



Film Study Guide

Movie #3 America After the Civil War...Reconstruction Pt 1 &2

America After The Civil War...Reconstruction Pt 1 & 2 - YouTube



Reconstruction: America After The Civil War Revisited the series explores the transformative years **following** ...
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Reconstruction: America After the Civil War explores the transformative years following the American Civil War, when the nation struggled to rebuild itself in the face of profound loss, massive destruction, and revolutionary social change. The twelve years that composed the post-war Reconstruction era (1865-77) witnessed a seismic shift in the meaning and makeup of our democracy, with millions of former slaves and free black people seeking out their rightful place as equal citizens under the law. Though tragically short-lived, this bold democratic experiment was, in the words of W. E. B. Du Bois, a 'brief moment in the sun' for African Americans, when they could advance, and achieve, education, exercise their right to vote, and run for and win public office.

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1. Can you imagine having to hold out hope to be treated like a person? What did former slaves hope to gain or regain once they were free? How would you feel if you were denied these basic human rights? What would it mean if white people finally allowed black people "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness? What do you think it will take for white people to see the ramifications of what they do to others? How can we get whites to empathize with how their life has privileges that African American people do not have?
2. The Southern states were devastated after the Civil War. Many lives were lost and their way of live was changing. Slavery was the cornerstone of Southern life and economy and now slavery had ended. Henry Louis Gates (host of the documentary) and his colleagues point out many opportunities for former slaves and southern farmers to develop new social, political, and economic relationships. Unfortunately, by 1877, freed slaves were often victims of wanton, vigilante violence and torture. How would you explain what caused the stagnation and degression?

3. Revolutionaries in the “Halls of Congress” and other African American Leaders were mentioned during documentary. Let us take time to highlight their actions.

<u>Person or Group</u>	<u>Contribution and/or Cost</u>
Black Teachers	
Black Churches	
Historically Black Colleges or Universities	
W.E.B Du Bois	
John R. Lynch	
Richard Harvey Cain	
Blanche Kelso Bruce	
Abram Colby	
Joseph H. Rainey	
Hiram Revels	

4. Effective change in policy requires support from our leaders. Use the table to list the actions former Presidents of the United States took to end slavery per the Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution - *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.*

	<u>Actions which supported former slaves</u>	<u>Actions which harmed former slaves</u>
Andrew Johnson 1865-1869		
Ulysses Grant 1869 -1877		
Rutherford B. Hayes 1877 - 1881		

5. **The Fourteenth Amendment** (1868) to the U.S. Constitution granted citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to African Americans and slaves who had been emancipated after the American Civil War. **The Fifteenth Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution (1870) guaranteed that the right to vote could not be denied based on “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” **The Nineteenth Amendment** (1920) to the U.S. Constitution granted women that their right to vote would "not be denied" on account of sex.

A New York Times article on *How Could Voter Suppression Affect the Presidential Election? Look at Georgia* dated September 27, 2020 stated that voters of color and voters in predominantly Democratic neighborhoods in Georgia experienced wait times 50 minutes longer than white voters during the June primary. Despite rights granted in the Constitution over 100 years ago, African Americans still face barriers when it come to voting. What do you think motivates African Americans to keep going to the polls to vote? What are your thoughts on this topic?

6. Reconstruction is a chapter of United States history that has been misrepresented and misunderstood. During Reconstruction, the United States had an opportunity to make amends for centuries of slavery and America failed blacks. Here we are, 155 years later and African American hopes and dreams listed in question number one are still being denied. Why do you think some white people despise or fear African Americans? Choose at least one person to discuss some of the details of Reconstruction with. Invite them to participate in conversation about racism. Let them know that it may be uncomfortable, but it will be a valuable learning experience. We look forward to hearing about your conversations January 21, 2021.
7. Think about US history classes in secondary school and college.
 - a. Who were your teachers and what sources did they use?
 - b. Name three impressions about Reconstruction you have held since your last school experience...and then, once you have those clearly recalled, name three things you have learned that challenged those three things.
 - c. Who are your teachers this time (their backgrounds), and what sources are as offered in this film series?
8. Carter G Woodson, a historian, scholar, and educator known as the “Father of Black History,” spent his life advocating for scholarly research, study, and publication of works about the African American experience. In 1926, Woodson created Negro History Week to celebrate the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, both in February. The week later became Negro History Month, then Black History Month. What do you think needs to happen so that school teach that factual American history has to include African American history beyond the 28 days of February?