

Lesson 5

The Civil War as a Turning Point in American History

Objective

- To understand how the Civil War— Reconstruction era altered fundamentally the political, economic, and social framework of the United States.

Notes to the Teacher

Lincoln's original objective in sending troops to the South was to preserve the Union and reunite the North and South. The Emancipation Proclamation, issued as a strategic move to gain British support and give the North a moral cause in the war, made freeing the slaves a second aim of the war. The war did reunite the country and free the slaves, but it altered the course of American political and economic development in other far-reaching ways as well.

In this lesson, students complete an outline summarizing the effects of the war to see why it represented a major turning point in the nation's history.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 5**. Have students work individually or in small groups to complete the outline.

Suggested Responses: Handout 5

Political

North: (1) national, (2) Morrill Tariff; aid for the transcontinental railroad; Na-

tional Banking Act; Contract Labor Law, (3) Republican

South: (1) Republican, (2) Democratic, (3) Solid South

Economic

North: (1) falling, (2) industrialization; West South: (1) tenant farming, sharecropping, (2) crop liens, (3) New South

Social

North: (1) Radicals (or Radical Republicans); (2) materialism

South: (1) 13, 14, 15, (2) freeing the slaves, making blacks citizens, giving black males the vote, (3) black codes

2. Be sure that all students have the outline completed accurately.

3. Finally, discuss these questions:

- a. Historian Carl Degler referred to the Civil War as the "second American Revolution." What do you think he meant by this? Was the change so great as to constitute a virtual revolution?

- b. In what ways does your completed outline provide evidence in support of Degler's position?

Specific points will vary, but students should see that the Civil War changed both sections politically, economically, and socially.

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Fill in the blanks with appropriate answers for each section of the country.

Political consequences:

North

1. The Civil War established the supremacy of the (national, state) government.
2. With Southern Democrats out of Congress, Congress passed four business-oriented planks in Lincoln's platform:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
3. Consequently, the _____ party became the party of big business.

South

1. Southerners associated Lincoln and the freeing of slaves with the _____ party.
2. Their resentment of his action led to their voting for the _____ party.
3. As a result, the South became known for years as the _____.

Economic consequences:

North

1. The wartime expansion of agriculture met the wartime demand, but contributed to overproduction and (rising, falling) prices in the postwar years.
2. New laws set the foundation for large-scale _____ in this country and served to link the interests of the North and (West, South).

South

1. The freeing of the slaves caused a breakdown of the plantation system. Two replacements were _____ and _____.
2. _____ kept many freedmen almost permanently in debt and consequently tied them to a particular plantation.

3. Other Southerners had a vision of industrialization in the South. This concept became known as the _____.

Social consequences:

North

1. The war polarized northern views on racial issues.

The Republican faction known as the _____ believed in the equality of the races, but the majority of whites had difficulty accepting blacks as equals and treating them without discrimination.

2. (Idealism, materialism) became a dominant postwar value.

South

1. After the war, Congress took steps to add amendments _____, _____, and _____.
2. These had the effect of _____, _____, and _____.
3. Although these amendments were violated by state laws known as _____, they provided the basis for legal equality for blacks.