

# THE US CIVIL WAR

The contested histories of conflict and freedom in the US



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## HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT STUDYING A DISPUTED HISTORY?

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Don't shy away from competing narratives - seek them out, lay them side by side, challenge yourself to study both, and form your own judgement. Parallel Histories offers a new way to study the history of conflict - history which is still contested, controversial and relevant. Our teaching methodology challenges students to understand both sides, examine the source evidence and debate alternative interpretations before coming to their own view.

In this e-book you will find:

Video narrations  and transcripts  of the competing histories

20 pieces of source evidence - to make a source full screen and for the full version of a text, tap



Questions about the source evidence for use in class 

Suggestions for further reading

PDF packs of the sources

Guidelines on setting up debates in class

# DID THE U.S. CIVIL WAR RESULT IN FREEDOM FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS?

On June 19, 1865, two months after the surrender of Confederate forces at Appomattox, the final order of emancipation informed the people of Texas that all enslaved people were free, marking the end of slavery the United States. Though the Union victory at the end of the American Civil War gave legal freedom to over 4 million formerly enslaved African Americans, the true extent of freedom African Americans experienced is a topic of debate.

On one side, people sustain that legal emancipation, rights granted to African Americans and subsequent progress made by African Americans is evidence that freedom was attained. However, others argue that legal decisions, social limitations and the subsequent inequality that African Americans faced is evidence that the Civil War did not result in freedom for African Americans.

Did the Civil War result in freedom for African-Americans? To develop your own view you will need to assess the different outcomes and legal decisions that impacted African-Americans following the Civil War.

## CHAPTERS

### YES, THE US CIVIL WAR RESULTED IN FREEDOMS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS

Yes

### NO, THE US CIVIL WAR DID NOT RESULT IN FREEDOMS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS

No

Before the War, northern Abolitionists called slavery evil

3

Before the War, southerners saw societal positives in slavery

4

The Emancipation Proclamation freed African-Americans from slavery

5

The Emancipation Proclamation didn't result in immediate freedoms

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Reconstruction in the South produced new opportunities and rights

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Reconstruction in the South was ineffective and was resisted

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Reconstruction in the South produced new opportunities and rights (continued)

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Reconstruction in the South was ineffective and was resisted (continued)

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Emancipation and Reconstruction produced real freedoms for African-Americans

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Emancipation and Reconstruction changed little for African-Americans in the South

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End of unit debate: tips on preparing your arguments

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# Before the War, northern Abolitionists called slavery evil

By the time of the outbreak of the Civil War, abolitionists--especially in the northern states of the United States--had made clear that slavery was incompatible with our nation's democratic ideals. While few had advocated for violence to achieve those goals, the war seemed to present a perfect opportunity to wipe out the "peculiar institution".



**Source 1:** Frederick Douglass's Speech on John Brown at Joy Street Baptist Church, Boston, December 3, 1860

We have seen, for the last sixty years ... resistance to slavery in the U.S. As early as the beginning of the U. S. ...there were abolition societies ... These societies appealed to the sense of justice, appealed to humanity, on behalf of the slave... I want the slaveholders to be made uncomfortable. Every slave that escapes helps to add to their discomfort. I rejoice in every uprising at the South... Slaveholders sleep more uneasily than they used to...This element will play its part in the abolition of slavery.

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**Source 2:** "No Compromise with the Evil of Slavery" is a speech given by William Lloyd Garrison in 1854.

I am a believer in that portion of the Declaration of American Independence ... "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Hence, I am an abolitionist. ...The abolitionism which I advocate is as absolute as the law of God... It admits of no compromise. Every slave is a stolen man; every slaveholder is a man stealer...

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## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 1 and 2

How could these sources be used as evidence to suggest that freedoms for African-Americans was a goal prior to the Civil War?

Explain the historical situation regarding ideas about slavery that would have influenced the authors of these sources in the 1850s.

