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Louisiana and New Orleans During Reconstruction



Teacher's guide: grade levels 7–12

Number of class periods: 4–6

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Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3: Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8: Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on . . . topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Louisiana Social Studies Grade-Level Expectations

7.1.1 and 8.1.1: Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences by conducting historical research, evaluating a broad variety of primary and secondary sources, and comparing and contrasting varied points of view.

7.4.3: Describe long-term and short-term outcomes of Reconstruction.

7.10.1: Describe the influences on and the development and expansion of individual rights and freedoms.

8.2.6: Identify and describe economic, social, and political characteristics of Louisiana during the antebellum/ plantation economy, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction eras.

The Historic New Orleans Collection, 533 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130

Contact: Daphne L. Derven, curator of education, (504) 598-7154, daphned@hnoc.org
 Jenny Schwartzberg, education coordinator, (504) 556-7661, jennifers@hnoc.org
 Sarah McKenney, education assistant, (504) 556-7669, smckenney@hnoc.org

Cover: *Extract from the Reconstructed Constitution of the State of Louisiana with Portraits of the Distinguished Members of the Convention and Assembly; 1868; The Historic New Orleans Collection, 1979.183*

Introduction

Historical Background

The formal start to the era of Reconstruction is a matter of debate, with some historians pegging it to the end of the Civil War in 1865 and others to President Abraham Lincoln's December 1863 announcement of a plan to bring loyal Southern governments back into the Union. In Louisiana, the beginning of Reconstruction is often associated with the conquest and occupation of New Orleans by the Union army in the spring of 1862, and the conclusion with the withdrawal of federal troops from the state in the spring of 1877. During this fifteen-year period, residents of New Orleans encountered many profound economic, political, racial, and social challenges, which significantly affected the dynamics of their society.

Many important questions arose during Reconstruction: What conditions and terms would be established for a seceded state, like Louisiana, to be restored to its proper relationship in the Union? How would the liberties and rights of recently emancipated people be delineated and protected? How would antebellum racial attitudes and practices, and the concepts of limited government and states' rights, affect the successful implementation of Reconstruction policies? How would the economic, political, and social institutions of Southern society be rebuilt to reflect the abolition of slavery and the preservation of the Union? Which level of government (federal or state) and which branch of the federal government (executive or legislative) would exercise the primary responsibility and constitutional authority for overseeing Reconstruction?

Even after the tumult of the Civil War, New Orleans was the largest and most prosperous city in the South, serving as home to a large African American population and situated as a vital conduit of domestic and foreign commerce near the mouth of the Mississippi River. The residents' responses to these Reconstruction issues and questions were crucial in shaping the policies of the federal and state governments as well as influencing the prospects of their success.

In this instructional unit, students will analyze and compare documents and images from the Reconstruction era. The experiences and viewpoints of African American and white residents of Louisiana and New Orleans will allow students to evaluate the implementation and impact of federal legislation and constitutional amendments. By answering essential questions and assessing a variety of primary sources, the students will evaluate historical evidence, draw conclusions, and develop viewpoints for discussion and presentation.

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Close read informational text for comprehension and critical analysis.
- Identify, explain, and summarize the main ideas and viewpoints that are being presented in the primary sources through proficient completion of the activities.
- Cite evidence from the texts of the primary sources to support responses to the comprehension and critical analysis questions.
- Collaborate effectively with classmates to develop and express positions (both in written responses and orally in small-group and whole-class discussion) on the unit's Essential Questions, based on evidence from the primary sources.

Essential Questions

Lesson One: To what extent did the lives of African Americans in Louisiana improve after the abolition of slavery?

Lesson Two: Why did political divisions and racial discord in New Orleans erupt into violence during the riot of 1866?

Lesson Three: To what extent did American ideals become attainable for African Americans in Louisiana during Republican Reconstruction?

Lesson Four: What factors led to the failure of Reconstruction to achieve lasting equality for African Americans?

Lesson One**The Impact of Emancipation on African Americans****Overview**

In this lesson, students will analyze excerpts from a variety of primary sources that illustrate how the abolition of slavery affected the lives of African Americans in Louisiana. To what extent did emancipation result in real freedom and opportunities for economic advancement (e.g., wage labor and property ownership), the acquisition of literacy, and the exercise of citizenship rights (e.g., voting and office-holding)? The students will work collaboratively with classmates to examine and evaluate evidence on how the abolition of slavery affected emancipated people's quality of life, access to economic and political opportunities, and standard of living. Students will develop viewpoints, present and support their positions, and compare their perspectives, based on the evidence from the documents.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze primary source text relating to the initial emancipation experiences of African Americans and the enactment of local and federal legislation that affected their newly acquired freedom during the early years of Reconstruction.
- Develop viewpoints on the impact of these events and present these positions to their classmates in a knowledgeable, persuasive manner.
- Develop, evaluate, and present a viewpoint on Lesson One's Essential Question: To what extent did the lives of African Americans in Louisiana improve after the abolition of slavery?

Historical Background

The Thirteenth Amendment, which passed in 1865 and abolished slavery except as punishment for a crime, eliminated the enslaved labor force on Southern plantations. Emancipated African Americans sought self-sufficiency, especially via landownership, but their lack of resources made these pursuits very difficult. White landowners who needed a labor force to plant and harvest their crops developed sharecropping, a contract labor system in which the landowner provided a parcel of land, seed, and farm implements to the tenant in return for a large share (as high as one-half) of the harvest. This contract labor system tied the tenant to the owner's land and maintained a significant level of dependency and servitude for the tenant. Some planters also inserted clauses in these labor contracts that placed additional demands and payments on the tenants. Many historians have described sharecropping as essentially a new form of slavery, in which African Americans gained little independence or agency.

Congress also established the US Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, also known as the Freedmen's Bureau, in March 1865, a month prior to President Lincoln's assassination. Initially intended to last only a year, the Freedmen's Bureau was a federal social service agency that provided food, shelter, medical treatment, and access to education for emancipated African Americans and impoverished whites. The Freedmen's Bureau would help found nearly three thousand schools and assist landowners and laborers in negotiating sharecropping contracts. During the early years of Reconstruction, however, many Southern town councils and state legislatures enacted a series of laws known as "Black Codes." These laws severely restricted the political rights and physical movements of African Americans. Those who refused to sign labor contracts could

be punished, and unemployed African Americans could be apprehended by local government authorities and auctioned as laborers to white landowners. In response to these abuses, Congress enacted two laws in 1866 (over President Andrew Johnson's vetoes): a supplemental Freedmen's Bureau bill that extended the agency's service indefinitely and the Civil Rights Act.

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 conferred citizenship rights to all African Americans: "All persons born in the United States . . . are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States; and such citizens, of every race and color, without regard to any previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude . . . [have] full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens. . . ." The act reversed the US Supreme Court's earlier decision in the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case (1857), which had denied American citizenship to people of African descent.

Materials

Document 1: Reactions to the Freedmen

Document 2: Excerpts from "Ordinance No. 35" (The Black Code of the Parish of Saint Landry, 1865)

Document 3: The Civil Rights Act of 1866

Document Analysis Worksheet for Documents 1–3

Document Synthesis Worksheet

Exit Card Worksheet

Procedures

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Direct the students' attention to the Lesson One Essential Question: To what extent did the lives of African Americans in Louisiana improve after the abolition of slavery? This question will be the framework by which students will evaluate the document excerpts and complete their worksheets.
2. Distribute copies of the three documents and three worksheets.
3. Begin share reading Document 1, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation, and have students join in after a few paragraphs. Students should highlight or underline key terms.
4. Students should now work collaboratively in their small groups to read and discuss the text of Documents 2 and 3, then complete the Document Analysis Worksheet together.
5. Students should work together to complete the Document Synthesis Worksheet.
6. Guide students in a whole-class discussion on Lesson One's Essential Question.
7. Ask students to individually reflect on the Essential Question and direct them to complete their Exit Cards.

Handout Document 1**Reactions to the Freedmen**

Excerpts from *The Freedmen of Louisiana: Final Report of the Bureau of Free Labor, Department of the Gulf, to Major General E. R. S. Canby, Commanding* by Thomas W. Conway, General Superintendent of Freedmen; New Orleans Times Book and Job Office, 1865; *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, 76-648-RL

Vagrancy.

. . . I find that the colored people are not apt to be vagrants. They have fewer vagrants than can be found among any other class of persons, and by far the fewest beggars. The largest number in my charge are helpless persons, old men, women and small children. The class usually called “vagrants” by the police and the courts are industrious and self-supporting.

Persecutions by the Police.

The injustice inflicted upon the freedmen at the hands of the New Orleans police, can hardly find its equal in the history of any city in Christendom.

