

Standard 5-1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of Reconstruction and its impact on racial relations in the United States.

5-1.5 Explain the purpose and motivations behind the rise of discriminatory laws and groups and their effect on the rights and opportunities of African Americans in different regions of the United States. (P, G, E, H)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand /Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

In 3rd grade, students summarized the effects of the state and local laws, that are commonly known as Jim Crow laws, on African Americans in particular and on South Carolinians as a whole (3-5.2).

In 8th grade, students will summarize the political, economic, and social conditions in South Carolina following the end of Reconstruction, including the leadership of Wade Hampton and the so-called Bourbons or Redeemers, agricultural depression and struggling industrial development, the impact of the temperance and suffrage movements, the development of the 1895 constitution, and the evolution of race relations and Jim Crow laws (8-5.1).

In United States history, students will summarize the progress made by African Americans during Reconstruction and the subsequent reversals brought by Reconstruction's end, including the creation of the Freedman's Bureau, gains in educational and political opportunity, and the rise of anti-African American factions and legislation (USHC-4.5).

It is essential for students to know:

During the Reconstruction period several discriminatory groups developed in order to intimidate the freedmen. The most infamous of these was the Ku Klux Klan. Although originally the KKK was a social organization of ex-Confederate soldiers, it soon grew into a terrorist group. The goal of the KKK was to use violence, intimidation and voter fraud to keep African American from exercising their rights under the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments so that whites could regain control of state governments. Public lynchings and cross burnings became common methods of intimidating African Americans who did not 'know their place.' Although the federal government made some feeble attempts to control the KKK and other groups, by 1876 these groups had achieved their purpose. The election of 1876 was so riddled with fraud that the electoral votes in three states were called into question. The election was decided by the House of Representatives. Democrats agreed to support the election of the Republican candidate in exchange for the removal of all federal troops from the South. This Compromise of 1877 resulted in the end of Reconstruction and African Americans were abandoned by the federal government. Democrats won control of the southern state governments. Soon southern governments were passing laws to limit the rights of African Americans.

Discriminatory laws known as Jim Crow laws were passed by all southern state governments. Like the slave codes of the antebellum period and the Black Codes of the early Reconstruction period, these laws were designed to keep the African American majority under control. Their aim was to maintain white supremacy by keeping the races socially separated and the African American in a position of social inferiority. Jim Crow laws made separate facilities for African Americans in schools, housing, theaters, on trains and everywhere else mandatory. Segregation reached every part of life in the South. Although these laws violated the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Plessy v Ferguson* [1896] that separate facilities were legal so long as these facilities were equal. This "separate-but-equal" doctrine validated the Jim Crow laws in the South for the next six decades. However, the "separate" part of the phrase was enforced while the "equal" part was ignored.

Southern governments also passed a series of laws designed to limit the political rights of African Americans as guaranteed by the 15th amendment. Laws established a literacy test for voting that technically did not violate the language of the 15th amendment. All voters were supposed to be able to read selections from the Constitution. However, this requirement was enforced for African American voters, but not white voters. A poll tax was imposed that was extremely difficult for poor farmers to pay, especially when it was collected months before the harvest. Poor white farmers were allowed to vote because of a 'grandfather' clause that said if their grandfather could vote then so could they. Of course the grandfathers of African Americans had not been allowed to vote, so neither could they. By the end of the 19th century, few African Americans were able to vote in the South. Although African Americans protested their exclusion from public life, violence, intimidation and lynchings by white terrorists effectively silenced most protests.

Although Northern states did not pass such blatantly discriminatory laws, there was still discrimination practiced in their society. African Americans lived in racially segregated neighborhoods and were often the last hired and the first fired from jobs. Although they were able to vote, they had little political power because of their relatively small numbers until the Great Migration.

It is not essential for students to know:

Students do not need to know details about the origins of the Klan and other groups such as the Knights of the White Camellia, or details about their methods of intimidation. Although students do not need to memorize a definition of terrorism, they should understand that terrorism is a term used to describe violence or other harmful acts committed or threatened against citizens by groups of persons for political or ideological goals. Students do not need to know facts about the election of 1876 including the names of the Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes, who was ultimately granted the presidency, or his opponent, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden.

Students do not need to know about the origin of the term Jim Crow, which comes from the name used by an antebellum minstrel performer. They do not need to know the circumstances of the *Plessy* case. Students do not need to know that segregation by law is referred to as *de jure* segregation and that segregation by practice is referred to as *de facto* segregation.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessments require students to **explain** the purpose and motivations behind the rise of discriminatory groups such as the KKK and their effect on the rights and opportunities of African Americans in the South during the Reconstruction period. Students should also be able to **explain** the role of discriminatory laws such as the Jim Crow laws and voting restrictions that were passed in the South in the latter part of the 19th century. Students should also be able to **compare** segregation by law in the South with segregation by practice in the North.