# Before the War, southerners saw societal positives in slavery

Apologists for the system of slavery had, by the outbreak of the civil war, variously described it as either a “necessary evil” and even a “positive social good.” In either case, the institution was seen as critical to the social and economic wellbeing of the South and it was clear from the first rumblings of war that many Southerners would fight to preserve it.



**Source 3:** ‘Slavery; a positive good.’ Speech given by John C. Calhoun in 1837.

Abolition and the Union cannot coexist. ...We of the South will not, cannot, surrender our institutions. To maintain the existing relations between the two races... is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both. It cannot be subverted without drenching the country in blood... Be it good or bad, slavery has grown up with our society and institutions, and is so interwoven with them that to destroy it would be to destroy us as a people.

Click for full extract



**Source 4:** Mud Sill speech given by James Hammond in 1858.

...In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties... a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill... Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement... Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand. A race inferior to her own, but eminently qualified in temper, in vigor, in docility... to answer all her purposes. We use them for our purpose, and call them slaves.

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## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 3 and 4

How could these sources be used as evidence to suggest that freedoms for African-Americans was resisted prior to the Civil War?

Explain three reasons why some people in the south resisted freedom for enslaved persons.



# The Emancipation Proclamation freed African-Americans from slavery



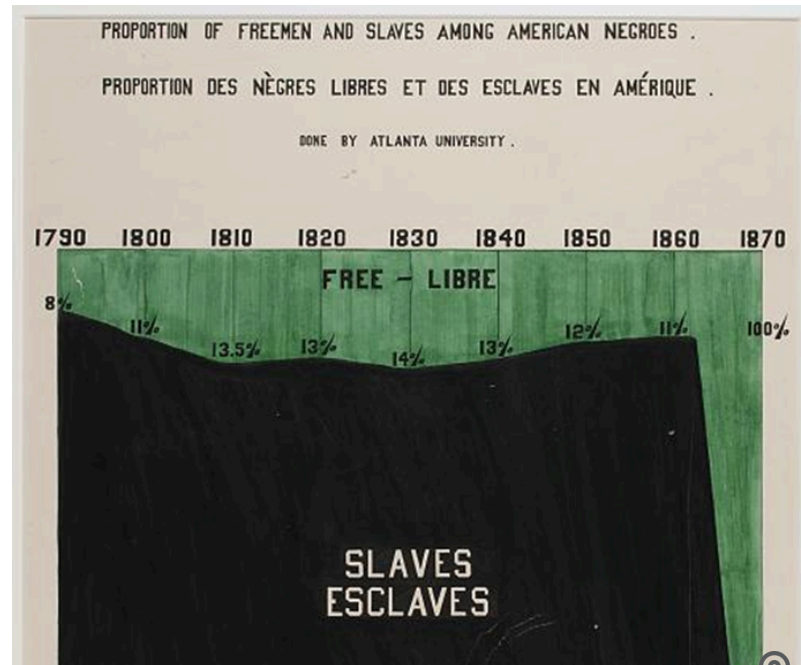
Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was proclaimed as a moral victory for the Union and the achievement of the dreams of millions of enslaved African-Americans. In fact, Lincoln's commitment to this principle paved the way for the end to slavery following the defeat of the Confederacy.

**Source 5:** "Emancipation: The Past and the Future" Harper's Weekly, Thomas Nast, January 24, 1863. Emancipation print contrasting African American life during and after slavery. Central scene contrasts the comfortable life of free African-Americans with the brutal existence of those enslaved.



Click to enlarge

**Source 6:** Proportion of freemen and slaves among American Negroes. - created by W.E.B. Du Bois and team for the 1900 Paris Exposition.



Click to enlarge

## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 5 and 6

Which source could be most persuasively used as evidence for the claim that Emancipation resulted in freedoms for African-Americans?

Consider both the origin of the sources and the information you can safely draw from them when framing your answer.



# The Emancipation Proclamation didn't result in immediate freedoms

Although the southerners were outraged by President Lincoln's decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, the reality was that it actually freed almost no enslaved people at all (except those who freed themselves by escaping to Union positions). Formal freedom would only come at the conclusion of the war, but even that legal freedom was often an illusion.