It has been the practice here to arrest as vagrants all colored laborers who were found on the streets in their working garments, and not employed just at the moment when the police saw them. These men may have had as honest employment as their persecutors; they may have worked all day long in the burning sun, loading or unloading ships or boats; they may have been in the employ of the Quartermaster’s Department, or some other Department of the Government; they may have their cotton hooks hanging to their belts, showing that they have proper employment; but still they have been arrested, locked up in jail and arraigned before the courts charged with the crime of vagrancy. Not a day passes without dozens of men being sent to me as vagrants, many of whom I release immediately upon ascertaining that they have been arrested unjustly. . . .

(from General Order No. 23 by Lieutenant Colonel George B. Drake)

Hire and Compensation of Laborers.

Voluntary contracts heretofore made between planters and laborers, or which hereafter may be made, will be submitted to the Superintendent of Freedmen, and if found by him to be fair and honest to the laborers, will be by him confirmed and approved, and stand as the contract of the parties thereto for the present year. But all such contracts must secure support, maintenance, clothing, and medical attendance to the laborer.

Free Labor and Its Opponents.

Men who were strong rebels against the Government, are, almost invariably, strong opponents of free labor. . . . Men, whose hearts are not sufficiently softened to reconcile them to the change from slave to free labor, can hardly expect that the freedmen will be content to live with them and cultivate their soil. The freedmen are ready and anxious to work. They do not expect to be idle, but they do expect to have their employers recognize the fact that they are as free as others. . . .

The enemies of free labor claim that slave labor is superior. They do so, more because of the force of prejudice than because there are facts to justify them.



Free Labor and Its Supporters.

In justice to those Northern men who are now here---men who came with their wealth, with the intention of settling in the State; who came with the love of the principles of liberty well fixed in their minds, I must say that they have set an example worthy of emulation. They are as ready to educate the freedmen as they are to employ them. They desire to see them morally, socially and politically elevated. . . .



The Breaking Up of the Meetings of the Freedmen.

During the summer, the police of New Orleans have entered churches and broken up the meetings of humble Christian worshippers. So great appeared to be the antagonism exhibited by these men toward the liberty enjoyed by the colored population of the city, that they used their clubs upon the floors of the meeting-houses, creating such a noise as to break up the meetings and send the poor people home in a state of fright and discouragement. When the police were asked for their authority, they showed an order signed "J. Burke, Chief of Police," and upon further investigation, it was found that the Chief received his orders from the Mayor.

The conclusion which I am compelled to draw from the conduct of the State authorities towards the freedmen, is simply this: that if the freedmen were left to the mercy of the people who formerly owned them as slaves, or to officers of their selection, we might with one count of the fingers of our hands number the years which the race would spend with us.

Handout Document 2

Excerpts from “Ordinance No. 35” (The Black Code of the Parish of Saint Landry, 1865)

from *Senate Executive Documents for the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Congress of the United States of America, 1865–1866*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866

An ordinance relative to the police of negroes recently emancipated within the parish of St. Landry.

Whereas it was formerly made the duty of the police jury to make suitable regulations for the police of slaves within the limits of the parish; and whereas slaves have become emancipated by the action of the ruling powers; and whereas it is necessary for public order, as well as for the comfort and correct deportment of said freedmen, that suitable regulations should be established for their government in their changed condition, the following ordinances are adopted, with the approval of the United States military authority commanding in said parish, viz:

SECTION 1. *Be it ordained by the police jury of the parish of St. Landry*, That no negro shall be allowed to pass within the limits of said parish without a special permit in writing from his employer. Whoever shall violate this provision shall pay a fine of two dollars and fifty cents, or in default thereof shall be forced to work four days on the public road, or suffer corporeal punishment as provided hereinafter.

SECTION 2. *Be it further ordained*, That every negro who shall be found absent from the residence of his employer after 10 o'clock at night, without a written permit from his employer, shall pay a fine of five dollars, or in default thereof, shall be compelled to work five days on the public road, or suffer corporeal punishment as hereinafter provided.

SECTION 3. *Be it further ordained*, That no negro shall be permitted to rent or keep a house within said parish. Any negro violating this provision shall be immediately ejected and compelled to find an employer; and any person who shall rent, or give the use of any house to any negro, in violation of this section, shall pay a fine of five dollars for each offence.

SECTION 4. *Be it further ordained*, That 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 said negro. But said employer or former owner may permit said negro to hire his own time by special permission in writing, which permission shall not extend over seven days at any one time. Any negro violating the provisions of this section shall be fined five dollars for each offence, or in default of the payment thereof shall be forced to work five days on the public road, or suffer corporeal punishment as hereinafter provided.

SECTION 5. *Be it further ordained*, That no public meetings or congregations of negroes shall be allowed within said parish after sunset; but such public meetings and congregations may be held between the hours of sunrise and sunset, by the special permission in writing of the captain of patrol, within whose beat such meetings shall take place. This prohibition, however, is not intended to prevent negroes from attending the usual church services, conducted by white ministers and priests. Every negro violating the provisions of this section shall pay a fine of five dollars, or in default thereof shall be compelled to work five days on the public road, or suffer corporeal punishment as hereinafter provided.

SECTION 6. *Be it further ordained*, That no negro shall be permitted to preach, exhort, or otherwise declaim to congregations of colored people, without a special permission in writing from the president of the police jury. Any negro violating the provisions of this section shall pay a fine of ten dollars, or in default thereof, shall be compelled to work ten days on the public road, or suffer corporeal punishment as hereinafter provided.



SECTION 10. *Be it further ordained*, That all the foregoing provisions shall apply to negroes of both sexes.

SECTION 11. *Be it further ordained*, That it shall be the duty of every citizen to act as a police officer for the detection of offences and the apprehension of offenders, who shall be immediately handed over to the proper captain or chief of patrol.



SECTION 14. *Be it further ordained*, That the corporeal punishment provided for in the foregoing sections shall consist in confining the body of the offender within a barrel placed over his or her shoulders, in the manner practiced in the army, such confinement not to continue longer than twelve hours, and for such time within the aforesaid limit as shall be fixed by the captain or chief of patrol who inflicts the penalty.

Handout Document 3**The Civil Rights Act of 1866**

Excerpt from *United States Statutes at Large, Thirty-Ninth Congress of the United States of America, Volume 14, 1865–1867, Session One (1865–66), Chapter 31; April 12, 1866*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all persons born in the United States and not subject to any foreign power, excluding Indians not taxed, are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States; and such citizens, of every race and color, without regard to any previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall have the same right, in every State and Territory in the United States, to make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, and give evidence, to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property, and to full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens, and shall be subject to like punishment, pains, and penalties, and to none other, any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, or custom, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Handout

Document Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Documents 1, 2, and 3: Freedoms vs. Restrictions**Critical Thinking Questions:** Use evidence from the documents to answer the questions.**Document 1: Reactions to the Freedmen**

1. Restate the author's conclusion in your own words. What does the author base this conclusion on? Give three pieces of evidence from the rest of the document.

2. How does the author characterize the supporters and opponents of free labor? Give one piece of evidence from the text for each point of view.

Document 2: Excerpts from "Ordinance No. 35" (The Black Code of the Parish of Saint Landry, 1865)

1. Write a short letter from the perspective of a recently emancipated person in Saint Landry Parish in 1866. You're writing to family members who moved to the North after the Civil War ended, and telling them about what your life is like after the abolition of slavery. What kinds of challenges do you face on a daily basis in terms of transportation, work, and religious/social life? Make sure that your letter references some of the issues discussed in this document.

Document 3: The Civil Rights Act of 1866

1. In your own words, what specific rights are guaranteed in this document? To whom do they apply, and who is excluded from holding these rights?

2. What civil rights do US citizens hold today that are not contained within this portion of the act?

Handout **Document Analysis Worksheet**

Name: _____ Date: _____

List five freedoms granted to African Americans after emancipation.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

List five restrictions on the lives of African Americans after emancipation.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Handout

Exit Card Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Based on what you have learned in this lesson, write a persuasive response to the Lesson One Essential Question. In this response, support your position with textual evidence from the document excerpts as well as insightful ideas that were presented during your small-group and whole-class discussions.

To what extent did the lives of African Americans in Louisiana improve after the abolition of slavery?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Lesson Two**Racial Discord and Violence in New Orleans, 1866****Overview**

In this lesson, students will analyze four sets of excerpts from primary source documents that provide insights on the political divisions and racial discord that developed between Northern Republicans and Southern Democrats in New Orleans during the initial years of Reconstruction. Students will examine the political atmosphere around white citizens' growing resentment of black residents who strove for greater economic opportunities, voting rights, and social justice. Students will use evidence from the documents to develop and share their viewpoints on the violent riot that erupted on July 30, 1866.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze primary source text and images relating to the eruption of racial violence in New Orleans in the summer of 1866.
- Develop viewpoints on the impact of these events and present these positions to their classmates in a knowledgeable, persuasive manner.
- Develop, evaluate, and present a viewpoint on Lesson Two's Essential Question: Why did political divisions and racial discord in New Orleans erupt into violence during the riot of 1866?

