

Reconstruction Introduction Activity

Introduction: Abraham **Lincoln** believed it was the **responsibility of the president** to oversee Reconstruction. Below is Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction.

- A. Ex-Confederates who took an oath of allegiance to the United States would be given a **pardon** (An official release from penalty after violating a law). This means they would be forgiven for supporting the Confederacy.
- B. Ex-Confederate Officers and government officials **would not** be pardoned.
- C. When **10%** of the voters in a state took the oath of allegiance, a new state constitution could be written, and elections for statewide offices could be held.
- D. Those elected to congress would then take their seats in Washington D.C. After words, the states would then be allowed to return to its place in the Union.
- E. Southerners had to promise to end slavery (13th Amendment).
- F. Property (but not slaves) would be returned to former Confederates who took the loyalty oath.

Response to Lincoln's Plan: Many **Republican** members of Congress **did not agree** with Lincoln's Plan. Those members of Congress were known as Radical Republicans (A group of Republicans who wanted freed slaves to gain the right to vote and be able to own property). They believed it was the **job of Congress, not the president**, to plan Reconstruction.

Radical Republicans take action: Both the president and Congress each had their own ideas about Reconstruction. The Radical Republicans created its own Reconstruction Plan. It was called the **Wade-Davis Bill**. The proposed law required that more than half of the voters in a state take the oath of allegiance. The bill also required the protection of rights for African Americans. **Lincoln vetoed the bill.**

Tragedy Hits: April 14, 1865, President Lincoln is assassinated by John Wilkes Booth while watching *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater. Andrew Johnson then becomes the President of the United States. Johnson was from Tennessee. Johnson chose not to join Tennessee when they seceded. Now that Lincoln is dead, what will happen to Reconstruction? Will Johnson make the decisions or will the Radical Republicans

Below are a series of questions. Please answer them using the information you have just read.

Question #1: **Whose responsibility** do you believe it is to reconstruct the South? Is it the President of the United States responsibility or is the Congresses responsibility. You have to explain your answer.

Question # 2: Why do you think the Radical Republicans disagreed with Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction?

Question # 3: Why do you think Lincoln vetoed the **Wade-Davis Bill**?

Question # 4: What do you think will happen now that Johnson is going to be the President of the United States? Will he take charge of Reconstruction or will Congress take charge of Reconstruction?