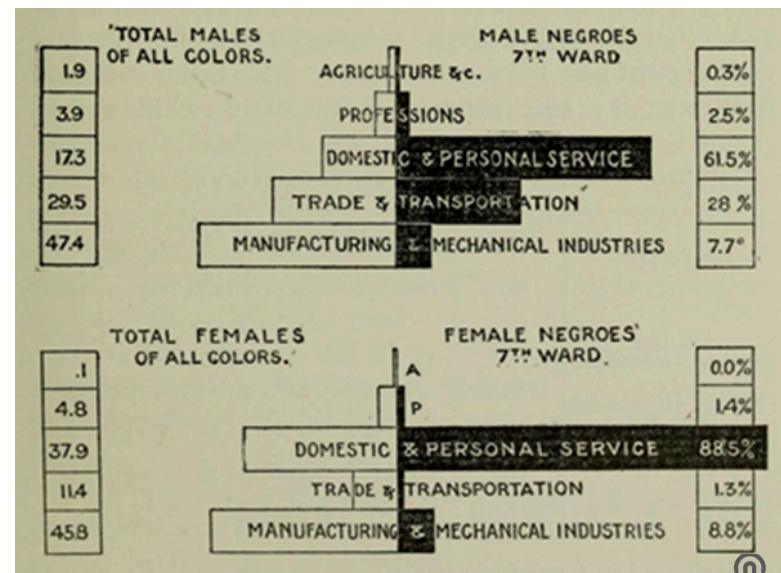


**Source 7:** "Slavery is Dead?" Harper's Weekly, Thomas Nast, January 12, 1867.  
An enslaved man being sold as punishment for crime, and an African-American man being whipped as punishment for crime in 1866



Click to enlarge

**Source 8:** Occupations in Philadelphia's Seventh Ward, W.E.B Du Bois in the Philadelphia Negro, 1899



Click to enlarge

## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 7

What can be inferred from the sources in relation to ongoing challenges for African-Americans after Emancipation?

Which of these sources are most convincing as evidence for the challenges faced by African-Americans? Explain with reference to the source.

### Study Source 8

What evidence can be drawn from the sources regarding the occupations of African-Americans at the end of the 1800s?

How could the source be used to introduce a nuanced view of differences among African-Americans and their occupations at the end of the 1800s?



# Reconstruction in the South was ineffective and was resisted




The implementation of Black Codes in the south following the Civil Wars was one of many instances in which white southerners tried to limit the rights of formerly enslaved persons. Many of the white teachers in the schools created by the Freedmen’s Bureau taught that African Americans were inferior to their counterparts and the guarantees of the 14th Amendment were limited by white southerner’s refusal to enforce them.

**Source 11:** General Reynolds Describes Lawlessness in Texas, 1868

Armed organizations, known as “Ku-Klux Klans,” exist in many parts of Texas to disarm, rob, and in many cases murder Union men and negroes, and also to intimidate everyone who knows anything of the organization but who will not join it.

Civil law is almost a dead letter. In some counties the civil officers are all, or a portion of them, members of the Klan.

...The murder of negroes is so common as to render it impossible to keep an accurate account of them.

**Click for full extract** 

## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 11

Using evidence from the sources, identify a trend or pattern from 1870 onwards that suggests African-Americans continued to face educational challenges.


### Study Source 12

Explain why the types of activities described in the source would have an effect on the rights of African-American after the Civil War.

How do the actions described in the passage foreshadow actions toward African-Americans in the south after the end of Reconstruction?

**Source 12:** Percentage of persons 14 years old and over who were illiterate (unable to read or write in any language), by race and nativity: 1870 to 1979

Year	Total	White			Black and other
		Total	Native	Foreign-born	
1870	20.0	11.5	-	-	79.9
1880	17.0	9.4	8.7	12.0	70.0
1890	13.3	7.7	6.2	13.1	56.8
1900	10.7	6.2	4.6	12.9	44.5
1910	7.7	5.0	3.0	12.7	30.5
1920	6.0	4.0	2.0	13.1	23.0

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# Reconstruction in the South produced new opportunities and rights (continued)

With the 15th Amendment, freedmen achieved the right to vote and were represented in every level of government. They supported legislation protecting their rights as citizens, including the Civil Rights Act of 1875. Although later overturned by the Supreme Court, these early legislative accomplishments set a precedent for protecting African-American freedoms.



