

The Reconstruction Era

Lesson 2 The Radicals Take Control

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do new ideas change the way people live?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did the North attempt to assist African Americans in the South?*
2. *What elements were included in the Radical Republican idea of Reconstruction?*

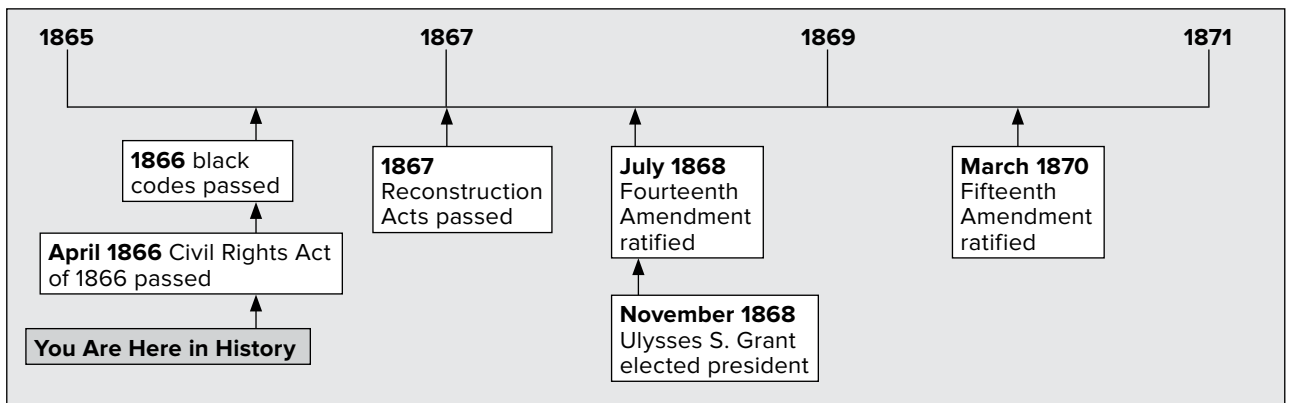
Terms to Know

black codes laws passed in the South just after the Civil War aimed at controlling freed men and women, and allowing plantation owners to take advantage of African American workers

override to reject or defeat something that has already been decided

impeach to formally charge a public official with misconduct in office

When did it happen?



What do you know?

In the first column, answer the questions based on what you know before you study. After this lesson, complete the last column.

Now...		Later...
	How did Southern states try to control newly freed African Americans?	
	Why did Congress pass amendments to the Constitution during this period?	
	How did the United States govern the Southern states during Reconstruction?	

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Protecting African Americans' Rights

In 1865, former Confederate states began creating new governments. They elected leaders to Congress, but the Radical Republicans would not seat them. They thought that Johnson's Reconstruction plan was too easy on the Southerners. Radicals wanted it to be difficult for Southerners to join the Union again.

White people in the South were unhappy that they had lost the war. They were angry that the slaves had been freed. To keep control of former slaves, Southern states passed laws called **black codes**. These laws were meant to control newly freed African Americans. Some made it illegal for African Americans to own or rent farms. Some made it easy for white employers to take advantage of African American workers. Others made it possible to fine or arrest African Americans who did not have jobs. In many ways, the black codes made life for African Americans little better than slavery.

The U.S. Congress was unhappy about the black codes. They wanted former slaves to be free and equal. So Congress did two things:

Congress's Response to the Black Codes

- Empowered the Freedmen's Bureau to set up courts to try people who violated African Americans' rights.
- Passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866.

The Civil Rights Act gave citizenship to African Americans. It also gave the federal government the power to get involved in state affairs to protect African Americans' rights.

President Johnson vetoed both bills. He argued that they were unconstitutional because they were passed without Southern representatives. Radical Republicans in Congress were able to **override**, or overrule, each veto. Both bills became law.

Congress worried that the Civil Rights Act might be overturned in court, so it passed another amendment to the Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment had ended slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment made African Americans citizens. It promised equal protection under the law. It also banned former Confederate leaders from holding office unless they had been pardoned. However, many Southern states would not ratify it. This made the Radical Republicans more determined than ever to treat the South harshly.



Explaining

1. Why would Radical Republicans not seat Southern senators and representatives in Congress?



Explaining

2. Why did Southern states pass black codes?



Listing

3. List two ways that Congress reacted to the Southern states passing black codes.



Marking the Text

4. Underline the reason Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.
5. What did this amendment do?

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Determining Cause and Effect

6. What allowed Radical Reconstruction to take place?



Analyzing

7. How were the Southern states governed during Reconstruction?



Identifying Central Issues

8. Why was Johnson able to control Reconstruction directly?

Radical Republicans in Charge

Radical Republicans were a powerful force in Congress. They became an even more powerful force in 1866. It was an election year, and they won many seats in Congress. There was no way Johnson could stop them. A period known as Radical Reconstruction began. The Radical Republicans passed the Reconstruction Acts.

Radical Reconstruction: The Reconstruction Acts	
Act	What it did
First Reconstruction Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • said that states that had not ratified Fourteenth Amendment must form new governments • divided ten states into five military districts governed by generals • banned Confederate leaders from serving in new state governments • required new state constitutions • guaranteed African American men the right to vote
Second Reconstruction Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empowered army to register voters and help organize state constitutional conventions

The Southern states were now under the control of army generals. This angered Southerners. It also brought the differences between Radical Republicans in Congress and President Johnson to the boiling point.

The Radical Republicans in Congress had the majority. But as president, Johnson was in charge of the Army. He was in charge of the generals who governed the South. This meant that he could control Reconstruction directly. He could avoid Congress by giving orders to his generals.

Congress knew this. So, to keep President Johnson from becoming too powerful, they passed laws to limit his power. One such law was the Tenure of Office Act. It said that the president

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could not fire any government officials without the Senate’s approval. They were afraid Johnson would fire the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, because he supported Radical Reconstruction.

This did not stop Johnson. He suspended Stanton, or stopped him from working temporarily, without the Senate’s approval. Radical Republicans in Congress believed that Johnson had violated the Tenure of Office Act.

The Radical Republicans reacted strongly. The House of Representatives voted to **impeach** Johnson—that is, formally charge him with wrongdoing. In 1868 the case went to the Senate for a trial. Not enough senators voted Johnson guilty, so he was able to remain president until Ulysses S. Grant was elected president in 1868.

In 1869, Congress took one more major step in Reconstruction. The Thirteenth Amendment had abolished slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment had granted citizenship to African Americans. This new Amendment—the Fifteenth—granted African American men the right to vote.

When the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified in 1870, many Americans thought Reconstruction was complete. However, there was still a long way to go.

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Check for Understanding

List two ways that Congress tried to help African Americans before Radical Reconstruction began.

1. _____
2. _____

List three measures passed by Congress during Radical Reconstruction.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Defining

9. Write a definition of *impeach*.

Identifying

10. What did the Fifteenth Amendment do?

FOLDABLES®

11. Place a three-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write the title *Amendments* on the anchor tab. Label the three tabs *13th*, *14th*, and *15th*. Write what you remember about the importance of each amendment. Use the Foldable to help answer Check for Understanding.