Historical Background

After the abolition of slavery in 1865, African Americans continued to strive for full citizenship, voting rights, and greater economic opportunities for landownership, social justice, and education. They worked toward these goals despite the restrictions of the Black Codes and the sharecropping and contract labor systems, and fierce resistance from many whites who were intent on maintaining their economic, political, and social dominance.

Racial hostility and political bitterness between Democrats and Republicans reached a boiling point during the summer of 1866, when white Republicans and their African American political allies attempted to reconvene the Louisiana constitutional convention (which had adjourned in 1864) and revise the state's constitution to include full citizenship with universal male suffrage and eliminate the Black Codes. Many white New Orleans Democrats, a group that included Confederate veterans, strongly opposed these proposed constitutional provisions as a plan by the Republican Party to increase the number of voters who were likely to vote for Republican candidates in future elections, and thereby enhance the Republicans' control of local and state government in Louisiana.

During the first meeting of the convention at the Mechanics Institute, these political conflicts and racial tensions culminated in violence. As the Republican politicians, including many African Americans, left the building, they were joined by a marching band of two hundred people. This group of black activists and musicians were celebrating the proposed work of this constitutional convention and displaying an American flag as their march proceeded from the Mechanics Institute. A white mob—largely composed of city police and volunteer firefighters—viciously attacked the mostly unarmed marchers with firearms, clubs, knives, and rocks. The mob wounded about 100 marchers and killed about 40, nearly all African American. Many wounded marchers attempted to retreat inside the Mechanics Institute for safety but were pursued by the raging white mob, which continued to inflict more serious injuries, arresting the less severely wounded marchers and asserting that the constitutional convention was an illegal assembly.

Federal troops under the command of Union Generals Absalom Baird and Philip H. Sheridan were summoned to suppress the massacre and place the city of New Orleans under martial law. Based on his investigation of this incident, General Sheridan testified for a report published by the US government in 1867: “It was no riot. It was an absolute massacre by the police. . . . It was a murder which the mayor and police of the city perpetrated without the shadow of necessity. Furthermore, I believe it was premeditated.”

Materials

Document 4: The Roots of Racial Division and Discord in New Orleans During Reconstruction

Document 5: The Circumstances that Caused the New Orleans Riot

Document 6: Newspaper Reports on the New Orleans Riot

Document 7: Images of the Riot

Document Analysis Worksheet for Documents 4 and 5

Document Analysis Worksheet for Documents 6 and 7

Exit Card Worksheet

Procedures

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Display and direct the students’ attention to the Lesson Two Essential Question: Why did political divisions and racial discord in New Orleans erupt into violence during the riot of 1866? This question will be the framework by which students will evaluate the documents and complete their worksheets.
2. Distribute copies of the four documents and three worksheets. The images in Document 7 should also be displayed via a projector during the lesson.
3. The students will work collaboratively in their small groups to read and analyze the text of Documents 4, 5, and 6, as well as the images in Document 7, and complete the two corresponding Document Analysis Worksheets.
4. Guide students in a whole-class discussion on Lesson Two’s Essential Question.
5. Ask students to individually reflect on the Essential Question and direct them to complete their Exit Cards.

Handout Document 4

The Roots of Racial Division and Discord in New Orleans During Reconstruction

Excerpts from *The Freedmen of Louisiana: Final Report of the Bureau of Free Labor, Department of the Gulf, to Major General E. R. S. Canby, Commanding* by Thomas W. Conway, General Superintendent of Freedmen; New Orleans Times Book and Job Office, 1865; *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, 76-648-RL

In regard to the authorities of the State, I can say nothing whatever favorable to the policy of the Government in regard to the freedmen. In all my intercourse with them, I have only been able to discover a spirit of opposition to the proclamation of liberty issued by our late President. The orders of the Commanding General of the Department, the laws of Congress, and the orders of the War Department, have been ignored as far as they could be. Many Judges of Courts have been known to say openly that “they did not want to hear d---d [n----r] testimony;” and still, for fear of removal by the military commander, they have made an appearance of observing orders and respecting the evidence of the freedmen. But this superficial respect amounts to no more than simply to secure themselves. In most cases the poor people of color were no better off than if a positive refusal to their testimony was given.



Since the publication of President Johnson’s Amnesty Proclamation, and since his interviews with different delegations from Southern States have been made public, our citizens have been more open and frank to acknowledge that slavery is forever dead.

Some relinquish their hold reluctantly, and are hardly willing to bury the corpse from their sight. A few, the more rebellious, prefer to kill the negro than to see him free. But events hasten. Our victory urges on to new achievements. Those who one week ago yielded up their slaves to freedom, and accepted the new order of things with cheerfulness, are now agitated afresh by fears of negro suffrage. Thus it is by the will of Heaven, by Divine right, that the nation’s freedmen are coming, surely and speedily, to occupy their rightful position—equality with white men in the eyes of the law.



The freedmen will not engage in any insurrection against the State, or any portion of it. The white population have the character of insurgents exclusively to themselves in this portion of our country. The colored population live much under the control of the Christian religion, and they have no disposition to murder or destroy. They are peaceable, forgiving, merciful. If they are not protected in the enjoyment of the liberty proclaimed to them, they will go away from the country, trusting in God.

Handout Document 5

The Circumstances That Caused the New Orleans Riot

Excerpts from *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, General, United States Army, Vol. 2*; New York: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1888

In the State of Louisiana a provisional government, chosen by the loyal element, had been put in operation . . . as early as 1864. This was effected . . . through the medium of a Constitutional convention, which met in New Orleans in April, 1864, and adjourned in July. The constitution then agreed upon was submitted to the people, and in September, 1864, was ratified by a vote of the few loyal residents of the State.

The government provided under this constitution being looked upon as provisional merely, was never recognized by Congress, and in 1865 the returned Confederates, restored to citizenship by [President Andrew Johnson's] amnesty proclamation, soon got control of almost all of the State. The Legislature was in their hands, as well as most of the State and municipal offices; so, when the President . . . extended his previous instructions regarding civil affairs in Texas so as to have them apply to all the seceded States, there at once began in Louisiana a system of discriminative legislation directed against the freedmen, that led to flagrant wrongs in the enforcement of labor contracts, and in the remote parishes to numbers of outrages and murders.

To remedy this deplorable condition of things, it was proposed, by those who had established the government of 1864, to remodel the constitution of the State; and they sought to do this by reassembling the convention. . . . Therefore, early in the summer of 1866, many members of this convention met in conference at New Orleans, and decided that a necessity existed for reconvening the delegates. . . .

Mayor John T. Monroe and the other officials of New Orleans looked upon this proposed action as revolutionary, and by the time the convention assembled (July 30), such bitterness of feeling prevailed that efforts were made by the mayor and city police to suppress the meeting. A bloody riot followed, resulting in the killing and wounding of about a hundred and sixty persons.



. . . This riotous attack upon the convention, with its terrible results of massacre and murder, was not an accident. It was the determined purpose of the mayor of the city of New Orleans to break up this convention by armed force.

. . . [The President] knew that “rebels” and “thugs” and disloyal men had controlled the election of Mayor Monroe, and that such men composed chiefly his police force.

Handout Document 6

Newspaper Reports on the New Orleans Riot

“The Riot Yesterday”; from the *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), July 31, 1866

An Inside View at the Mechanics’ Institute Yesterday.

One of us was in the Representative Hall yesterday when the first shots were fired in the street. We had just come in. The hall was quite full, before the bar, of negroes—an immense crowd, indeed; and inside of it were about a hundred white persons, more or less. We presume that a majority of these were of the Convention, or friendly to it. There were others, like ourself, members of the press, and others whose object was simply to know what was going on and to be able to make faithful relation of it. The negroes were of the humbler class, and were mostly furnished with loaded canes and stout clubs. In the street, immediately in front, were also a great many of them similarly armed. Very few white men were around or near them. There was not a policeman to be seen far or near, and even knowing the powder mine over which we stood, we could not imagine that blood was so soon to be shed under our very feet.

The proposed Convention was not in session when we entered the Hall, nor had we got time to inquire as to what had been or was proposed to be done, when shots were heard in the direction of Canal street. A rush was made towards the front. As we walked past Dr. Dostie, he remarked excitedly, and we thought exaltingly: “The firing has begun!” Passing into the vestibule we found a dark stream rushing down the stairs and we regarded it as unwise to go with it; we might fare badly either with it or from it, so we went above, where we found the young gentlemen who are employed in the office of the State Engineer, and where there was an excellent lookout towards Canal street, from which we leisurely surveyed the exciting and excited scene.

When we reached the lookout in the upper story, the police had appeared in sight and was driving back the crowd of white people from before the building. Shots were fired after them which they turned to return. The white people fell back to near Canal street. Many shots were fired apparently from the building, and these were returned, but the police steadily kept back the white people. Only the police seemed to be armed; the whites near them had brickbats, but no arms. There but two dead or wounded in sight. Each of these was a negro, though one might have been a mulatto.