**Source 13:** Currier and Ives Print, The first colored senator and representatives - in the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States, 1872



Click to enlarge

**Source 14:** Civil Rights Act of 1875. "An Act to protect all citizens in their civil and legal rights." 18 Stat. 335.

SECTION. 1. 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, theatres, 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.

Click to enlarge

## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 13 and 14

How can these sources be used together as evidence to corroborate the view that the Civil War resulted in freedoms for African-Americans?

How much weight do these sources have as evidence to support the claim that the Civil War resulted in freedoms for African-Americans? Assess their provenance and content when explaining your answer.

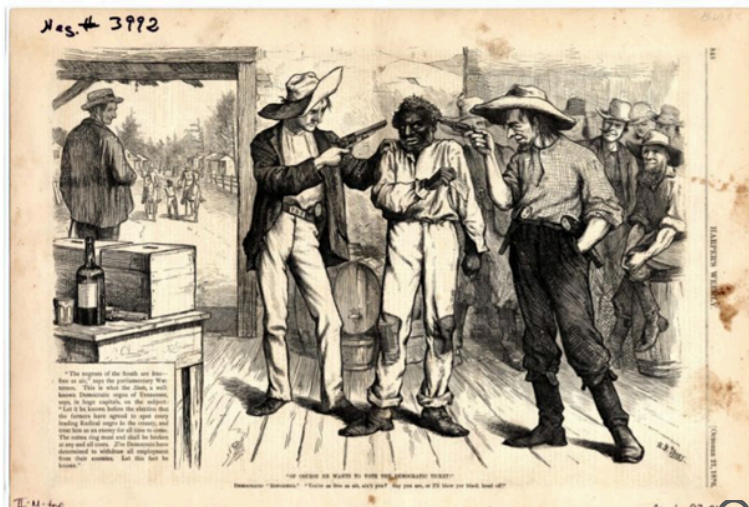



# Reconstruction in the South was ineffective and was resisted (continued)



By 1876, Southern Democratic resistance to Reconstruction was gaining success. Through a combination of violent and economic intimidation of black voters and institutional support from a conservative Supreme Court, the success of Reconstruction was reversed by the mid-1880s and African-American freedom was limited well into the 20th century.

**Source 15:** 'Of course he wants to vote the Democratic ticket!' Political cartoon of white men holding a pistol to a black man's head at a polling station in Tennessee.




Click to enlarge 

**Source 16:** Civil Rights Cases, 109 U.S. 3 (1883). On a broader level, this decision set the stage for over half a century of discrimination and segregation, which would not end until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s

Supreme Court decision  
Civil Rights Cases, 109 U.S. 3 (1883)

Since they apply only to government actions, the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments are not an appropriate basis for Congress to pass laws protecting African-Americans from discrimination by private parties....

The 1st and 2d sections of the Civil Rights Act passed March 1st, 1876, are unconstitutional enactments as applied to the several States, not being authorized either by the Thirteenth or Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution.

Click for full extract 

## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 15 and 16

How can these sources be used together as evidence to corroborate the view that the Civil War did not result in freedoms for African-Americans?

How much weight do these sources have as evidence to support the claim that the Civil War did not result in freedoms for African-Americans? Assess their provenance and content when explaining your answer.

# Emancipation and Reconstruction produced real freedoms for African-Americans

With the 15th Amendment, freedmen achieved the right to vote and were represented in every level of government. They supported legislation protecting their rights as citizens, including the Civil Rights Act of 1875. Although later overturned by the Supreme Court, these early legislative accomplishments set a precedent for protecting African-American freedoms.



**Source 17:** General Order No. 3, issued by Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger, June 19, 1865.

General Order No. 3 states:

“The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.”

