

Learning the Skills of a Historian

The Reconstruction Era

Introduction

We will learn all sorts of fascinating information about the history of the United States. We will dig into the depths of the hard times suffered in war and depression and we will ride the highs of the good times of the 1920s. We will learn a number of valuable skills that will not only make you a better student of history, but a better reader, thinker, and analyst of your world.

Task

You will start your journey towards mastery of the Skills of a Historian by digging into historical documents and discovering the stories they tell. Although you will study a number of documents and answer lots of questions along the way, you will demonstrate your understanding by crafting 3 evidence based conclusions.

Procedure

We will be working through 3 separate documents sets in order to practice 5 Skills of a Historian:

- A. I can analyze primary artifacts to make sense of the past***
- B. I can use both evidence and analysis to assemble a supported statement***
- C. I can understand the cause of major events and how the effects changed the world***
- D. I can understand history by studying the people of the past and thinking from their perspective***
- E. I can use tier 2 and tier 3 content-area words to effectively read about the past and communicate what I know about it***

Each document set starts with a statement and an essential question. The statement provides context and the question is what drives your thinking as you study each document. As you work your way through, analyze each document and answer the target questions to frame your thinking. When you finish the last source of the set, reflect back to the essential question. Use evidence (the documents) to complete your extended response.

Analyzing Primary Artifacts → *How can we make sense of the past using the artifacts that were left behind?*

A. I can analyze primary artifacts to make sense of the past.

A.1 I can interpret the *What, Why, Where and Who* of a political cartoon.

A.2 I can interpret the *What, Why, Where and Who* of primary written sources (Speech, journal entry, article etc.)

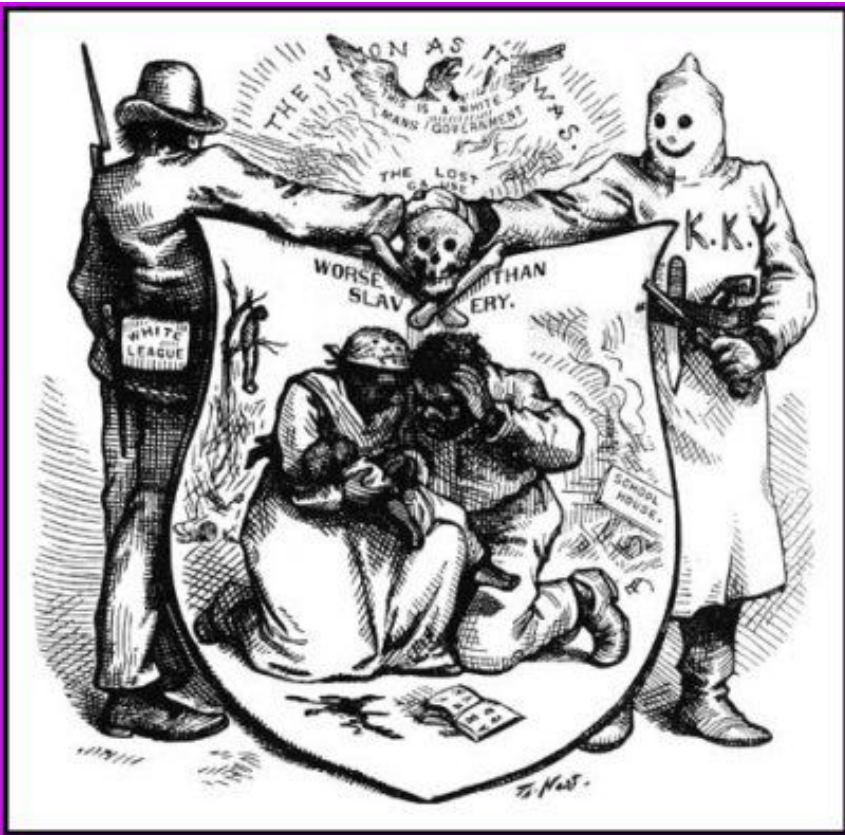
1. DBQ Statement and Question: The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves and the Reconstruction Amendments provided citizenship and suffrage. *What was the reality of the freedom that many African Americans experienced in the South during the Reconstruction period?*

Document A:

Thomas Nast. "The Union as it was / The Lost Cause, worse than slavery."

