsbury's Message to Legislature (1865)*. This letter was written at the beginning of the Reconstruction era.
  - What does the Governor identify as the main problem facing the country after the Civil War?
  - How would he measure the success of Reconstruction?
  - How does his criteria compare to that of students?
- Have students analyze the following source to help determine their opinion on the success of Reconstruction:
  - *Letter from Bureau of Refugees, Freedman, and Abandoned Lands (1868)*
  - *Lest You Forget Letter (1954)*.
- Ask students to use their criteria from the warm up to evaluate the success of Reconstruction based on these documents. If you are teaching on a 50 minute schedule, this would be a good stopping point. Resume the next day by reviewing content and their evaluations from the previous day's documents. Then continue to the next step.
- Go to **DocsTeach** at the National Archives, which has interactive lessons based on primary documents from the Reconstruction Era.
  - <http://docsteach.org/activities/28/detail?mode=browse&menu=closed&era%5B%5D=civi-l-war-and-reconstruction>
- Have students analyze the primary documents relating to the Freedman's Bureau, and then drag the document to the "success" or "failure" side of the scale.
- Ensure that students consider the following questions at the end of the strategy.
  - Which documents did you place on the side of "effective"? Which on the side of "ineffective"? Which in the center? Why?
  - Which documents did you give greater weight? Why?

- According to the documents, what was the job of the Freedmen's Bureau?
- To what extent do you think the Bureau helped formerly enslaved persons? What questions do these documents raise in your mind?

## Assessment Evidence

Evidence that will be collected to determine whether or not desired results are achieved

### Closure/Exit Ticket:

- Ask students to compare their initial evaluation of Reconstruction using only the two Delaware sources to their evaluation after looking through the Freedmen's Bureau Activity.
  - Were they similar or different?
  - Why might that be?
- Have students pair share their answer and then go over as a whole group.
- Have students individually answer the following question based on the previous discussion
  - Why is it important to consider multiple sources when evaluating a historical event?