

Unit 9: Reconstruction

7th Grade Lesson Plan: The Big Picture

(45 – 60 minutes)

Objective	<p>In this one-day lesson, students will examine and understand the defining characteristics of the Reconstruction era.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>We will</u> identify the main ideas, themes, key events, and defining characteristics of the Reconstruction era of Texas history. 2. <u>I will</u> analyze a primary source image, then use a reading passage to identify major themes and significant information related to this era. I will answer comprehension questions about the passage.
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reconstruction era focuses on how the U.S. government attempted to reunite the country and rebuild the South after the Civil War. • There were three primary questions that drove the Reconstruction era: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What should be done with the ex-Confederates and their leaders? - How should the Southern states be brought back into the Union? - Should the government provide services to the newly freed Black Southerners? • There were opposing viewpoints on how to answer these questions. Some people wanted a lenient form of Reconstruction, while others wanted the South to be punished for their rebellion.
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading for key information, context, main ideas, and supporting evidence. • Summarizing and paraphrasing key ideas in a text. • Making observations, inferences, and predictions about a primary source image. • Identifying the main idea and supporting evidence from a primary source text. • Identifying and explaining the cause-and-effect relationship between significant events of the era.
Essential Question	<p>What are the key events, major themes, and defining characteristics of the Reconstruction era of Texas history?</p>

Assignment

Warm-up

- Using an answer bank of nine response options, students circle or highlight up to six statements that they believe are true about Texas and the United States during the Reconstruction era. Students use prior knowledge from the previous unit to accomplish this task.

Lesson

- Part I:** Analyze an image – Students view an image of an African American School in Diboll, Texas. Students will use the image to make observations, inferences, and predictions about the unit.
- Part II:** Essential Ideas Reading Passage – Students read a passage introducing key themes, events, and topics from the unit. Major themes include opposing viewpoints regarding major issues related to Reconstruction including how to reunite the country, deal with the ex-Confederates, and what, if anything, should be done in support of the freed people.
- Part III:** Students answer comprehension questions identifying the three primary questions facing the country during Reconstruction and explain the opposing views on how to address the questions. Students predict how the country will likely respond to these questions in the advanced work. Students give their own opinion about whether the U.S. government should take a lenient or strict policy of Reconstruction toward the South.

Exit Ticket

- Students answer a multiple-choice question to determine which statement provides the best description of the defining characteristics of the Reconstruction era.

Materials

1. Slideshow (*Suggested use: present on the overhead; Upload to an educational platform like google classroom; print extra copies for note-taking assistance*)
2. Warm-up / Exit Ticket (*Suggested printing: 1 per student. Assignment prints two copies per page.*)
3. Assignment (*Suggested printing 1 per student*)
 - a. Advanced Level work
 - b. Grade Level work
 - c. Foundations Level work

Differentiation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scaffolding including classwork at three different levels of academic ability 2. Visual representations of directions 3. Chunking text information 4. Visual cues in the readings, which include key information in bold lettering. 5. Sentence Stems 6. Reduction in answer choices and writing where applicable. 7. Answer choices provided for short, constructed responses.
TEKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.01(A) Identify the major eras in Texas history, describe their defining characteristics, and explain the purpose of dividing the past into eras, including Texas in the Civil War and Reconstruction. • 7.05(A) Explain the central role the expansion of slavery played in the involvement of Texas in the Civil War. • 7.05(C) Explain the political, economic, and social effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Texas. • 7.20(B): Analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and conclusions.

Teacher Guide: The Big Picture

Warm-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students read statements in a graphic organizer to identify up to six statements that are likely to be true for the Reconstruction era.Slides 2 and 3 restate the directions and provide sentence stems to guide student responses when sharing with the class.Slides 4 and 5 provide the essential question and the “We will / I will” statements for the lesson.
Lesson	<p><u>Part I: Analyze an Image</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students view an image of an African American school in east Texas with the teacher and students standing out front to make observations, inferences, and predictions about the unit.Slide 6 provides a larger view of the image from this portion of the work. <p><u>Part II: Essential Ideas Reading Passage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students read the passage about the major themes, topics, and events of Reconstruction.Slides 8 – 12 provide images to accompany the reading. Each paragraph has one slide with an image that accompanies the primary theme or topic of that paragraph. The teacher can encourage students to try to determine the connection between each image and the paragraph it accompanies. <p><u>Part III: Comprehension Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students identify the three primary questions facing the U.S. after the Civil War, and explain different points of view related to how to answer each question.Students provide their own opinion for how the country should handle Reconstruction based on two primary opposing viewpoints – a lenient policy or a strict policy of Reconstruction toward the South.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced: Students read a passage at a higher Lexile Level that presents the defining characteristics of the Reconstruction era. Students use the passage to identify the three primary questions facing the country during Reconstruction and summarize the different points of view that existed for how best to answer these questions. Students end by providing their own opinion of how the country should approach Reconstruction.• Grade Level: Students read a passage at a grade level Lexile Level that presents the defining characteristics of the Reconstruction era. Students use the passage to summarize the different points of view that existed for how best to answer the three primary questions facing the country during Reconstruction. Students end by providing their own opinion of how the country should approach Reconstruction using a sentence stem to guide their response.• Foundations: Students read a passage at a grade level Lexile Level that presents the defining characteristics of the Reconstruction era with key information presented in bold lettering. Students choose two of three multiple-choice answers that best represent the opposing viewpoints related to the three primary questions facing the country during this era. Students end by providing their own opinion of how the country should approach Reconstruction using a sentence stem to guide their response.
Exit Ticket	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students answer a multiple-choice question to determine the best statement that most accurately explains the defining characteristics of the Reconstruction era.• Slides 14 and 15 restate the directions and provide directions for sharing student answers with the class.

Primary Sources and Other Resources Used

- American Lumberman. [African American School House], photograph, 1907; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph204411/>; accessed September 10, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting The History Center.
- Russell, Andrew J. *Ruins in Richmond, cor. Carey and Governor Sts.* 1865. Photograph. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs. <https://www.loc.gov/item/91787187/>
- Notman Photo Co. *President Jefferson Davis, seated, surrounded by Confederate commanders from left to right, General John Bell Hood, General A.P. Hill, Major General Jeb Stuart, General Stonewall Jackson, General Robert E. Lee, General James Longstreet, General Joseph Eggleston Johnston and General Pierre Gustave Toutant-Beauregard, in uniforms with swords / Notman Photo. Co., Albany, N.Y.* 1885. Photograph. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021644151/>
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- Stephenson, Mrs. Charles (Grace Murray). *Emancipation Day Celebration, June 19, 1900.* June 19, 1900. Photograph. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library. <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph124053>.
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