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Helena, MT
June 2012

Reconstruction Report Card

National Standards for History:
- **Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877) -- Standard 3:How various reconstruction plans succeeded or failed**

Objectives: Students will be able to:
- Understand the task the United States faced of trying to put the nation back together after the Civil War.
- Evaluate plans of reconstruction of both the Radical Republicans and President Johnson.
- Create a reconstruction plan of their own to create a stable and unified United States.

Resources:
- Background information on reconstruction plans for both Radical Republicans and President Johnson.
- Report Card Form
- "My Reconstruction Plan" handout
- Chart paper or document camera
- Copies of the Wade-Davis Bill and Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction (optional)

Background:
The United States faced the daunting task of rebuilding the nation after the Civil War. President Johnson and the Radical Republicans had conflicting ideas on how reconstruction plans should look and be implemented. This conflict led to vicious political battles and the impeachment of a president. Huge amounts of resources were poured into the South to help its economy. African Americans were again rolled back as whites regained power. President Lincoln had begun planning for restoration of the South before the war ended. His plan of Reconstruction was based on his idea that the South had never left the Union. When he was assassinated in April 1865 Vice President Andrew Johnson intended to follow the basics of Lincoln's plan. Radical Republicans controlled Congress and wanted harsher terms in the plan.

Introduction:
Introduce students to the concept of Reconstruction. Elicit answers to the following question, "What problems do you think the United States might face after the Civil War"? Explain to students that the issues facing the US were very complicated. To simplify the issues compare the devastation that was caused by Hurricane Katrina with the devastation of the war. Record responses on chart paper or use document camera.

Activity 1:

1. Place students into groups of four. Hand out both of the Reconstruction Plans – Johnson and Radical Republican. Students should read through and highlight main ideas and use a **?** to indicate what they do not understand.
2. After a period of time have the students direct their attention back to a whole group discussion. Using overheads place each plan on the projector, one at a time. Discuss each bullet of the plan. Clarify any bullets that students may have questions about.

Activity 2:
1. Using an overhead explain the Reconstruction Report Card. Each student is to give the plans grades. Groups may discuss the strengths and weaknesses with each issue with tablemates and then evaluate both plans. Students do not need to agree with each other but must be ready to defend their grades.
2. Distribute Report Cards and grading sheets.
3. Give group's ample time to discuss and grade the issues dealing with each plan.
4. Have each student turn his or her paper over and draw a horizontal line across it. One end should represent Johnson's plan and the other end represents the Radical Republican plan. Students should mark with an X where they stand on the two plans.
5. Then, have the students line up in a continuum. They will need to talk with others to find out where to stand in relationship to how others feel. They should use their paper with the X to help them.
6. Have the students at each end tell why they chose to support the plan they represent.
7. Students in the middle should share what parts of each plan they support and which they do not support.

Activity 3:

1. Students now have the opportunity to write their own plan for Reconstruction. Distribute the "My Plan for Reconstruction" form for writing his/her own plan.
2. Explain that for each issue students must follow these procedures:
   • Brainstorm the steps they think the government should take to deal with the issue.
   • Grade their own ideas and give substantial evidence for the grade.
   • Consider the plans of Johnson and the Republicans. They can modify, reject or borrow any of the ideas from these plans.
3. Students should share ideas with their groups and then as a whole class discussion.
4. Ask: "Did anyone change their stance after listening to others on the continuum?"
4. The class could try and come up with one plan that they can agree on.

Conclusion:
Have students research what happened in Reconstruction after Congress was back in session.

Reconstruction Report Card

	Andrew Johnson's Plan	Grade	Comments
Issue #1 What should be done to Southerners who rebelled?			
Issue #2 What should Southern states have to do in order to be brought back into the Union?			
Issue #3 What can be done to provide assistance for African Americans?			

A= Excellent; well-thought out   **B=** Good idea but may require further work   **C=** Needs work   **D=** Problems evident
F= Simply could not be implemented

	Radical Republicans' Plan	Grade	Comments
Issue #1 What should be done to Southerners who rebelled?			
Issue #2 What should Southern states have to do in order to be brought back into the Union?			
Issue #3 What can be done to provide assistance for African Americans?			

Andrew Johnson's Plans for Reconstruction

The showdown between Lincoln and the Congress over competing reconstruction plans never occurred. The president was assassinated on April 14, 1865. His successor, Andrew Johnson, did not have his predecessor's skills in handling people; those skills would be badly missed. Johnson's plan reflected the following:

- Pardons would be granted to those taking a loyalty oath; verbal pledges would be accepted
- Require existing political leaders to seek pardons from Congress
- No pardons would be available to high Confederate officials and persons owning property valued in excess of $20,000
- Speed up the readmission process by emphasizing rejection of secession and slavery
- Allow states to decide on what type of assistance to provide African Americans
- A state needed to abolish slavery before being readmitted
- Recognize that leniency toward the South will heal the nation's wounds faster

Most of the seceded states began compliance with the president's program. Congress was not in session, so there was no immediate objection from that quarter. However, Congress reconvened in December and refused to seat the Southern representatives.

Radical Republicans Plan for Reconstruction

After the Civil War Congress was controlled by the Republicans and they had their own terms for Reconstruction. The main features of this so-called Radical Reconstruction included the following:

- The division of the South into five military districts controlled by the US Army, while new state constitutions and governments were being set up.
- The requirement of southern states to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. The amendment addressed civil rights issues, and prohibited many former Confederate government officials from holding office.
- The requirement of the new state governments to grant African American males the right to vote.
- Punish rebels by confiscating their land.
- Replace existing political leaders
- Demand that states meet strict requirements before readmitting to Union
- Provide assistance and protection to African Americans
- Use military to maintain control and enforce African American suffrage.

Thaddeus Stevens, a leading Radical Republican, said that Southern institutions "must be broken up and relaid, or all our blood and treasure have been spent in vain."

My Reconstruction Report Card

	My Reconstruction Plan	Grade	Comments
Issue #1 What should be done to Southerners who rebelled?			
Issue #2 What should Southern states have to do in order to be brought back into the Union?			
Issue #3 What can be done to provide assistance for African Americans?			

A= Excellent; well-thought out   **B=** Good idea but may require further work   **C=** Needs work   **D=** Problems evident
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