Thus stood things for an hour. Sorties seemed to be made, but as we had no desire to take part in the combat, and yet might have been mistaken for a combatant, we remained until a knock at the door announced an officer who told us that the way was clear to go out. . . .

We have remarked that when we first entered the building, the street in front was lined with negroes; few white men were in sight. When we came out the scene was changed; in front were a few policemen, but at Canal and at Common streets were white men alone. The police seemed to be doing their utmost to preserve the peace and to keep back the excited crowd. Beyond the immediate neighborhood of the Hall, negroes were passing, attending to their business as usual, unmolested and unhurt.



“Great Riot”; from the *Tri-Weekly Advocate* (Baton Rouge), August 1, 1866

It is our painful duty to furnish you with the particulars of one of the most distressing disturbances which ever occurred in this city. . . .

The Convention met at Mechanics’ Institute and was called to order. . . .

. . . A procession of negroes, headed by a band, came up Phillippa street and were received by the crowd outside with cheering.

Cheers arose from the crowd of negroes and whites inside the Hall . . .

Whilst events were being discussed a shout arose from the street. About a dozen negroes standing at a brick pile, throwing these missiles in the direction of Canal street, whilst two, apparently leaders, were firing new, glistening, long-barreled revolvers. . . .

As the negroes fell back a rush was made up the assembly room by both colored and white. On the insiders asking what was the matter, a light colored negro, who was standing in front addressing a mixed crowd, cried out, “the police rebel sons-of-[b-----s] are arresting colored men” and said any black person suffering himself to be arrested by them was a coward. . . .

At this time . . . the entire police force came on the ground well armed.

A united attack was then made upon them from the Hall and a scene of the wildest confusion ensued. . . .

Every one who attempted to escape from the Hall was fired upon and many were killed and wounded. . . .

The blood splashed walls, the clotted ground, wrecked furniture and other evidence of mob passion tells the fearful story which was sickening to look on.



“GREAT RIOT”; from the *New York Times*, July 31, 1866

Your New-Orleans correspondent telegraphs the following highly important news of riot and bloodshed in New-Orleans, to-day, growing out of an attempt on the part of the Mayor to prevent the Constitutional Convention from assembling.

New-Orleans, Monday, July 30—Noon.

A fearful state of excitement prevails in this city.

The Police are behaving in the most exemplary manner, and trying to prevent lynching and mobbing. . . .

The excitement throughout the entire city is unbounded. . . .

New-Orleans, Monday, July 30—1:30 P.M.

A procession of negroes, with flags flying and drums beating, while marching toward Mechanics’ Institute were met by some whites, who were repulsed, after endeavoring to disperse them.

Several shots were fired, but no one was hurt. . . .

New-Orleans, Monday, July 30—2:45 P.M.

The most intense excitement prevails all over the city.

Individual firing is going on in Common, Canal, and Dryades-streets.

Three negroes have been killed on Dryades and two on Common-street.

Two whites are reported wounded.

An immense Police force is out and using all possible efforts to quell the riot. . . .

New-Orleans, Monday, July 30—3:15 P.M.

The rioting in the city is partially suspended.

The Police surround the building where the Convention is held, which is full of negroes.

The Police are trying to get them out, but the populace are very belligerent. . . .

New-Orleans, Monday, July 30—3:30 P.M.

The populace surround the building where the Convention is being held.

There is an immense number of negroes inside and outside the building.

Outside the Police and the people . . . commenced to besiege the building.

Those inside the building, seeing themselves closely besieged, hung out a flag of truce, whereupon the Police ascended the stairs to protect the members of the Convention, but no sooner had they marched into the hall than the parties inside opened an indiscriminate fire upon them.

The flag of truce was no longer respected, and every visible head in the building is now being fired upon. . . .

New-Orleans, Monday, July 30—4 P.M.

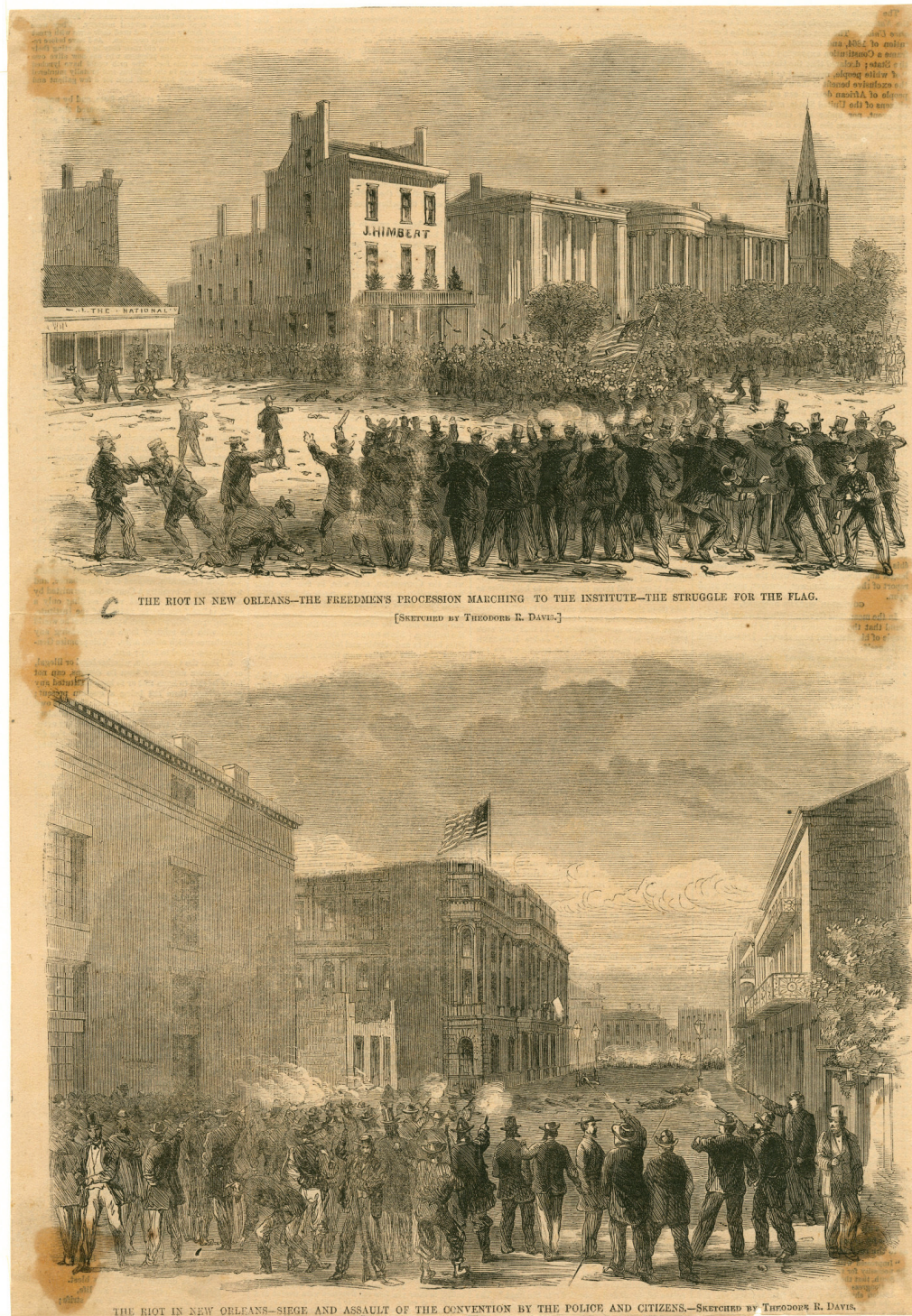
The fearful work continues. . . .

. . . The riot was occasioned by one of the freedmen's processions this morning, shoving a white man and tripping him. The policemen supposed the man had been struck, and advanced and arrested the supposed assailant. They were met with a volley of pistol shots bricks, &c., which at once induced a general alarm, and hence the bloody tragedy that has been enacted. . . .

All the lock-ups are filled with the arrested rioters, and the hospitals with the dying and wounded. The city is perfectly quiet. The crowds on the different thoroughfares near the Convention building have all been dispersed at the point of the bayonet, and artillery planted within sweeping range.

Handout Document 7

Images of the Riot



Two scenes of the riot in New Orleans; August 25, 1866; newspaper illustration by Theodore Russell Davis, delineator; *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, 1974.25.9.308 i,ii



Four scenes of the riot in New Orleans; August 25, 1866; newspaper illustration by Theodore Russell Davis, delineator; *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, 1974.25.9.309 i–iv

Handout

Document Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Documents 4 and 5: Discord and Violence

Critical Thinking Questions: Use evidence from the text of Documents 4 and 5 to answer the questions.

1. By the time of the New Orleans riot, had recently emancipated African Americans in Louisiana achieved equality with white citizens? Give at least two specific examples from Documents 4 and 5 to support your answer.

