Reconstruction Amendments Part I

Understanding the impact of the Reconstruction Amendments

Directions: After the Civil War, the Reconstruction amendments laid the foundation of rights for former slaves. Read the language of each amendment, and then rewrite the amendment in your own words. After you have reviewed the amendments, analyze the primary source documents provided. Determine which image shows the impact of each amendment on the lives of Freedmen. Glue the image onto the appropriate box. Below each image, explain how the new freedom is being expressed.

13th Amendment

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

14th Amendment

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.

15th Amendment

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Primary-Source
Reconstruction Amendments Part I

Understanding the impact of the Reconstruction Amendments

Cut out each image to use on the accompanying worksheet.
Teacher’s Guide to Reconstruction Amendments Part I

A Note to Teachers:
This Primary Source Reconstruction Amendments activity can be used by itself, but works even better with Reconstruction Amendments Part II sold at our online TpT store, Primary Source.

Reconstruction Amendments Part I: Understanding the impact of the Reconstruction Amendments
Reconstruction Amendments Part II: Understanding the reaction to the Reconstruction Amendments

Teacher Tips for Reconstruction Amendments Part I:
- This activity is intended to help students understand the purpose of the three amendments made to the Constitution during Reconstruction.
- Encourage students to do a close reading of the primary source documents by prompting them with leading questions such as:
  - What do you see?
  - What do you know?
  - What questions do you have about the picture?
- This activity can be used as a formative/summative assessment when teaching the amendments.
- This activity can be taught in whole class format or small group format.
- Prior knowledge of the concept of abolition and exodusters is highly recommended.

Background information on Reconstruction after the Civil War:
Reconstruction was the generally the period after the Civil War from 1865-1877. The purpose of Reconstruction was to oversee the return of the eleven states that had seceded back into the Union as well as to determine and enforce the new legal status of freedmen. There was enormous controversy over how best to achieve these goals. Three amendments, known as the Reconstruction Amendments, laid the foundation of rights for former slaves. The 13th amendment abolished slavery, the 14th amendment ensured anyone born in the United States was a citizen entitled to rights of citizenship and guaranteed equal protection under the laws, and the 15th amendment said the right to vote could not be denied to a person based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Freedmen achieved general equality during the time that Northern Union troops occupied the South. They got jobs or worked their own land, went to school, and were even elected to government offices. However, as soon as Union troops returned to the North, the status of freedmen quickly deteriorated. Southern governments enacted legislation to segregate races in all public places known as Jim Crow Laws. In an attempt to escape these laws and other violent confrontations with white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, thousands of Freedmen left the south in the 1870s and 1880s to settle in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado. These migrants were known as Exodusters. However, most Freedmen stayed in the south, usually becoming sharecroppers on the very same lands in which they were owned as slaves.

The Reconstruction Era is considered a failure. While Southern states returned to the Union, the little gains blacks made in citizenship were quickly eroded by white-controlled southern governments. The status of blacks in the south would not improve until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Primary-Source
Reconstruction Amendments Part I

Understanding the impact of the Reconstruction Amendments

Source Information

Primary source for 13th Amendment


Primary source for 14th Amendment


Primary source for 15th Amendment

MARRIAGE OF A COLORED SOLDIER AT VICKSBURG BY CHAPLAIN WARREN OF THE FREEMEN'S BUREAU.