Harper's Weekly, v. 18, no. 930 (24 Oct 1874), p. 878.

The Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-128619.



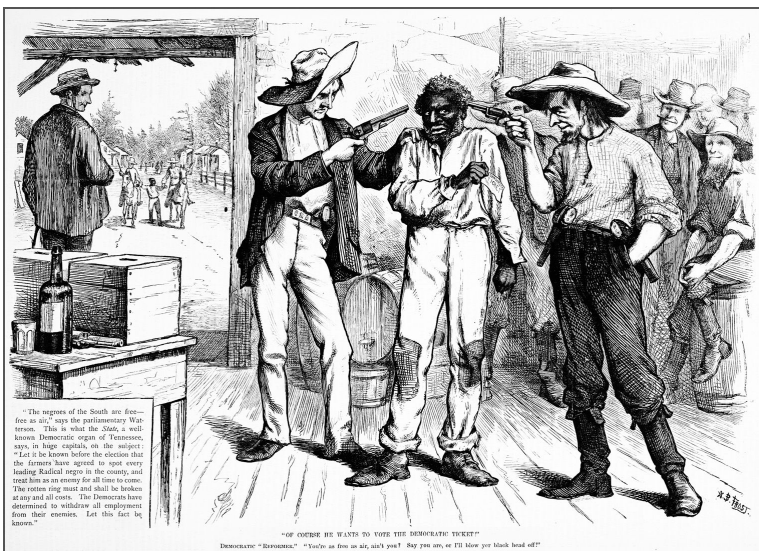
1. Who do the two people on either side of the image represent?
2. Why did the author title the cartoon "The Union as it Was"?
3. What is happening in the background of the shield?

Document B: "Visit of the Ku-Klux," Harper's Weekly, 1872.



1. Who is at the door?
2. What do you think is motivating the people at the door?
3. What is the family doing?

Document C: "Of course he wants to vote the Democratic ticket." Harper's Weekly, Oct. 21, 1876



1. What is the African American trying to do?
2. What do you think the white men are telling him to do?
3. What does this cartoon suggest about the reality of African Americans earning the right to vote?

Document D:

J. L. Edmonds, an African American school teacher, gave this account of the murder and intimidation before the 1875 election in Clay County, Mississippi

“Where we appointed a meeting [the Democrats] would go there and speak as they pleased. They would take a cannon and load it up with chains and leave it with the mouth pointing toward the crowd of colored people. When they fired they had nothing in it more than powder, but when they were going to speak they would have it turned around and chains hanging around it.

They had a parade at West Point. I was standing on the corner talking and some of the colored men came up, and a colored man says, “I do not care how many are riding around, I am a Republican and expect to vote the ticket.” Just then a man walked up with a pistol and shot him. Pretty soon another colored man made some expression and he was shot at.

They had flags—red, white, and crimson flags. The whole street was covered. You could not hear your ears hardly for the flags waving and flapping over your head. They had one United States [flag] at the courthouse but most of the flags were just the old Confederate flags.

They said they were going to beat at this election. They said that at the meetings, on the stumps and at schoolhouses around the county. They said they would carry the county or kill every nigger. They would carry it if they had to wade in blood.”

1. Why did the Democrats point a cannon at the colored people and fire blank shots at the crowd?
2. What is the connection between violence against free blacks and elections?
3. What risks did African Americans take in exercising their right to vote?

Document E: Abram Colby was a former slave who was elected to the Georgia State legislature during Reconstruction. Abram Colby said the following in his testimony to a joint House and Senate Committee in 1872.

Colby: On the 29th of October 1869, [the Klansmen] broke my door open, took me out of bed, took me to the woods and whipped me three hours or more and left me for dead. They said to me, "Do you think you will ever vote another damned Radical ticket?" I said, "If there was an election tomorrow, I would vote the Radical ticket." They set in and whipped me a thousand licks more, with sticks and straps that had buckles on the ends of them.