2. How does the author of *The Freedmen of Louisiana* (Document 4) describe the attitudes of newly freed people towards local authorities and white neighbors?

3. According to General P. H. Sheridan, what was the purpose of the Louisiana Constitutional Convention in 1866? What was the purpose of the rioters?

Handout

Document Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Documents 6 and 7: Accounts of the New Orleans Riot

Critical Thinking Questions: Use evidence from Documents 6 and 7 to answer the questions.

1. How are the three newspaper articles alike in their descriptions of the riot? Give at least one specific example.

2. How do the three newspaper articles differ in their descriptions of the riot? Give at least one specific example.

3. Examine the illustrations in Document 7 depicting the riot. Based on these illustrations, write a brief news bulletin, reporting on this event.

4. How accurately and closely do the illustrations in Document 7 compare to the text of the newspaper articles in their reports of the New Orleans riot? Cite evidence from the documents to support your viewpoint.

Handout

Exit Card Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Based on what you have learned in this lesson, write a persuasive response to the Lesson Two Essential Question. In this response, support your position with textual evidence from the document excerpts as well as insightful ideas that were presented during your small-group and whole-class discussions.

Why did political divisions and racial discord in New Orleans erupt into violence during the riot of 1866?

[illegible]

Lesson Three

Citizenship, Civil Rights, and Social Justice During Reconstruction

Overview

In this lesson, students will examine the actions of the federal and state governments and use this evidence to assess the progress made toward full citizenship, civil rights, and social justice for African Americans during the period of Republican Reconstruction.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze primary source text that describes the actions of government entities and individuals during Republican Reconstruction.
- Develop viewpoints on the impact of these events and present these positions to their classmates in a knowledgeable, persuasive manner.
- Develop, evaluate, and present a viewpoint on Lesson Three's Essential Question: To what extent did American ideals become attainable for African Americans in Louisiana during Republican Reconstruction?

Historical Background

Racial riots in New Orleans and Memphis in 1866 evoked outrage in Congress and across the North concerning the unwillingness of many white Southerners to accept and abide by the outcomes of the Civil War. Although slavery had been abolished, many former Confederates in the South held strong resentment, resisting and repudiating all attempts to provide full citizenship, voting rights, and economic and social equality to African Americans. This mindset led to many confrontations between former slaveholders and formerly enslaved people, created a crucible of civil rights conflict in the South, and threatened the outcome of the Civil War.

After a series of landslide election victories in 1866, the Republican Party decided that the federal government needed to exercise greater oversight of Southern polity and society as these former Confederate states and supporters transitioned back into the United States during Reconstruction. To this end, Republicans in Congress advocated the enactment of legislation that would increase the federal military presence and establish and empower Republican political organizations in the former seceded states. In 1867, Congress passed four Reconstruction Acts that divided the South into five military districts and created guidelines for the creation of new Southern state governments. The era that commenced with these acts and lasted until the end of Reconstruction is often referred to more specifically as Republican Reconstruction. As ironclad constitutional safeguards, Congress also passed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which were ratified in 1868 and 1870, respectively. The Fourteenth Amendment defined American citizenship; granted citizenship, civil rights, due process, and equal protection of the law to African Americans; denied voting rights to citizens who had participated in rebellion against the United States; and empowered the federal government to protect the citizens' civil rights against any infringement by the states. The Fifteenth Amendment stated that the right to vote could not be denied on the basis of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Moreover, Congress enacted Enforcement Acts in 1870 and 1871 that allowed federal military forces to respond to intimidations and terrorism by the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacy groups that sought to deter African Americans from exercising

their new rights. Lastly, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which prohibited segregation and required equal access to public accommodations.

In 1868, delegates to the Louisiana Constitutional Convention ratified a new state constitution that provided for equal citizenship, voting rights, equal access to public accommodations, and the establishment of public schools and colleges. Ninety-eight delegates participated, of whom half were African American. The new constitution fostered huge increases in voter registration by African Americans; more than 700,000 registered to vote during this period. In New Orleans the police force integrated, as did public schools. During Reconstruction, for the first time, large numbers of African Americans were elected to local and state office. In Louisiana, these officeholders included Oscar Dunn, who served as lieutenant governor from 1868–71, and P.B.S. Pinchback, who served as lieutenant governor from 1871–72 and also acted as governor for a short period.

Materials

Document 8: Congressional Testimonies of African American Residents of New Orleans

Document 9: Federal Legal Actions During Republican Reconstruction, 1867–1877

Document 10: The Louisiana Constitution of 1868

Documents 11 (A), (B), and (C): Images from Reconstruction

Document Analysis Worksheet for Documents 8–10

Image Analysis Worksheet for Documents 11 (A), (B), and (C)

Exit Card Worksheet

Procedures

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Display and direct the students' attention to the Lesson Three Essential Question: To what extent did American ideals become attainable for African Americans in Louisiana during Republican Reconstruction? This question will be the framework by which students will evaluate the documents and complete their worksheets.
2. Distribute copies of the four documents and the three worksheets. The images in Document 11 should also be displayed via a projector during the lesson.
3. The students will work collaboratively in their small groups to read and analyze the text of Documents 8, 9, and 10, as well as the images in Document 11, and complete the Document Analysis Worksheet and Image Analysis Worksheet.
4. Guide students in a whole-class discussion on Lesson Three's Essential Question.
5. Ask students to individually reflect on the Essential Question and direct them to complete their Exit Cards.

Handout Document 8

Congressional Testimonies of African American Residents of New Orleans

Excerpts from *The Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the Second Session, Thirty-Ninth Congress, 1866–1867*; Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1867

Note: The original version of this report organizes all questions and answers from the congressional sessions in a lengthy numbered list. Those numbers have been replaced by “Q:” and “A:” here for readability.

NEW ORLEANS, December 22, 1866.

O. J. DUNN¹ (colored) sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN:



Q: State whether you have any knowledge of the feelings and opinions of the colored citizens here.

A: I know them to a certain extent; I have been with them a great deal. The feeling among them is that there is no security for them under the present municipal government; that there is no justice for them. They have occasion every day to be satisfied of that fact.

Q: State, in your own way, what reasons bring you to this conclusion.

A: We are insulted on every occasion, whenever they have an opportunity. In going through the streets it is a common thing to hear them say, “These negroes think they have their own way now, but they are mistaken; the President is with us, and we will soon drive the negroes and their Yankee friends off.” I have frequently seen them point out negroes . . . and say, “As soon as we get things in our own hands we will manage the matter.” . . .

Q: In what way, other than by speech, does this feeling of which you have spoken show itself?

A: I have known instances in which they tried to pick quarrels with us. They very seldom do it with only one alone, but when there are three or four along they will do it. If a colored man goes along genteelly dressed they will rub against him and try to pick a quarrel with him. They seem to have a deep seated hatred against loyal people, without regard to color—against the whole loyal community.

Q: Has there been a branch of the Freedmen’s Bureau here in the city?

A: Yes, sir; and I have had occasion to send a great many freedmen to it. The planters, in many portions of the State, would make arrangements with them and fail to perform their part of the contract. There have been many instances the present season where planters have employed laborers at \$15 a month. The contract specified that the planter should be allowed to retain one-half the monthly salary; they would retain it in that way until the cotton was picked, and then manage to get into a quarrel with them and drive them away without paying them. I have had several come to me with such information, and some of them I have taken to the Freedmen’s Bureau. This is a common thing through all the parishes. The Freedmen’s Bureau is a great eye-sore to the planters; they do not like it at all; and I am sorry to say that in many instances agents in the parishes do not act exactly just towards the freedmen.

¹ In 1868, less than two years after he gave this testimony, Oscar J. Dunn was elected lieutenant governor of Louisiana, which made him the highest-ranking African American executive officeholder in the country’s history at the time. He served in that position until his death on November 22, 1871.

NEW ORLEANS, December 22, 1866.

L. J. P. CAPLA (colored slightly) sworn and examined.



By Mr. SHELLABARGER:

Q: Do you live in the city?

A: Yes, sir; I have kept store here for twenty-nine years. I am a merchant.

Q: Are the people of Louisiana more in favor of the government of the United States now than they were during the war?

A: No, sir; they will have nothing to do with the United States, never.

Q: How do you know that?

A: Because I know their sentiments. I hear such sentiments expressed every day. They will never be reconciled to the government of the United States.

By Mr. BOYER:

Q: Do you mean for us to understand that you are informed as to the sentiments of the people throughout the State?

A: I know that I am in favor of the United States, and I know they are not of the same opinion with me. I know their sentiments, and I know I have a great many enemies among that people.

Q: Since the war have you held much communication with the people throughout the State, or has your intercourse been confined to the citizens of New Orleans?

A: I mean to tell you, sir, that there is not one inch of ground in Louisiana that is loyal to the United States; and they teach their children to be disloyal in the school-books they use.



Q: Do you mean to say that there are no loyal citizens in the city of New Orleans?

