



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions: It is the spring of 1868. As the battles for control of Reconstruction policy come to a head, the President of the United States, Andrew Johnson, is facing impeachment. A series of complicated and fascinating events bring him to this first presidential impeachment trial in American history. You are a journalist covering 1860s Washington politics. It will be your job to report on these events in a way that makes the connections between the words and deeds of the principal figures clear to the average newspaper reader.

In this activity, your teacher will divide your class into groups. Each group will be asked to review an interactive timeline of events beginning with the April 14, 1865 accession of Johnson to the Presidency and ending with the May 16, 1868 acquittal of Johnson in his impeachment trial [temporarily located at <http://civclients.com:80/nehint/impeach/>]. Each group will also review one hyperlinked document that sheds further light on the events leading up to the impeachment and trial of President Johnson.

As reporters, your group will be responsible for analyzing and reporting to the class about your assigned document and explaining how it fits into the larger picture of the timeline. To help you in developing your story, you and your group will complete the worksheet that follows in preparation for the class discussion.



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions for all Groups: Examine the interactive timeline [temporarily located at <http://civclients.com:80/nehint/impeach/>] from beginning to end and use it as a reference for completing this assignment. You will notice that there are hyperlinks to corresponding documents for many segments of the timeline. You and your group will be assigned to read one of these documents and complete the corresponding worksheet. When you link to a document, you will notice an option to print out the excerpt. It is recommended that you do this and take it home for further study.



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions for Group A: Read Andrew Johnson’s Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, (hyperlinked on the May 29, 1865 date on the timeline) and, together, complete the worksheet that follows. Next, discuss the impact of his words upon the events that led up to his impeachment. Take notes and prepare your presentations.

Major Question: How is Andrew Johnson’s attitude of leniency toward the pardoning of former Confederates and re-admission of formerly rebellious states back into the Union tied to his view of presidential power? In what ways do you think the views Johnson expressed here may have contributed to his impeachment?

Question	Answer
Who wrote the document? When? For what audience?	
Does it sound like Johnson wishes to punish the South?	
Johnson talks of the “pretended” Confederate states. What does he mean by that and why is it significant?	
Would you say that Johnson views his role in Reconstruction as primary or secondary to that of Congress?	

The Politics of Reconstruction

<p>Does Johnson view this Reconstruction plan as the only acceptable method?</p>	
<p>Why do you think Johnson seems to favor a plan offering generous terms for re-admitting Southern states and pardoning former Confederates?</p>	



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions for Group B: Read the excerpt from Charles Sumner’s “Promises of the Declaration of Independence and Abraham Lincoln” (hyperlinked under June 1, 1865 on the timeline) and, together, complete the worksheet that follows. Next, discuss the impact of his words upon the events that led up to President Johnson’s impeachment. Take notes and prepare your presentations.

Major Question: What is Charles Sumner’s view regarding the enfranchisement of former slaves? In what ways do you think the views Sumner expressed here may have contributed to the struggle between Congress and President Johnson?

Question	Answer
Who wrote the document? When? For what audience?	
What does Sumner see as the connection between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution?	
Does it sound like Sumner is willing to compromise on the question of suffrage for blacks as a condition for Reconstruction? Why or why not?	
What does Sumner argue is the Constitutional basis for granting suffrage to blacks?	

The Politics of Reconstruction

<p>Based on the views Sumner presents here, would you say that he sees Congress's role in Reconstruction as primary or secondary to that of President?</p>	
<p>What do you think Sumner would say to a political ally who argued that patience was required if they were to achieve suffrage for blacks?</p>	



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions for Group C: Read Andrew Johnson’s Speech to the Citizens of Washington on the Occasion of George Washington’s Birthday (hyperlinked under February 22, 1866 on the timeline) and, together, complete the worksheet that follows. Next, discuss the impact of his words upon the events that led up to his impeachment. Take notes and prepare your presentations.

Major Question: What are President Johnson’s views regarding those in Congress who do not wish to admit representatives from Southern states until they undergo a Reconstruction program outlined by Congress? In what ways do you think the views Johnson expressed here may have contributed to the struggle between him and the Congress?

Question	Answer
Who wrote the document? When? For what audience?	
Johnson argues against frequent changes to the Constitution and calls those advocating such changes as another type of <i>disunionist</i> . Explain what he means in your own words.	
Does it sound like Johnson believes that Congress has a proper attitude in dealing with Southern states?	
What is Johnson’s opinion of leading Congressional Republicans like Stevens and Sumner?	

The Politics of Reconstruction

<p>Based on the views Johnson presents here, would you say that he sees the President's role in Reconstruction as primary or secondary to that of Congress?</p>	
<p>What does Johnson mean by bringing up the principle of "no taxation without representation"? How does he argue this applies to the situation before him?</p>	



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions for Group D: Read the excerpt from Andrew Johnson’s veto of the First Reconstruction Act (hyperlinked under March 2, 1867 on the timeline) and, together, complete the worksheet that follows. Next, discuss the impact of his words upon the events that led up to his impeachment. Take notes and prepare your presentations.

