



# Reconstruction

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1860-1877



# The Process of Reconstruction

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Lesson Objective-1: Explain the effects of government policy during Reconstruction on society from 1865 to 1877.

Content Objective (a): Reconstruction altered relationships between the states and the federal government and led to debates over new definitions of citizenship, particularly regarding the rights of African Americans, women, and other minorities.

Content Objective (b): The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, while the 14th and 15th amendments granted African Americans citizenship, equal protection under the laws, and voting rights.

# The Process of Reconstruction

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Content Objective (c): Efforts by radical and moderate Republicans to change the balance of power between Congress and the presidency and to reorder race relations in the defeated South yielded some short-term successes. Reconstruction opened up political opportunities and other leadership roles to formerly enslaved persons but it ultimately failed, due both to determined Southern resistance and the North's waning resolve.

Content Objective (d): The women's rights movement was both emboldened and divided over the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.

# Big Idea Questions

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- a. How did Reconstruction alter the relationship between the states and the federal government?
- b. What was the importance of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution?
- c. How did the process of Reconstruction alter the relationship between the Presidency and Congress, plus, for a brief time, reorder race relations in the South?
- d. How was the women's movement impacted by the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution?
- e. Despite the early successes of Reconstruction, what events ultimately led to its conclusion?

# The Failure of Reconstruction

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Lesson Objective 2– Explain how and why Reconstruction resulted in continuity and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American.

Content Objective a– Southern plantation owners continued to own the majority of the region's land even after Reconstruction. Formerly enslaved persons sought land ownership but generally fell short of self-sufficiency, as an exploitative and soil-intensive sharecropping system limited blacks' and poor whites' access to land in the South.

Content Objective b– Segregation, violence, Supreme Court decisions, and local political tactics progressively stripped away African American rights, but the 14th and 15th amendments eventually became the basis for court decisions upholding civil rights in the 20th century.

# Thought Questions

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- How did the dynamics of the South change because of Reconstruction?
- What was the failure of Reconstruction?