A: Yes, sir; there may be, but they are few; and I believe that those who are loyal are good loyal ones, for a great many that pretended to be loyal went back to their party.

Handout Document 9**Federal Legal Actions During Republican Reconstruction, 1867–1877****Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution (excerpt)**

Proposed June 13, 1866; ratified July 9, 1868

US Government Publishing Office,
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-CONAN-REV-2016/pdf/GPO-CONAN-REV-2016-7.pdf>

SECTION. 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Fifteenth Amendment to the US Constitution (full text)

Proposed February 26, 1869; ratified February 3, 1870

US Government Publishing Office,
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-CONAN-REV-2016/pdf/GPO-CONAN-REV-2016-7.pdf>

SECTION 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

SECTION 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Civil Rights Act of 1875 (excerpt)

Approved March 1, 1875

from *The Statutes at Large: The United States, from December, 1873, to March, 1875, and Recent Treaties, Postal Conventions, and Executive Proclamations, Volume XVIII, Part 3*; Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1875;
http://constitution.org/uslaw/sal/018_statutes_at_large.pdf

An act to protect all citizens in their civil and legal rights. . . .

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all persons within the jurisdiction of the United States shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and other places of public amusement; subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law, and applicable alike to citizens of every race and color, regardless of any previous condition of servitude.

SEC. 2. That any person who shall violate the foregoing section by denying to any citizen, except for reasons by law applicable to citizens of every race and color, and regardless of any previous condition of servitude, the full enjoyment of any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, or privileges in said section enumerated, or by aiding or inciting such denial, shall, for every such offense, forfeit and pay the sum of five hundred dollars to the person aggrieved.

Handout

Document 10

The Louisiana Constitution of 1868

Excerpts from *Constitution Adopted by the State Constitutional Convention of the State of Louisiana on March 7, 1868*; New Orleans: The Republican Office, 1868; <https://archive.org/details/constitutionadop1868loui>

TITLE VI.—GENERAL PROVISIONS.

ART. 98.—Every male person, of an age of twenty-one years or upwards, born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, and a resident of this State one year next preceding an election . . . shall be deemed an elector, except those disfranchised by this Constitution. . . .

ART. 99. The following persons shall be prohibited from voting and holding any office: All persons who shall have been convicted of treason, perjury, forgery, bribery, or other crime punishable in the penitentiary, and persons under interdiction. . . . Those who held office , civil or military, for one year or more, under the organization styled “the Confederate States of America;” those who registered themselves as enemies of the United States; those who acted as leaders of guerrilla bands during the late rebellion; those who, in the advocacy of treason, wrote or published newspaper articles or preached sermons during the late rebellion; and those who voted for and signed an ordinance of secession in any State.



ART. 103.—The privilege of free suffrage shall be supported by laws regulating elections and prohibiting under adequate penalties all undue influence thereon from power, bribery, tumult, or other improper practice.



TITLE VII.—PUBLIC EDUCATION.

ART. 135.—The General Assembly shall establish at least one free public school in every parish throughout the State, and shall provide for its support by taxation or otherwise. All children of this State between the ages of six (6) and twenty-one (21) shall be admitted to the public schools or other institutions of learning sustained or established by the State in common without distinction of race, color, or previous condition. There shall be no separate schools or institutions of learning established exclusively for any race by the State of Louisiana.

Handout Documents 11 (A), (B), (C)

Images from Reconstruction

Document 11 (A)



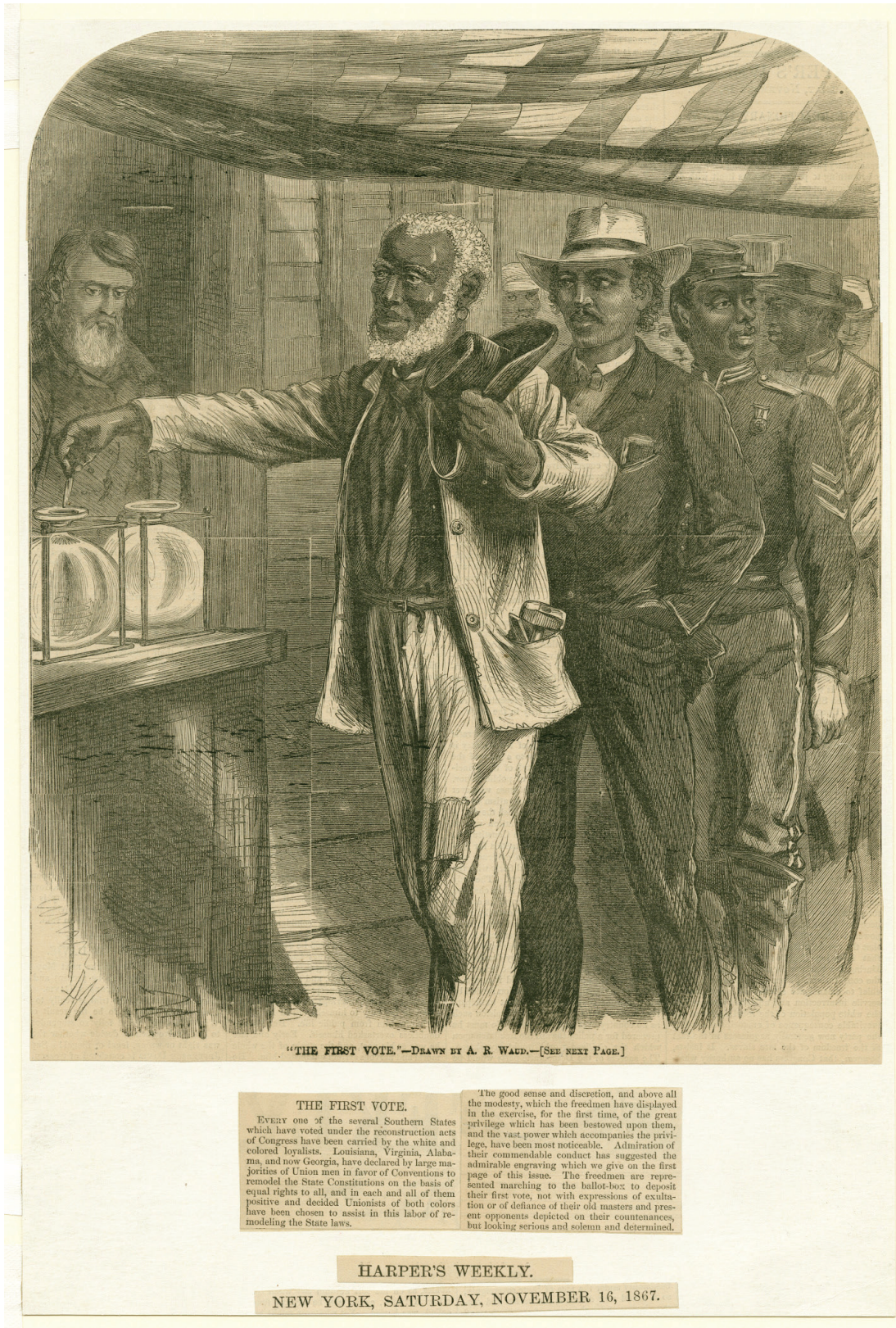
Extract from the Reconstructed Constitution of the State of Louisiana with Portraits of the Distinguished Members of the Convention and Assembly; 1868; The Historic New Orleans Collection, 1979.183

Document 11 (B)



The Fifteenth Amendment; c. 1871; lithograph by C. Rogan, publisher; *Library of Congress, LC-DIG-pga-03453*;
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006678638/>

Document 11 (C)



The First Vote from Harper's Weekly; November 16, 1867; newspaper illustration by Alfred Rudolph Waud, delineator; The Historic New Orleans Collection, 1974.25.9.319

Handout

Document Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Documents 8, 9, and 10: Citizenship, Civil Rights, and Social Justice During Reconstruction**Critical Thinking Questions:** Use evidence from the documents to answer the questions.

1. Based on the testimony of Oscar Dunn, describe the attitudes and behavior of many white residents toward African American residents in New Orleans after the war.

2. In his testimony, L. J. P. Capla asserts, "There is not one inch of ground in Louisiana that is loyal to the United States." How does he support this viewpoint?

3. In your own words, what does the Fourteenth Amendment do? Why is this important?

4. In your own words, what does the Fifteenth Amendment do? Why is this important?

5. What specific things did the Civil Rights Act of 1875 guarantee to American citizens, and how does it protect them?

6. How did Article 98 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1868 enhance the civil rights of African Americans and all residents of Louisiana?

7. How did Article 99 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1868 punish residents in leadership positions who actively supported the Confederacy against the United States?

8. How did Article 135 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1868 improve the lives of African Americans and the residents of New Orleans?

Handout **Image Analysis Worksheet**

Name: _____ Date: _____

Critical Thinking Questions: Use evidence from Documents 11 (A), (B), and (C) to answer the questions.

