

Reconstruction DBQ

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions for each document on a separate sheet of paper.

- 1) Skim the document to get an idea of the SOAPStone
- 2) After looking at the questions, read the passage more closely and annotate
- 3) Look at the questions to figure out what information you need to find to support your answer
- 4) Answer the questions, in complete sentences, on a separate sheet of paper. Support your answer with quotes, facts, and references to the document.

*When citing a document, use (**Doc. ____**) at the end of the sentence

Ex: Many African Americans--such as those in Frankfort, Kentucky--were terrorized for simply living as free people in the American South [Doc. D)

3 points - Questions fully answered AND supported by references to the document

2 points - Question partially answered AND supported by references to the document

1 point - Question partially answered with no (or incorrect) references to the document

0 points - Question not answered, off topic, or answer doesn't make sense

Historical Context

The Civil War may have settled some significant national problems, but it also created many more. Slavery was abolished, the country was reunited, and the supremacy of the federal government was confirmed. However, the cost of the Union victory - lost lives, destroyed property, and sectional bitterness - was staggering and it created huge new problems and tasks.

Perhaps the most challenging task facing our tired nation was the future status of the four million newly freed slaves. After the death of President Lincoln and the failure of President Johnson, Congress, in 1867, took charge of the effort to "reconstruct" our divided nation. A large part of "Congressional Reconstruction" was an effort to establish and to protect the citizenship rights of freedmen. The former Confederacy was divided into five military districts, each governed by a Union general. The southern states, in order to rid themselves of these "military dictatorships", were required to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, guaranteeing equal rights for all citizens including former slaves.

At the same time, large numbers of former Confederate soldiers and supporters were disenfranchised, or denied the right to vote. By 1870, all of the former Confederate states had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and were readmitted to the Union. In each state, the voting rights of freedmen were protected while voting was denied to many white Southerners. Therefore, with many whites not voting and union troops remaining in the South to protect them, freedmen seemed to be enjoying some level of equal rights and full citizenship. This did not last long.

By 1877, Reconstruction ended and all Southern state governments were restored, and the citizenship rights of freedmen rapidly eroded. African-American voting rates plummeted.

Soon these former slaves fell into a “second class” citizenship characterized by a system of state-enforced segregation and discrimination

Doc. A

In January 1866, soon after the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, radical Republicans in Congress began arguing that freedmen should be allowed to vote on equal terms with whites. A bill was introduced to give the vote to the freedmen of the District of Columbia. Most Democrats and many moderate Republicans opposed the bill, though most radical Republicans supported it (even though only five Northern states allowed African-American men to vote at this time). The following excerpts come from the speech of Pennsylvania Congressman Benjamin Boyer, a Democrat who opposed the bill to allow African Americans the right to vote in the District of Columbia.

It is common for the advocates of Negro suffrage to assume that the color of the Negro is the main obstacle to his admission to political equality... But it is not the complexion of the Negro that degrades him... {the Negro is] a race by nature inferior in mental caliber... the Negroes are not equals of white Americans, and are not entitled... to participate in the Government of this country...

- 1) According to the Congressman, why shouldn't blacks be allowed to vote?
- 2) How common do you think this viewpoint was, and why?

Doc B

The following is an example of what came to be known as “Black Codes”, laws designed to restrict the rights of newly-freed African-Americans

Now that the slaves have become emancipated, it is necessary to pass regulations that preserve public order. These regulations must also preserve the comfort and correct behavior of the former slaves. Therefore, the following rules have been adopted with the approval of the United States military authorities who have command in this area:

_ Every Negro is required to be in the regular service of some white person, or former owner, who shall be held responsible for the conduct of that Negro.

_ No public meetings or congregations of Negroes shall be allowed after sunset. Such public meetings may be held during the day with the permission of the local captain in charge of the area.

_ No Negro shall be permitted to preach or otherwise speak out to the congregations of colored people without special permission in writing from the government

_ No Negro who is not in the military service shall be allowed to carry firearms or any kind of weapons without the special written permission of his employers

_ No Negro shall sell, trade, or exchange merchandise within this area without the special written permission of his employer.

3) How were these laws justified?

4) For each code:

- Put it into your own words.
- Explain the effect each would have had
- Explain why you think the people in power made the code

Doc. C

The following petition was made to the United States Congress on March 25, 1871:

We the colored citizens of Frankfort and vicinity do this day memorialize upon the condition of affairs now existing in this state of Kentucky. We would respectfully state that life, liberty and property are unprotected among the colored race of this state. Organized bands of desperate and lawless men, mainly composed of soldiers of the late Rebel armies, armed, disciplined, and disguised, and bound by oath and secret obligations, have by force, terror, and violence subverted all civil society among the colored people... We believe you are not familiar with... the Ku Klux Klan's riding nightly over the country, going from county to county, and in the towns spreading terror wherever they go by robbing, whipping, ravishing [raping], and killing our people without provocation, compelling colored people to break the ice and bathe in the chilly waters of the Kentucky River... Our people are driven from their homes in great numbers... We would state that we have been law-abiding citizens, pay our tax, and, in many parts of the state, our people have been driven from the polls - refused the right to vote, Many have been slaughtered while attempting to vote; we ask how long is this state of things going to last. We appeal to you... to enact some laws that will protect us and that will enable us to exercise the rights of citizens... the senator from this state denies there being organized bands of desperadoes in this state... we lay before you a number of violent acts occurring during his administration...

5) What was the purpose of the letter, and what did the author describe? BE SPECIFIC.

6) Why would the author write to the Congress instead of appealing to their local or state governments?

Doc. D

Source: Albion Tourgee, Letter on Ku Klux Klan Activities. New York Tribune, May 1870.

Note: Tourgee was a white, Northern soldier who settled in North Carolina after the War. He served as a judge during Reconstruction and wrote this letter to the North Carolina Republican Senator, Joseph Carter Abbott.

It is my mournful duty to inform you that our friend John W. Stephens, State Senator from Caswell, is dead. He was foully murdered by the Ku-Klux in the Grand Jury room of the Court House on Saturday... He was stabbed five or six times, and then hanged on a hook in the Grand Jury room... Another brave, honest Republican citizen has met his fate at the hands of these fiends... I have very

little doubt that I shall be one of the next victims. My steps have been dogged for months, and only a good opportunity has been wanting to secure to me the fate which Stephens has just met... I say to you plainly that any member of Congress who, especially if from the South, does not support, advocate, and urge immediate, active, and thorough measures to put an end to these outrages...is a coward, a traitor, or a fool.

7) How would you describe the political climate the the South?

8) If you were a Northerner living there, how would you have felt?

USING ONLY THE INFORMATION ABOVE, and in your own words, write a 1 page essay answering the following question: What was life like for African Americans in the South immediately after the Civil War?

Focus on who had power, how that power was maintained, and how/why the rights of African Americans decreased so rapidly.

Neatness, grammar, spelling, and thoroughness count.

___ Question thoroughly answered with at least 5 supports from the documents (25 pts)

___ Edited for spelling and grammar (5 pts)