

Civil War and Reconstruction pre-1861-77

Timeline

- 1850** Clay's Compromise makes California a free state and introduces the Fugitive Slave Act.
- 1851** Harriet Beecher-Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- 1854** Kansas-Nebraska Act allows these two states to decide for themselves if they have slavery.
- 1857** Dred Scott case in Supreme Court establishes slaves as property who could be taken anywhere in the USA.
- 1859** Abolitionist John Brown launches a raid on Harper's Ferry to spark a slave revolt.
- 1860** Abraham Lincoln becomes President of the USA.
- 1860** South Carolina secedes from the Union,
- 1861** Six more states secede from the Union and create the Confederacy.
- 1862** Lincoln passes a Contraband Law which states that if slaves are property Union armies can seize them to work for the army.
- 1863** Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation promising freedom to all slaves in Confederate held territories.
- 1864** Black soldiers granted equal pay with White soldiers, although they could still not serve as officers.
- 1865** 13th Amendment to the Constitution makes slavery illegal.
- 1865** Confederate armies surrender at Appomattox leading to Union victory. Days later President Abraham Lincoln is shot dead.
- 1866** 14th Amendment declares all people born in USA are citizens.
- 1867** Three Reconstruction Acts passed.
- 1870** 15th Amendment declares every US citizen has the right to vote.
- 1872** Freedman's Bureau closed.
- 1873** Supreme Court declares states can set their own race laws.

Key Questions

"The period of Reconstruction from 1863 to 1877 was a time of progress for former slaves in America's southern states." How far do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. [18 marks]

Key Terms and Concepts

- Abolition** The act of granting freedom to all slaves.
- Black Codes** A set of racist laws passed temporarily in southern states after the Civil War.
- Confederacy** The Confederate States of America formed in 1861 from the southern states that seceded from the Union.
- Conscription Act** Passed in July 1863 leading to anti-African American rioting in New York.
- Freedmen's Bureau** A government organisation formed in 1865 to support freed Black slaves build a new life.
- Klu Klux Klan** Violent racist group formed to terrorise Black Americans.
- Reconstruction** The project by Northern politicians to create a new more equal South and protect the rights of freed slaves.
- Republican Party** Political party formed in 1854 as a response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act to support the free-soil movement.
- Secession** States leaving the Union.
- Segregation** The separation of Black and White people in society.
- Sea Islands** 10,000 slaves freed set up their own society and a new town called Mitchelville
- Supreme Court** The highest court in the USA which can force the government to change laws.
- Union** The Union of the States of America which remains as North America during the Civil War.

Important Figures

- Abraham Lincoln** First Republican President of the USA who issues the Emancipation Proclamation
- Andrew Johnson** Vice-President who takes over from Lincoln in 1865 and attempts to end Reconstruction.
- Frederick Douglass** Escaped slave who became an important abolitionist in the North. Made speeches and wrote books.
- Thaddeus Stevens** Republican who led the Reconstruction era.