Question: What is the character of those men who were engaged in whipping you?

Colby: Some are first-class men in our town. One is a lawyer, one a doctor, and some are farmers... They said I had voted for Grant and had carried the Negroes against them. About two days before they whipped me they offered me \$5,000 to go with them and said they would pay me \$2,500 in cash if I would let another man go to the legislature in my place. I told them that I would not do it if they would give me all the county was worth... No man can make a free speech in my county. I do not believe it can be done anywhere in Georgia.

1. What do you think was the political platform of the "radical ticket"?
2. What is the significance of the character of the men who were abusing Colby?
3. Why did the white men fear Colby's in the state legislature?

Document F: After the region's slaves were freed, Southern communities passed laws called "black codes" to control black citizens. The first states to pass black codes were Mississippi and South Carolina; other Southern states soon followed. Exact provisions of these laws varied from state to state, but their effect was similar. The following selections of black codes are from Louisiana in 1865.

Sec. 1. . . . Be it ordained by the police jury of the parish of St. Landry, That no negro shall be allowed to pass within the limits of said parish without special permit in writing from his employer. Whoever shall violate this provision shall pay a fine of two dollars and fifty cents, or in default thereof shall be forced to work four days on the public road, or suffer corporeal punishment as provided hereinafter.

Sec. 4. . . . Every negro is required to be in the regular service of some white person, or former owner, who shall be held responsible for the conduct of said negro. But said employer or former owner may permit said negro to hire his own time by special permission in writing, which permission shall not extend over seven days at any one time. . . .

Sec. 5. . . . No public meetings or congregations of negroes shall be allowed within said parish after sunset; but such public meetings and congregations may be held between the hours of sunrise and sunset, by the special permission in writing of the captain of patrol, within whose beat such meetings shall take place. . . .

Sec. 6. . . . No negro shall be permitted to preach, exhort, or otherwise declaim to congregations of colored people, without a special permission in writing from the president of the police jury. . . .

Sec. 8. . . . No negro shall sell, barter, or exchange any articles of merchandise or traffic within said parish without the special written permission of his employer, specifying the article of sale, barter or traffic. . . .

Sec. 9. . . . Any negro found drunk, within the said parish shall pay a fine of five dollars, or in default thereof work five days on the public road, or suffer corporeal punishment as hereinafter provided.

1. Why do you think African Americans were prohibited from holding public meetings and giving speeches to each other?
2. What is the significance of the punishment for violating Sec. 1 & Sec. 9?
3. What was the true purpose of passing black codes? (HINT: what did southern whites want?)

Understanding Cause & Effect → How can we understand why major events happened and how they changed the world?

