

**Reconstruction Essay**

The American dream is defined as “The dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.”

**Central Question: Did Reconstruction help African-Americans move closer to achieving the American Dream? Why or why not?**

In your response, please consider the political, economic and social changes, both positive and negative, that Reconstruction brought about in the South.

Requirements:

- The paper must be NO LESS than TWO full pages in length, and NO MORE than FOUR pages in length.
- The paper must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font.
- Each body paragraph should incorporate at least one quote & 3 pieces of detailed evidence.
  - Evidence should be drawn from class notes and/or primary source readings (found in the HW or slideshows.)
  - Please be sure to incorporate *both* primary and secondary evidence to support your thesis.
- You should use both your class notes and readings. You SHOULD NOT do any outside research.
- All sources should be cited by handout or page (in a footnote.)

<b>Due Dates</b>	
<i>The thesis &amp; outline will be checked by the end of class on:</i>	<i>The final paper is due on:</i>
Monday, Sept. 24th	Thursday, Sept. 27th

\* I am available for extra-help by appointment before or after school or during the day (blocks 1, 3, 4, and 7). You are always welcome to swing by my office to see if I'm in – if I'm not there please leave me a note so I know you were there.

\* I am more than willing to meet with you outside of class time to discuss your ideas or talk through your outline. Make sure to come with specific questions as to what you would like me to help you with. Do not come in and say ‘please read this and tell me what’s wrong with it.’

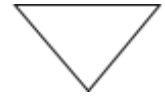
## Pre-Writing Brainstorm

<i>Factors to consider</i>	<i>Positive aspects of life after the Civil War</i>	<i>Negative aspects of life after the Civil War</i>
Economic conditions (jobs, income, etc.)		
Political conditions (laws, rights, etc.)		
Social conditions (treatment, daily living conditions, etc.)		

## Paper Writing

Writing a paper should not be viewed as a one-step activity. Rather, it should be a process that involves multiple steps that allow you to organize your thoughts in a way that helps you to write a clear, persuasive, and eloquent essay.

*The structure of the essay is as follows (the model below is based on a 5-paragraph essay):*



### Paragraph 1 (Introduction)

- The introduction should start broad and get more specific as it progresses.
- The first thing you should do is to introduce the reader to the larger context of the essay.
  - The first 1-2 sentences should contain background information (who, what, when, where)
  - For example, if you are writing a paper on the reality of immigrant's experience in America, your first 1-2 sentences should talk generally about immigration, when it took place, who came, and maybe why people came to America. Do not dive right into the topic of the essay without giving the reader some sense of time and place (context).
- After you introduce the topic, you need to make the connection to your specific topic – transition from background information into what you will be writing about.
- The last sentence of the paragraph should contain a clear, concise thesis statement.
  - What is a thesis statement?
    - A thesis statement should illustrate an argument that you will prove over the course of the paper.
    - A thesis statement should always contain brief mention of what the body of the paper will discuss in greater detail (i.e. it should summarize the topic sentences of the 3+ body paragraphs.)
    - If the question asks you to defend a particular point, the thesis statement will state the point as a fact and back it up with brief mention of 3+ major reasons why it is true. These reasons will then be the basis of the body of your paper.

### Paragraph 2, 3, and 4 (Body Paragraph #1-3)

- Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence to preview to the reader what the paragraph will discuss.
- Each body paragraph should contain 3 examples to support the specific point being addressed in the paragraph.
  - Examples should include quotations, facts, statistics, etc. (with citations)
  - This is where you will usually include quotations from texts and citations from readings and notes that you have.
- The body of your paper should be as specific as possible and should offer as clear and vivid illustrations as possible.
- The last sentence should not only bring the paragraph to a conclusion, but it should also serve as a transition into the next body paragraph (i.e. find a connection or relationship between the two paragraphs.)

### Paragraph 5 (Conclusion)

- The conclusion should summarize the contents of the entire paper *and* should try and offer some additional insights (intelligent comments or observations) about the topic.
- Restate your argument – *do not* cut and paste the introduction verbatim or try to change one or two of the words from the introduction!
- Open the paper up. It is here that you should try to do one of the following:
  - connect your paper to the larger historical picture
  - state its significance to the time period
  - relate it to later events or issues
  - think of other questions to ask (related to the topic)

## Paragraph I (Introduction)

**What is the general topic of this essay?** (Remember, you want to start your intro broad and get more narrow/focused as you go on.)

**What general information does the reader need about this topic?** (What is the topic being discussed? What information is needed to give the reader enough background to understand the topic?)

When did the event being discussed take place?

Where is the action taking place?

Why is the issue/topic important or relevant to the time period?

**What will this essay explain and/or argue?** (What is your specific thesis? Your thesis should contain the topics of your body paragraphs.)

## Paragraph II (First Body Paragraph)

**What is the topic of this paragraph?** (What specific point will this paragraph illustrate with three examples?)

Sum up the topic/purpose of the paragraph in 1 sentence:

**What are the three examples that illustrate the specific topic?** (Explain what each example shows = this is your analysis.) [First summarize each example and then explain/analyze.]

1.)

2.)

3.)

**What statement wraps up this topic?** (What conclusion can be drawn from the examples from the examples in this paragraph?)

**What phrase serves as a transition into the next paragraph?** (How does the topic of this paragraph connect to the topic of the following paragraph?)

### Paragraph III (Second Body Paragraph)

**What is the topic of this paragraph?** (What specific point will this paragraph illustrate with three examples?)

**What are the three examples that illustrate the specific topic?** (Explain what each example shows = this is your analysis.) [First summarize each example and then explain/analyze.]

1.)

2.)

3.)

**What statement wraps up this topic?** (What conclusion can be drawn from the examples from the examples in this paragraph?)

**What phrase serves as a transition into the next paragraph?** (How does the topic of this paragraph connect to the topic of the following paragraph?)

## Paragraph IV (Third Body Paragraph)

**What is the topic of this paragraph?** (What specific point will this paragraph illustrate with three examples?)

**What are the three examples that illustrate the specific topic?** (Explain what each example shows = this is your analysis.) [First summarize each example and then explain/analyze.]

1.)

2.)

3.)

**What statement wraps up this topic?** (What conclusion can be drawn from the examples from the examples in this paragraph?)

## Paragraph V (Conclusion)

What phrase serves as a transition from the body of the paper?

What more can now be said about the ideas expressed in the thesis statement? (Restate, in new terms, the thesis statement. Then add further reflections.)

What thought-provoking statement concludes the essay?

So what? Why is the topic of this essay important? (How can you broaden the scope of your discussion?)

How does the topic of the essay relate to later events/issues?