

Reconstruction: The Challenges of Reunification

Lesson Plan for 7th Grade Texas History (120 minutes)

This lesson will introduce students to the key concepts, important events, and issues that shaped the history of Texas during the period of Reconstruction following the Civil War. This lesson will be centered on how the United States proceeded in reinstating states such as Texas back into the Union and the conditions that were in place to deal with seceding states. An emphasis will be placed on important amendments such as the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments so that students can gain an understanding of how African Americans became free and equal citizens in Texas. The aftermath of the war itself – and therefore questions of “what becomes of the ex-Confederates?” and “how do you bring a seceded state like Texas back into the Union?” -- will also be central to the challenges of Reconstruction, which were all about who would hold power in post-Civil War Texas.

Lesson Topics

- Presidential Reconstruction, Re-Admission
- Challenges with Reunification
- Radical Reconstruction
- Civil War Amendments
- Convention of 1868-1869

Essential Questions

1. How would you define the period known as Reconstruction?
2. What were some of key differences in the policies of Reconstruction?
3. How did Reconstruction policies impact the newly freed people?

Students will know the following information based on previous TEKS standards:

Explain the political, economic, and social effects of Civil War and Reconstruction in Texas.
Explain how the diversity of Texas is reflected in a variety of cultural activities and celebrations.

Students will develop the following skills during this unit based on the TEKS standards:

Analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology, sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.
Use social studies terminology correctly.
Identify bias and points of view from the historical context surrounding an event that influenced the participants.

Table 1. Lesson Materials, Descriptions, and TEKS for Lesson Content

Printable Lesson Materials	Material Description	Lesson Specific TEKS
Hook Exercise	<p>This printable hook exercise focuses on the term reconstruction and the possible areas that needed to be rebuilt in Texas following the Civil War.</p> <p><i>Suggested printing: 1 per student</i></p>	<p>7.5(C) 7.22(A)</p>
Slideshow presentation	<p>This ready to use classroom presentation contains essential questions, a timeline of events beginning with Lincoln’s Reconstruction Plan to the end of the Reconstruction era, and two primary source documents with guided questions to promote discussion among students (see lecture notes within the slides for specific details).</p> <p><i>Suggested printing: 1 per student as needed for note taking accommodations</i></p>	<p>7.5(C) 7.22(A)</p>
Guided Notes	<p>The printable guided notes were designed to be used in conjunction with the presentation. Students will use the graphic organizer to create a timeline of events during Reconstruction and interact with the primary source documents.</p> <p><i>Suggested printing: 1 per student or allow students to create a three-column chart of their own</i></p>	<p>7.5(C) 7.22(A)</p>

Printable Lesson Materials	Material Description	Lesson Specific TEKS
Texas Black Codes	<p>This printable primary source document from 1866 may be used in conjunction with the first “Think-Pair-Share” activity from the slideshow presentation (slide 13) or independently as a student activity to provide context for the newly gained rights and restrictions placed on recently freed people.</p> <p><i>Suggested printing: 1 per group</i></p>	<p>7.20(D) 7.6(A)(C) ELA</p>
General Griffin to Governor Throckmorton, 1867	<p>This printable primary source document should be used in conjunction with the second “Think-Pair-Share” activity in the slideshow (slide 17) or independently as a document analysis.</p> <p><i>Suggested printing: 1 per student</i></p>	<p>7.20(D) 7.6(A)(C) ELA</p>
Exit Ticket	<p>This printable exit ticket uses the three essential questions above to provide a formative assessment opportunity at the end of the lesson.</p> <p><i>Suggested printing: 1 ticket per student (two tickets per page)</i></p>	<p>7.5(C)</p>

Primary Source Documents

[Circular No. 20, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, Galveston, August 31, 1866](#). Texas Adjutant General’s Department Reconstruction Records. TSLAC.

[Samuel Q. Richardson to Hamilton, September 1865](#), Records of Andrew Jackson Hamilton, Texas Office of the Governor, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.