B. I can understand the cause of major events and how the effects changed the world.

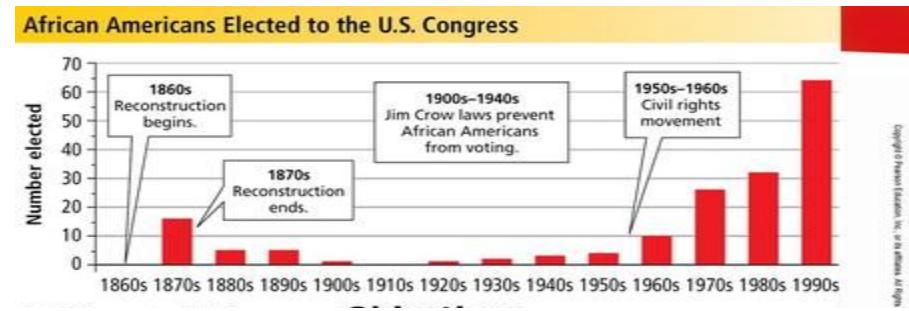
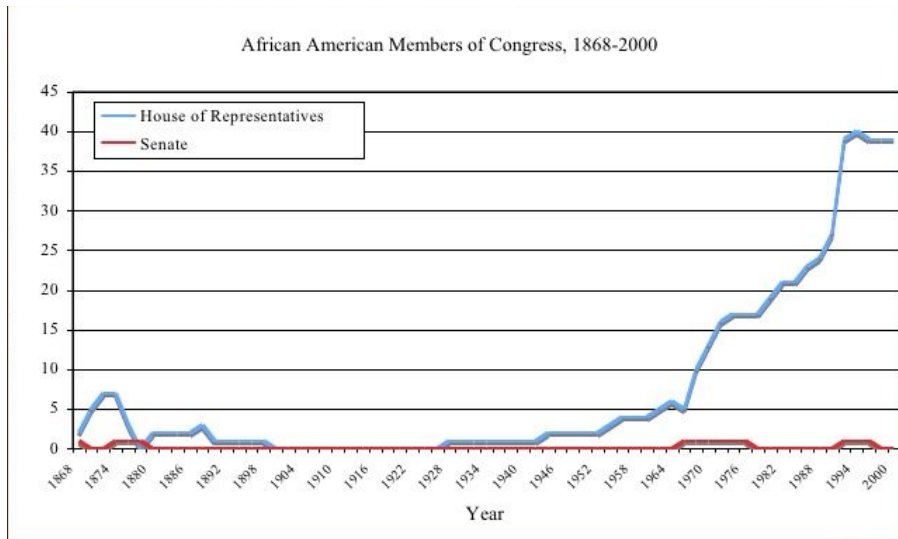
C.1 I can interpret the meaning and message of graphs, maps & figures in order to understand cause and effect relationships.

C.2 I can interpret the meaning and message of textual sources in order to understand cause and effect relationships (Legislation, speeches, articles, videos).

DQB Question: A major goal of Reconstruction was to incorporate newly freed African Americans into society, especially in the South. What were the experiences of newly freed African Americans in the south and what major demographic changes did those experiences lead to?

Document A:

Document B:



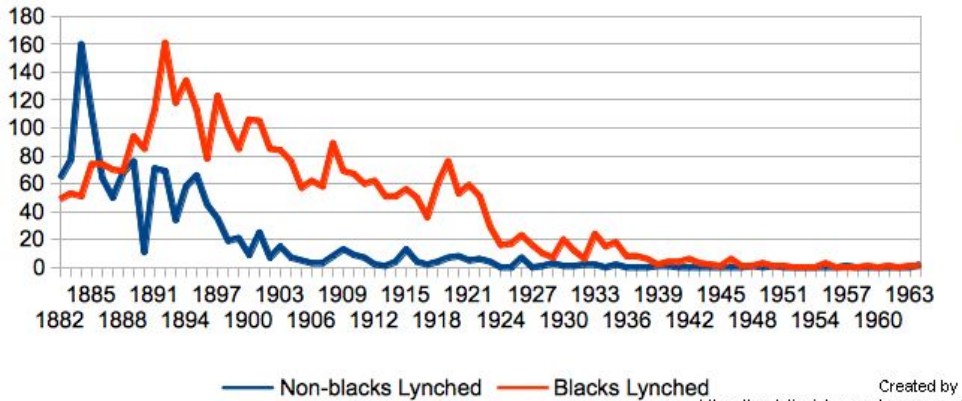
1. How did the demographics of the US Congress change in the 1870s? What do you think drove that change?

2. What happened to the demographics of the US Congress in the last 20 years of the 19th century? What do you think drove that change?

Document C:

Lynchings per Year, 1882-1963

Data from the Tuskegee Institute



Created by <https://evolutionistx.wordpress.com/>

1. What is the trend of the graph from 1880-1891?

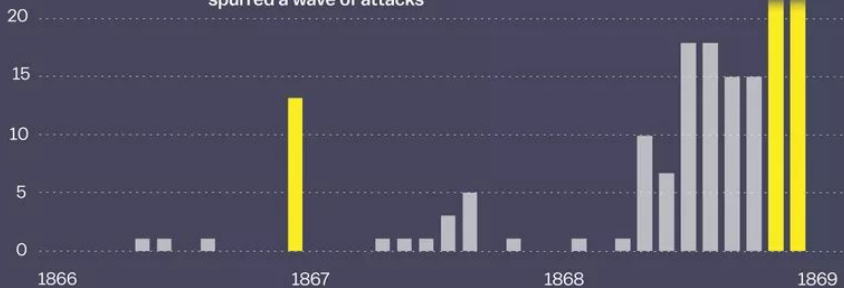
2. Why do you think so many free African Americans were lynched after the Civil War?

