

## THE RECONSTRUCTION AMENDMENTS:

**Directions:** For each amendment complete the following:

- **Step 1:** Read the text of the Amendment
- **Step 2:** Fill in the cause and consequence chart below for each major piece of legislation passed during the first years of Reconstruction (1865-1869). Use your “Politics of Reconstruction” handout and the prompts/descriptions below to help you with each portion of the chart.
- **Step 3:** Considering the continuity and change of the US Constitution and its Amendments. Complete the activities and questions that follow each Amendment below to consider how these amendments caused change and continue to influence our country today.

### PART 1: THE 13<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT – THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

**Step 1** - 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment: *Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*

- What does the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment do? Ends slavery
- Which group is still subject to slavery? Prisoners

#### Step 2 – Cause and Consequence Chart:

##### 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment:

Amd	Cause	Consequence / Cause	Consequence / Cause	Consequence
.	13 <sup>th</sup> Amendment /Freedmen’s Bureau	Andrew Johnson and the South Respond	Republican Civil Rights Act of 1866	President’s Response to CRA 1866
13th				

#### Step 3 – Continuity and Change

- Continuity: How does the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment continue to influence American society in the modern day?
- Change: Citing the portion of the Amendment that states “*except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted*”, some people have argued that mass incarceration of prisoners today (40% of whom are Black, even though Black people make up 10% of the US population) and forcing prisoners convicted of crimes to work (i.e. make furniture, pick up garbage, build roads, fight fires) for wages that are far lower than minimum wage are essentially modern forms of slavery. **Watch [Clip of 13<sup>th</sup>](#) (first 10 minutes) then answer:**
  - What is the overall argument made by 13<sup>th</sup>? What do you think about that argument?

### PART 2: THE 14<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT – CITIZENSHIP FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, EQUAL PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW

**Step 1** - 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment: *All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*

- Explain each of the features by finishing each sentence **using your own words (NOT the language of the amendment)**:
  - US Citizenship is guaranteed to all people who...
  - States can not... without ...
  - The US government, at all levels, must treat people...

**Step 2** – Cause and Consequence Chart

**14<sup>th</sup> Amendment**

Amd .	Cause 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment	Consequence / Cause Rejection	Consequence / Cause Mid-Term Election of 1866	Consequence / Cause Reconstruction Act of 1867	Consequence 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment
14th					

**Step 3** – Continuity and Change:

- Continuity & Change: Read the article “Here’s Why the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment is a Big Deal” by googling the title or selecting the following [LINK](#). Complete the following.
  - CHANGE - Considering the Constitution can be interpreted in different ways, how was the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment used to both justify **and** end segregation, specifically the concept of separate but equal? Cite both applicable court cases.
  - CONTINUITY - What is one other example of how the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment continues to influence the country more recently? (Cite either Roe v. Wade, Bush v. Gore, or Obergefell v. Hodges)

### PART 3: THE 15<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT – PROTECTING THE VOTE

**Step 1** - 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment: *The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.*

- What does the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment accomplish?
- Historical Perspective: If you were a woman in America at this time, why would you likely have been upset by the passage of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, specifically the language it uses? (Note – Women were not allowed to vote at this point in American history).

#### Step 2 – Cause and Consequence Chart

##### 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment

Amd.	Cause The 15 <sup>th</sup> Amendment	Consequence What did it accomplish?	Consequence What problems occurred as a result?
15th			

**Step 3 - Continuity and Change: Read the following excerpt then answer the questions that follow:** *Many of the gains provided by the Fifteenth Amendment proved to be only temporary, however, because many white Americans strongly opposed black political power. Following the end of Reconstruction, many southern states quickly enacted laws that limited the voting power of black citizens in order to restore white supremacy. In some places, African Americans faced additional taxes or the threat of losing their jobs, homes, or even their lives if they tried to vote. By the 1890s, most black communities in the South were effectively **disenfranchised** (stripped of their voting power) by these state and local policies, despite the Fifteenth Amendment. During the 1960s, securing equal voting rights became one of the central issues of the civil rights movement, culminating in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which eliminated restrictions such as literacy tests and poll taxes. Even today, in modern America, there are still barriers in place that disproportionately affect people of color. Take a look at the following video from John Oliver's Last Week Tonight to examine modern barriers to voting - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHFOWlMCdto>.*

- Continuity – How did the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment fail to ensure the rights of African Americans to vote from 1865-1965?
- Change – What eventually passed that would change the effectiveness of the Amendment? Why?
- Change – Why does Oliver argue that Voter IDs restrict people's access to vote (take notes here, there are multiple reasons)?

- What argument is offered by proponents (supporters) of Voter ID laws?
- Why don't you think voter ID laws are illegal (i.e. violate the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment)?