Click to enlarge



**Source 18:** Booker T Washington LL. D., “Durham, North Carolina, a City of Negro Enterprises” *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, His...* Mar 30, 1911; 70, 32 *American Periodicals* pg. 642

“I do not believe that one can find another section of the globe where 2 races which are dissimilar in many respects dwell in so large numbers where they get on better in all the affairs of life than they do in our Southern States... In addition to many prosperous doctors, lawyers, preachers,... I found some of the most flourishing drug stores, grocery and dry goods stores I have ever seen anywhere among Negroes.”

Click for full extract



## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 17 and 18

How could they be used as evidence to suggest that Emancipation and Reconstruction following the Civil War resulted in freedoms for African-Americans?

Cross reference your deductions from these sources with those you made from other sources in the book to corroborate the claim that the Civil War resulted in freedoms for African-Americans.

Which part of this narrative is most vulnerable to criticism? Explain your answer.



# Emancipation and Reconstruction changed little for African-Americans in the South

By 1876, Southern Democratic resistance to Reconstruction was gaining success. Through a combination of violent and economic intimidation of black voters and institutional support from a conservative Supreme Court, the success of Reconstruction was reversed by the mid-1880s and African-American freedom was limited well into the 20th century.



**Source 19:** Plessy vs. Ferguson, Judgement, Decided May 18, 1896; Records of the Supreme Court of the United States

[From Justice Brown’s majority opinion]  
 “Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts, or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal, one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane”

Click for full extract



**Source 20:** Acts of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina [South Carolina Black Codes] 1865

XCVI. All persons who have not some fixed and known place of abode, and some lawful and respectable employment...shall be deemed vagrants, and be liable to the punishment hereinafter prescribed.

XCVIII. The defendant, if sentenced to hard labor, after conviction may be hired for such wages as can be obtained for his services, to any owner or lessee of a farm, for the term of labor to which he was sentenced.

Click for full extract



## ACTIVITY

### Study Source 19 and 20

How could they be used as evidence to suggest that Emancipation and Reconstruction following the Civil War failed to give freedoms to African-Americans?

Cross reference your deductions from these sources with those you made from other sources in the book to corroborate the claim that the Civil War failed to give freedoms to African-Americans.

Which part of this narrative is most vulnerable to criticism? Explain your answer.

# End of unit debate: tips on preparing your arguments

Your teacher will give you a statement to discuss, (sometimes that's described as 'a motion to debate') and put you in teams telling you if you are 'for' or 'against' the statement or motion. Then it's up to you to make clear arguments supported by strong evidence in order to make your speech persuasive. Your teacher will have tasked a couple of students to act as 'Chairs' – their role is to manage the debate and give feedback to the speakers. The Chairs should tell you what they are looking for in a good speech.

## **STEP ONE**

Working as a group look through the range of source evidence your teacher has supplied you, and think about the alternative historical interpretations you've studied. Each speaker will need to develop a different reason to support the debate motion using one or more of the sources to support their argument.

## **STEP TWO**

Think about how your opponents might attack your argument. Make sure the source evidence you are going to use is reliable and relevant and therefore credible. And think about how you can attack your opponent's argument.

## **STEP THREE**

Prepare your speech as bullet points so you can make eye contact with your audience as you speak. If you have printed out any of the sources, think about where you can bring them into the argument. Check your speech is the right length – your teacher will have told you how long each speaker has.

Work out the best order for your team to speak, typically the last speaker has the extra job of summarising the whole team's points as well as making their own.

## **STEP FOUR**

Run the debate! It's best if you sit close to and opposite your opponents, and that you sit in the order you'll be speaking. This means you can hear each other more easily. The Chairs will keep everyone to time and give feedback at the end. They will tell each speaker one thing they did well, and one thing to work on. This is more important than deciding a winner.

# Acknowledgements

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Source 4: Public Domain. James Henry Hammond. "Mud Sill Speech". Speech, March 04, 1858. From Teaching American History. <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/mud-sill-speech/>

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