Document D:

Monthly attacks on South Carolina freedmen, 1866-68

October and November 1868 saw "innumerable" attacks designed to intimidate black citizens out of voting, and kill those who did

The 1866 elections spurred a wave of attacks



Source: Freedmen's Bureau Online

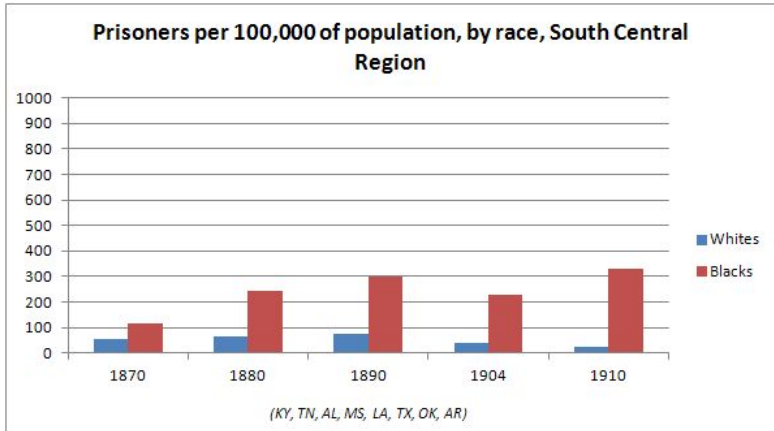
Vex

1. What events do the highlighted bars represent?

2. According to the graph, what was the root purpose of attacking freedmen in South Carolina?

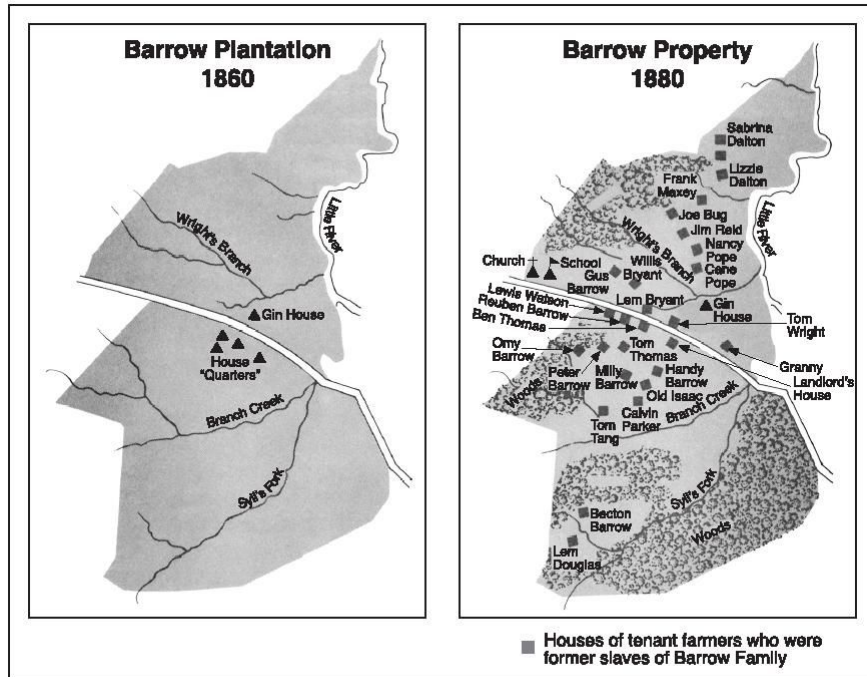
3. Why do you think monthly attacks jumped up in prevalence during the times specified by highlighted bars?

Document E:



1. Why do you think the creator of this graph used 1870 as the start?
2. What states are included in this graph? What is the significance of including those states?
3. What is the trend of the graph moving from 1870-1910?