1. Who is portrayed in Document 11 (A)? Explain the meaning of the phrase “Reconstructed Constitution,” from the illustration’s title, and how it impacted these people.

2. Explain how Document 11 (B) depicts and recognizes the contributions, civil rights, and humanity of African Americans.

3. Briefly describe how African Americans are depicted and the action that is occurring in Document 11 (C), and explain the significance of the action.

Handout

Exit Card Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Based on what you have learned in this lesson, write a persuasive response to the Lesson Three Essential Question. In this response, support your position with textual evidence from the document excerpts as well as insightful ideas that were presented during your small-group and whole-class discussions.

To what extent did American ideals become attainable for African Americans in Louisiana during Republican Reconstruction?

[illegible]

Lesson Four**The Destruction of Reconstruction****Overview**

In this lesson, students will examine the political conflicts, racial rhetoric, and confrontations that occurred in Louisiana and New Orleans during 1873 and 1874. These events and ideas eventually led to the withdrawal of federal troops from the city and of the Republican Party from its political commitments to protect the citizenship and civil rights of African Americans in the South. Democratic politicians across the South, including those in Louisiana, employed racist rhetoric, intimidation, and violence—often in alliance with white supremacist groups such as the White League—to regain control of their local and state governments. These tactics also undermined their Republican rivals' legislative achievements in civil rights and deprived African Americans of full citizenship, equality, and social justice. Students will work collaboratively with their classmates and use the evidence from the documents to develop viewpoints and present their positions on these historical issues.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze primary source text that describes the rhetoric and historical events in Louisiana and New Orleans in 1873 and 1874.
- Develop viewpoints on the impact of these events and present these positions to their classmates in a knowledgeable, persuasive manner.
- Develop, evaluate, and present a viewpoint on Lesson Four's Essential Question: What factors led to the failure of Reconstruction to achieve lasting equality for African Americans?

Historical Background

During the 1870s, white Democratic Southerners intensified their efforts to regain control of their local and state governments. Societies such as the Ku Klux Klan and the White League were organized to promote white supremacy and enforce black exclusion from voting and office-holding, and used tactics of intimidation and violence to achieve these objectives. As time passed, a popular consensus developed that the ongoing problems of race relations and civil rights in the South should be resolved by Southerners without Northern intervention and federal oversight. In 1872 Congress enacted the Amnesty Act, which restored voting rights to more than 160,000 former Confederates in the Southern states. By 1876, federal troops originally deployed to suppress white terrorism toward blacks and protect black citizens' civil and social rights remained in only three former seceded states: Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

Southern politicians took control of their local and state governments, one after another, often through the use of militant confrontation and rhetoric, intimidation, and actual violence. The Colfax Massacre in Grant Parish, Louisiana, on April 13, 1873, resulted in the murder of at least one hundred African Americans. During the Battle of Liberty Place on September 14, 1874, twenty-four African Americans and three white Republican supporters were killed. It was not until President Ulysses S. Grant ordered six naval ships and a squadron of federal troops to New Orleans that the White League surrendered its control of the city and Republican Governor William Kellogg's authority was restored.

Ultimately, the tactics used by the Southern Democratic Party and white supremacist groups paid dividends in the presidential election of 1876. Disputes over which candidate would receive electoral votes from Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina led to a compromise in which Rutherford B. Hayes, the Republican candidate, was awarded the votes and, consequently, the election in return for the withdrawal of the remaining federal troops in those three states. The withdrawal of the federal troops and their Republican Party allies from their military and political commitments in the South largely left African Americans to fend for themselves in their struggle to further their rights as citizens of the United States.

Materials

Document 12: Excerpts from Governor William Pitt Kellogg's "Address to the People of Louisiana"

Document 13: "Platform of the Democratic Party of Louisiana in 1874"

Document 14: The Platform of the Crescent City White League

Document 15: Turning Point: The Battle of Liberty Place, September 14, 1874

Document Analysis Worksheet for Documents 12 and 13

Document Analysis Worksheet for Documents 13 and 14

Exit Card Worksheet

Procedures

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Display and direct the students' attention to the Lesson Four Essential Question: What factors led to the failure of Reconstruction to achieve lasting equality for African Americans? This question will be the framework by which students will evaluate the documents and complete their worksheets.
2. Distribute copies of the four documents and the three worksheets. The images in Document 15 should also be displayed via a projector during the lesson.
3. The students will work collaboratively in their small groups to read and analyze the text of Documents 12, 13, 14, and 15, and complete the Document Analysis Worksheets.
4. Guide students in a whole-class discussion on Lesson Four's Essential Question.
5. Ask students to individually reflect on the Essential Question and direct them to complete their Exit Cards.

Handout Document 12

Excerpts from Governor William Pitt Kellogg's "Address to the People of Louisiana" on May 10, 1873

New Orleans: State of Louisiana Executive Department, 1873; *Library of Congress*

A partisan press has teemed with such misrepresentations regarding myself and the government I in part represent, a gentleman who assumes to be entitled to the office I now hold has been so prolific in his addresses to the public in advocacy of his assumptions . . . the so called Committee of Two Hundred has been so industrious in the publication of views not only calculated to mislead the public in the formation of opinion, but to seduce it into actions that tend toward anarchy and further bloodshed, an organization of malcontent and disappointed politicians, especially in New Orleans, have labored so hard to carry out their treasonable programme . . . with the avowed purpose of overthrowing the lawfully established government of the State . . . that in justice to myself I deem it a duty to address you. . . .



Is a party that can raise no voice of indignation against the barbarous massacre at Colfax—no matter what its opinions of its origin—fit to govern a people composed in half at least of the race massacred, or is it entitled to the consideration and sympathy of good men, to whatever race they may belong? Civilized mankind will say it is not. I submit that these self-constituted leaders are no more exponents of the real wealth and intelligence of the white race in Louisiana than are the negroes whom their representatives murdered, and whose assassination they decidedly approve. I can but believe that a majority of the white people of Louisiana prefer living in harmony with their colored neighbors, and are willing to accord to them their legal constitutional rights. Wearied of a vain resistance to the dominant party of the Union, as well as to the federal administration, I believe they do not wish to prolong war under the guise of peace. But an intolerant and fictitious public opinion, manufactured by designing politicians, and a partisan press, prevent them from giving expression to what their good sense and better judgment suggest. . . .



The public disorders and the sentiments of ostracism and antagonism . . . are a standing menace preventing capital and labor from coming here. The tide of immigration turns aside from the tempting climate and productive soil of this State, and the army of European laborers, warned away by lawlessness and insecurity, passes on to Texas or the West. The State is yearning for the aid of foreign capital to renew its levees, foreign labor to revive its agriculture. But it is absurd for any community that encourages lawlessness to hope for the confidence of the capitalist or the aid of the industrious laborer. Nothing can save the State but the enforcement of laws that will insure to all citizens security in the peaceful exercise of all their rights. Prosperity can only come to Louisiana when laws are enforced, when turbulence is put down, when hostility of races ends, and when all citizens are willing to accord to each other what the law and justice and good policy demand.

Handout Document 13

“Platform of the Democratic Party of Louisiana in 1874”

Excerpts from *Address of Governor Kellogg to the People of the United States on the Condition of Affairs in Louisiana, with Official Facts and Figures*; New Orleans: State of Louisiana Executive Department, 1874; *Library of Congress*

We, the white people of Louisiana, embracing the Democratic party, the Conservative party, the White Man’s party, the Liberal party, the Reform party and all others opposed to the Kellogg usurpation, do solemnly resolve and declare that the government now existing in Louisiana originated in and has been maintained by force and fraud in opposition to the will of a large majority of the voters of the State, in opposition to the principles of the constitution of the United States and in violation of every principle of justice and liberty.

That the dominant faction of the Radical [Republican] party in this State has, by false and fraudulent representations, inflamed the passions and prejudices of the negroes, as a race, against the whites, and has thereby made it necessary for the white people to *unite and act together in self-defense, and for the preservation of white civilization*.

That the rights of all men, under the constitution and laws of the land, must be respected and preserved inviolate, irrespective of race, color, or previous condition; but we deny that Congress can constitutionally enact laws to force the two races into social union or equality.

That the white people of Louisiana have no desire to deprive the colored people of any rights to which they are entitled, but we are convinced that reform is imperatively demanded, and can be effected *only by electing to office white men of known* capacity and integrity; and we believe that large numbers of colored citizens will vote with us, to secure a government which must be beneficial alike to both races.

That we disclaim earnestly any intention of carrying, or attempting to carry, the approaching election by violence, *and that charges to this effect emanating from our Radical enemies are without foundation*, and are falsely made for the purpose of obtaining the aid of the military forces of the United States in order to overawe the people, perpetuate the existing usurpation, and subvert the true principles of the government. . . .

