



DBQ THEME: RECONSTRUCTION

DIRECTIONS:

This task is based on the accompanying documents (1–8). Some of these documents have been edited to help you with the task. The essay is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents and your knowledge of Reconstruction. Carefully analyze the documents as you complete **Part A**. Your responses should help you to write the essay in **Part B**.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

The period of time from the end of the Civil War (1865) until 1877 is known as Reconstruction. This was a period of tremendous change, during which the nation faced many difficult problems. Besides rebuilding cities and towns that were destroyed during the long and costly war, people who were rebels had to be brought back into the Union, over 4 million former slaves and their former masters needed to adjust to emancipation, and the South faced serious economic problems. The United States met with many successes during Reconstruction, but it also committed many failures in trying to reunite the divided nation.

TASK:

- Describe at least three major changes that took place in the United States during Reconstruction.
- Describe at least two successes of Reconstruction.
- Describe at least two failures of Reconstruction.

PART A—SHORT-ANSWER SECTION

The following documents relate to Reconstruction. Examine each document carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Document 1: A Southerner Describes Politics During Reconstruction

Congress passed an act by which registration was required of all male citizens in South Carolina, and an election of delegates by them to a State Constitutional convention. The election was held under the protection of the military commander of the district, General Dan Sickles.

When the registration was completed, it showed a Negro majority. Then it looked like every sharp cunning rascal who could get a carpetbag and transportation from above the Mason Dixon line put out to the State in quest of political adventure.

These carpetbaggers and a few South Carolina white scalawags organized the Federal Union Republican Party and laid plans to control the Constitutional Convention of 1868. They accomplished their purpose.

The Convention met in Charleston in 1868, composed of twenty-three scalawags, twenty-five carpetbaggers and seventy-six Negroes. As they know nothing about society and constitutional law, it is a wonder they gave us a constitution as good as they did. It was modeled after the State Constitution of Ohio. We lived under its provisions until 1895. Overall, it was an improvement from the constitutions of 1795 and 1865, in that it prohibited imprisonment for debt; divided up representation in the House of Representatives according to the numbers of people living in a county; provided for the public free school system; and required attendance of all children ages six to sixteen . . .

1. Name at least two groups of people that were involved in creating the Constitution of South Carolina.

(2)

2. What were two positive features of the Constitution of 1868, according to the author?

(2)

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Document 2: Illustration: "Everything Points to a Democratic Victory this Fall" (1874)



Courtesy Library of Congress

Even though Freedmen were granted the right to vote with the Fifteenth Amendment, southern whites found ways to prevent African Americans from voting, as suggested by the illustration above. Without Freedmen's votes, the traditional party of the South, the Democratic party, was able to regain control of southern politics.

1. What are two ways shown in this illustration that Freedmen were prevented from voting?

(2)

Document 3: A Freedman Describes His Experience

Continuing to enjoy good health and obtaining steady work, we had saved enough money within two years to buy the house and lot, having nearly two-thirds cash therefor. I felt proud, being then for the first time in my life a land owner, but it was of short duration. I had relied upon the word of a white man, and had paid him the amount agreed upon, and had received what I had supposed to be a clear title to the land, but it turned out soon afterwards, that the man owned only the house, and the land upon which it stood was the property of another, who notified me to pay rent for the land or move my house away.

In thus describing my own experience upon being freed from slavery, I only show that of over four million others. History does not show where four millions of people had been held in slavery so long, that they had lost all knowledge of the way to provide for their own support, to spend their earnings to advantage, to use economy in buying necessities of life and to save up for another day.

This was the condition of the Colored people at the end of the war. They were set free without a dollar, without a foot of land, and without the ability to get the next meal, and this too, by a great nation.

It does seem to me, that a great nation, which had received such wealth from the labor of an enslaved people, upon setting them free, would at least, have given them a square meal. Justice seems to demand one year's support, forty acres and a mule each.

Did they get any portion of it? Not a cent. Four million people turned loose without a dollar and told to "Root hog or die!" Now whose duty was it to feed them? My opinion is that the government should have done it.