Major Question: What is President Johnson’s argument supporting his veto of this bill? In what ways do you think the views Johnson expressed here may have contributed to the struggle between him and the Congress?

Question	Answer
Who wrote the document? When? For what audience?	
Johnson argues that in extending military power over the formerly seceded states, Congress only pretends its purpose is to maintain order. What does he say is the real purpose of the order?	
Does it sound like Johnson believes that Congress has a proper attitude in dealing with Southern states?	
What is Johnson’s opinion about the prospects of black suffrage?	

The Politics of Reconstruction

<p>Based on the views Johnson presents here, would you say that he sees the President's role in Reconstruction as primary or secondary to that of Congress?</p>	
<p>Summarize Johnson's argument regarding federal vs. state authority in legislation.</p>	



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions for Group E: Read this excerpt from the First Reconstruction Act passed by Congress over Johnson’s veto (hyperlinked under March 2, 1867 on the timeline) and, together, complete the worksheet that follows. Next, discuss the views of Congress on the subject of reconstructing the south and how those views may differ from those of President Johnson. How might this override of Johnson’s veto have intensified the struggle between him and Congress and prepared the way for impeachment? Take notes and prepare your presentations.

Major Question: What is the position of Congress regarding the method best used to restore order and Union in the South? In what ways do you think this Act may have contributed to the struggle between Congress and President Johnson?

Question	Answer
Who wrote the document? When? For what audience?	
Congress begins this bill with the premise that “no legal State governments or adequate protection for life or property now exists in the rebel States.” What did they mean by “legal” and “adequate”?	
Does it sound like Congress wants to promote a merciful plan for the South?	
What does this bill say about the prospect of black suffrage?	

The Politics of Reconstruction

<p>Based on the views Congress presents here, would you say that they see the President's role in Reconstruction as primary or secondary to that of Congress?</p>	
<p>Summarize the Congressional argument regarding federal vs. state authority in legislation as it relates to reconstruction.</p>	



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions for Group F: Read this excerpt from the Tenure of Office Act (hyperlinked under March 2, 1867 on the timeline) and, together, complete the worksheet that follows. Next, discuss the views of Congress on the subject of reconstructing the south and how those views may differ from those of President Johnson. How might this override of Johnson’s veto have intensified the struggle between him and Congress and prepared the way for impeachment? Take notes and prepare your presentations.

Major Question: What is the position of Congress regarding their authority over Presidential appointments? In what ways do you think this Act may have contributed to the struggle between Congress and President Johnson?

Question	Answer
Who wrote the document? When? For what audience?	
In the Constitution, the Senate is granted the power of “advice and consent” in presidential appointments. This Act of Congress extended that power also to removals. Why do you think Congress felt compelled to pass this legislation?	
The Supreme Court would hold this legislation unconstitutional in <i>Myers v. United States</i> (1926)? What parts of the act do you think may have been problematic?	
What does this act say about the relationship between President Andrew Johnson and the Congress?	

The Politics of Reconstruction

<p>Based on the views Congress presents here, how would you characterize their view of presidential powers?</p>	
<p>Present an argument in your own words defending the right of the President to remove his own officials without the consent of the Senate. Now present a counterargument from the Senate supporting their right to consent to removals. Which argument do you consider to be stronger?</p>	



The Politics of Reconstruction

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity 2: The Road to Impeachment

Directions for Group G: Read the excerpts from Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa’s Opinion on the Trial of Andrew Johnson (hyperlinked under May 16, 1868 on the timeline) and, together, complete the worksheet that follows. Next, discuss the views of Congress on the subject of reconstructing the south and how those views may have differed from those of President Johnson. How might these differences have intensified the struggle between him and Congress and prepared the way for impeachment? Take notes and prepare your presentations.

Major Question: What is the position of Senator Grimes regarding whether or not President Johnson should be convicted and removed from office? What does he say about the constitutionality of the Tenure of Office Act?

Question	Answer
Who wrote the document? When? For what audience?	
Why does Grimes say that the Tenure of Office Act cannot fully apply to Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton?	
The Supreme Court would hold the Tenure of Office Act unconstitutional in <i>Myers v. United States</i> (1926)? Do you think Senator Grimes would agree with that assessment?	

The Politics of Reconstruction

<p>What does Senator Grimes say about the part of the Act that calls for making “testing” its constitutionality a crime?</p>	
<p>Based on the views Grimes presents here, how would you characterize his view of presidential powers?</p>	
<p>Present an argument in your own words defending the right of the President to remove his own officials without the consent of the Senate. Now present a counterargument from the Senate supporting their right to consent to removals. Which argument do you consider to be stronger?</p>	