That we extend to all of our race, in every clime, the right hand of fellowship, and a cordial invitation to come and settle among us and unite their destinies with ours. That while we are in favor of meeting punctually the payment of the legitimate debt of Louisiana, we are immovably opposed to the recognition of the dishonest and fraudulent obligations issued in the name of the State, and we pledge ourselves to make a searching investigation in the matter.

Handout Document 14

The Platform of the Crescent City White League

Excerpts from *Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the Second Session of the Forty-Third Congress, 1874–75*; Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1875

THE WHITE LEAGUE—ITS PLATFORM IN FULL—A MANLY AND STRAIGHTFORWARD DOCUMENT. . .

With our hands on our hearts, and appealing to God, we and the whole white people of Louisiana can declare that we are in no way responsible for the intolerable evils of misgovernment under which the State is perishing. From the time that the right of suffrage was, as we believed, and as we still believe, accorded too hastily to a race in the infancy of freedom, we firmly resolved that it was our duty, and a wise expediency, to accept the policy of the reconstruction laws in their full scope. We endeavored at once to address ourselves to the intelligence of the negro, to explain to him that slavery having been forever abolished, he, as a citizen possessing all of the rights of white citizens, had the same interests and the same duties as white men. . . . We still hoped that time and experience would give them discretion in the exercise of a precious right, which they never exercised here or elsewhere except as a gift from our race. We thought that a right which they owed to the white race would not be persistently used by them to accomplish the ruin of white men. In this hope we have been most grievously disappointed. The negro has proved himself as destitute of common gratitude as of common sense.

Instead of improving in his capacity to make an intelligent and patriotic use of the ballot, we do not hesitate to affirm that he is to-day less qualified for the duties of self-government than he was seven years ago. In the beginning we are willing to believe that he was guided by a childish faith in the bad men who arrogated to themselves the control of his vote. But though he has long since lost that faith; though the bare-faced rascalities of those men are now known to him; though he denounces them as liars and thieves, he still retains them in positions of power and trust for the avowed purpose of breaking down the industry of the State, wasting it by exorbitant taxation, and finally driving its white inhabitants to other States.

Any one who has been to their meetings, or overheard their private conversations, knows that they dream of the gradual exodus of the whites, which will leave Louisiana to their exclusive control, like another Hayti. The increasing spirit of caste founded on the most absurd inversion of the relations of race, shows itself in every form. Their incessant demands for offices from the State, city, and Federal Government, for which they are unfit, and to which they have no title other than the color of their skin; the development in their conventions of a spirit of proscription against white radicals and even against honorable republicans who fought in the northern armies for their liberation; their increasing arrogance, which seems to know no bounds; their increasing dishonesty, which they regard as a statesmanly virtue; their contemptuous scorn of all the rights of the white man which they dare trespass upon, all these signs warn us that the calamity which we had long apprehended is now imminent, and that we must be prepared for all its consequences. Disregarding all minor questions of principle or policy, and having solely in view the maintenance of our hereditary civilization and Christianity menaced by a stupid Africanization, we appeal to the men of our race, of whatever language or nationality, to unite with us against that supreme danger. A league of the whites is the inevitable result of that formidable, oath-bound, and blindly obedient league of the blacks, which, under the command of the most cunning and unscrupulous negroes in the State, may at any moment plunge us into a war of races—a conflict in which we are resolved that we and ours shall not be the victims. Indeed, it is with some hope that a timely and proclaimed union of the whites as a race, and their efficient preparation for any emergency, may arrest the threatened horrors of a social war, and teach the blacks to beware of further insolence and aggressions, that we call upon the men of our race . . . to unite with us in an earnest effort to re-establish a white man's government in the city and the State. Were the negro willing to listen to the voice of reason, we could demonstrate even to his understanding that the predominance of our race in government is indispensable to his well-being. We could show him that in every

Southern State ruled by the whites his rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are more firmly secured than they are under black domination in Louisiana.

We could show him that the negro's right to vote, to labor, to secure a tenure of the profits of his industry, are far better guaranteed by the white rulers of Virginia than by the black rulers of Louisiana; that in Georgia and in Texas every jot and tittle of his legal and constitutional franchises—his life, his immunity from wrong and oppression of every kind—are far better guarded than in those States in which his race is in the ascendancy. We would show him that where the white man rules, the negro is peaceful and happy; that where the black rules, the negro is starved and oppressed; that where our race bears sway, his race is mentally, morally, and materially progressing; that where his race governs, there is increasing ignorance, distress, and brutality.

But it is worse than idle to reason with those people. They have become maddened by the hatred and conceit of race, and it has become our duty to save them and to save ourselves from the fatal probabilities of their stupid extravagance and reckless vanity, by arraying ourselves in the name of white civilization, resuming that just and legitimate superiority in the administration of our State affairs to which we are entitled by superior responsibility, superior numbers, and superior intelligence; and while we declare it is our purpose and fixed determination not to interfere in any manner with the legal rights of the colored race, or of any other race, we are determined to maintain our own legal rights by all the means that may become necessary for that purpose, and to preserve them at all hazards.

Handout Document 15

Turning Point: The Battle of Liberty Place, September 14, 1874

Excerpts from *Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the Second Session of the Forty-Third Congress, 1874–75*; Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1875

The White League is an organization which exists in New Orleans, and contains at least from twenty-five hundred to three thousand members, armed, drilled, and officered as a military organization. Organizations bearing the same name extend throughout many parts of the State. It was pretended that this organization in the city was simply as a volunteer police-force, the regular police being inefficient; that it has no connection with associations of the same name in other parts of the State, and that these latter are large political clubs without military organization or arms. A brief examination and a brief cross-examination effectually dispelled this pretension. Several of its members and officers were examined before the committee. So far as was shown, this organization in no single instance performed police functions. Its organization, equipment, drill, and discipline were wholly military. Its name was not appropriate to a volunteer police, but was appropriate to an association designed to put the whites of the State into power by force. It had cannon. On the 14th of September, 1874, it rose upon and attacked the police of the city, the pretext of the attack being the seizure of arms which it had imported from the North, and having defeated them with considerable slaughter, it took possession of the State-house, overthrew the State government, and installed a new governor in office, and kept him in power until the United States interfered. This rising was planned beforehand. Its commanding officer, Ogden, published an elaborate and pompous report of his military movements, in which he expresses his thanks to his aids and other officers for their important and valuable services before and during the day of the action. . . .

The White League of New Orleans itself was and is a constant menace to the republicans of the whole State. Its commander can, in a few hours, place bodies of men, armed and drilled, in any of the near parishes, or those on the coast, or into Mississippi, Alabama, or Texas. It doubtless contains many persons of property and influence. It also contains many persons of very different character. It would be desirous and able to overthrow the State government at any time, if not prevented by the power of the United States. They still retain more than 1,000 stand of arms, taken from the State on September 14, and never returned.

We cannot doubt that the effect of all these things was to prevent a full, free, and fair election, and to intimidate the colored voters and the white republicans. . . . The overthrow of the State government by the White League on the 14th of September; the turning out large numbers of parish officials in the country, compelling them to flee for their lives; . . . these things in a community where there is no legal punishment for political murder, must, in the nature of things, have filled with terror a people timid and gentle like the colored population of Louisiana, even if we had not taken abundant evidence as to special acts of violence and crime and their effects on particular neighborhoods.

Handout

Document Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Documents 12 and 13:
Appeals of the Republican and Democratic Parties to Louisiana Voters

Critical Thinking Questions: Use evidence from the documents to answer the questions.

1. According to Republican Governor William Kellogg, what is the attitude of the majority of white people of Louisiana toward African Americans?

2. According to Kellogg, what are the problems caused by Democratic control of the state government?

3. According to the platform of the Democratic Party, why should the people of Louisiana support the Democratic Party and its candidate for governor?

4. According to the platform of the Democratic Party, what are the problems caused by Republican control of the state?

5. Based on the statements in these documents, which political party do you think would have had a greater appeal to the people of Louisiana in 1874? Briefly explain your viewpoint.

Handout

Document Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Documents 14 and 15:
The Platform and Power of the White League in New Orleans

Critical Thinking Questions: Use evidence from the documents to answer the questions.

1. Why does the Crescent City White League believe that it will be good for all Louisianans to “re-establish a white man’s government” in New Orleans and Louisiana?

2. How does the Crescent City White League justify its “legitimate superiority” to govern Louisiana?

3. How do Documents 14 and 15 differ in their descriptions of the White League? Give at least two specific differences and provide textual support from both documents for each point.

4. Based on the information in Document 14, how do you think a member of the White League would have characterized the Battle of Liberty Place differently than the author of Document 15? Write a short description (3–5 sentences) of the Battle of Liberty Place from the point of view of a member of the White League.

Exit Card Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Based on what you have learned in this lesson, write a persuasive response to the Lesson Four Essential Question. In this response, support your position with textual evidence from the document excerpts as well as insightful ideas that were presented during your small-group and whole-class discussions.

What factors led to the failure of Reconstruction to achieve lasting equality for African Americans?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.