1. What are two problems the author faced after being freed?

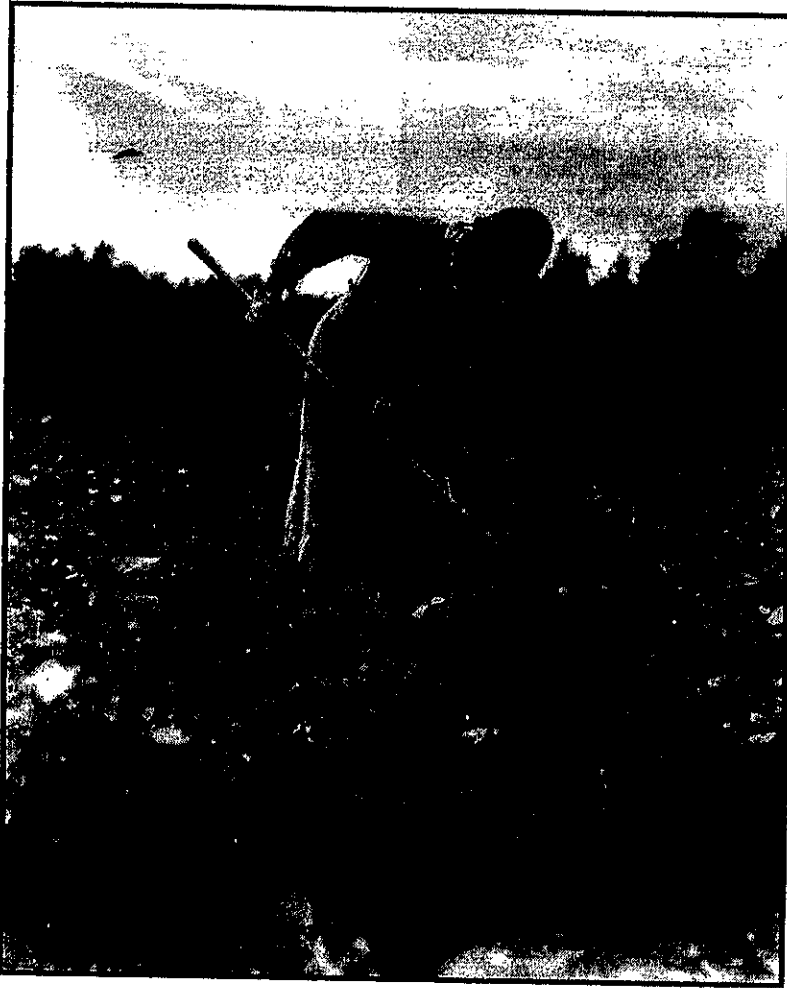
(2)

2. List at least one criticism of the government expressed by the author.

(1)

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Document 4: Sharecropping



Courtesy Library of Congress

After the Civil War, freed men and women had no money, no land, and very few skills. Many former slaves became sharecroppers, sometimes even on the plantations owned by their former masters. Sharecroppers farmed on land they rented from a landlord, in exchange for a share of the crop they produced. Because sharecroppers needed to borrow money for necessities like tools and food, they seldom were able to make or save any money. Pictured above is a sharecropper working in a cotton field.

1. Name two ways that sharecropping was similar to slavery.

(2)

Document 5: "Worse Than Slavery" (1874)



Courtesy Library of Congress

This illustration appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in October, 1874, and depicted conditions faced by African Americans in the South at the time.

1. According to this illustration, who is responsible for making freedom "Worse Than Slavery" for African Americans? _____

(2)

2. Name at least two things that African Americans experienced according to this illustration.

(2)

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Document 6: A Tennessee Family Moves West

My folks were natives of Tennessee, and lived in Lawrence County, at which place I was born. My father's name was James D. Riley. He owned and operated a plantation, also, was engaged in diverse other kinds of business. At the beginning of the Civil War, he was considered a wealthy man, but at the conclusion of the war, he was a financial wreck, as many others in the Southern states were.

He decided to improve his financial position in Texas and migrated to that state in 1877. We traveled to Dallas by train, which was the end of the railroad for a passenger at that date.

From Dallas we traveled overland in a covered wagon pulled by a team of horses, to Mill County, where my father bought a tract of land. On this land we established a home and engaged in farming, also ranged a few cattle on the open range.

The main factor which caused father to settle in Mill County was that a colony of Tennessee folks was located there.

1. Why did the Riley family move from Tennessee to Texas?

(1)

Document 7: Schools for Freedmen



Courtesy Library of Congress

Before the Civil War, it was considered a crime for a slave to learn how to read and write, so it is not surprising that schools were considered to be a priority by many people after Emancipation. The illustration above shows a school for Freedmen in Mississippi.

1. Name at least one thing that the students in this illustration are doing that they could not do as slaves. _____

(1)

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Document 8: "A Yankee Visits the New South" (1887)

When we come to the New Industrial South, the change is marvelous. . . . Instead of a South devoted to agriculture and politics, we find a South wide awake to business, excited and astonished at the development of its own immense resources . . .

The South is manufacturing a great variety of things needed in the house, on the farm and in the shops, and already sends to the North and West several manufactured products. The most striking industrial development today is in iron, coal, lumber, and marble. More encouraging for the Southern people is the multiplication of small industries in nearly every city I visited.

It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the public mind that the South, to use an understandable phrase, "has joined the procession." Its mind is turned to the development of its resources, to business, to enterprise, to education, to economic problems; it is marching with the North in the same purpose of wealth by industry. It is true that the railways, mines, and furnaces could not have been without huge investments of Northern money, but I was continually surprised to find so many and important local industries the result of Southern funds, made and saved since the war.

1. According to this article, what is the great change that has occurred in the new South?

(1)

2. Name at least two products or resources of the new South.

(2)