Document F:

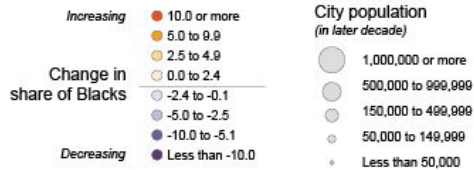
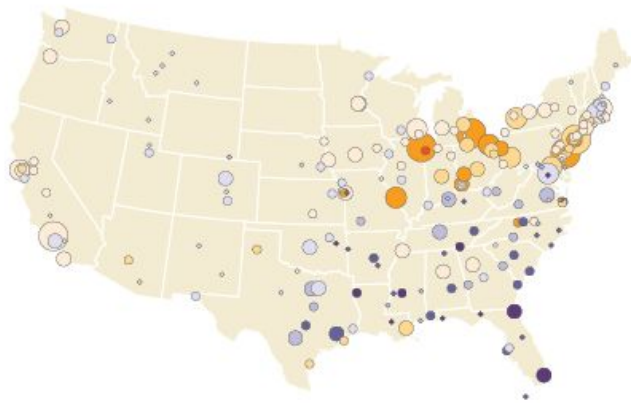


1. What was the legal/political status of African Americans in 1860? what was their status in 1880?
2. What is a tenant farmer?
3. What does this graph tell us about the reality of freedom for many African Americans in the south?
4. Using both Document E & F, where did many free African Americans end up in the south?

Sources: *Scribner's Monthly*, "A Georgia Plantation," April 1881 and Graebner and Richards, *The American Record*, McGraw Hill, 2001 (adapted)

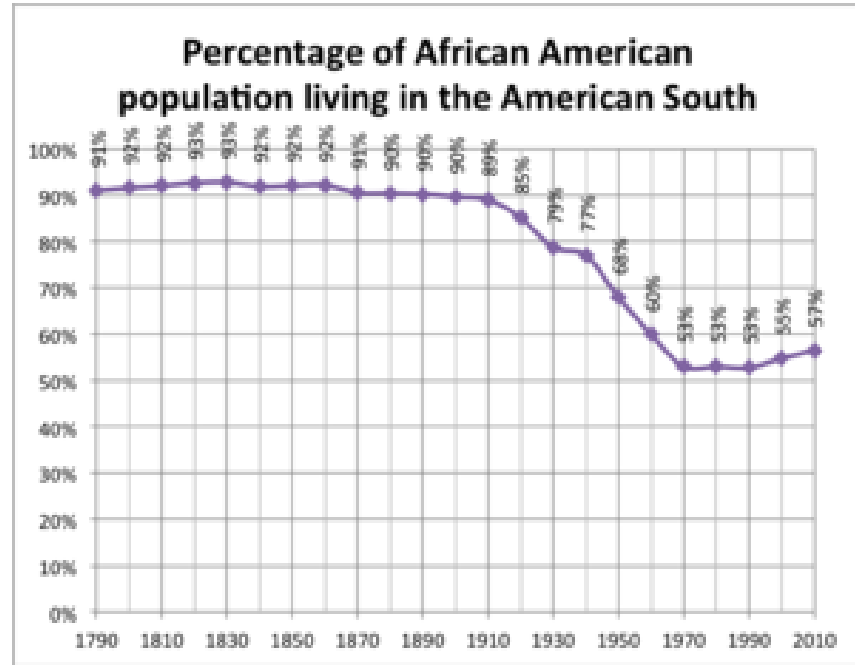
Document G:

The First Great Migration:
1910-1940



Document

H:



1. What happened to the % of African Americans living in the South 1870-1970?
2. Using the Document A, where did most of the free blacks go?
3. Why did many free blacks embark on the Great Migration? What were they looking for?

Visualizing the Past → How can we better understand the people of history by recreating the past and living in their shoes?

D. I can understand history by studying the people of the past and thinking from their perspective.

D.1 I can discuss issues and share people's experiences through historical perspective.

D.2 I can empathize with people of the past regardless of personal views and biases.

DBQ Question: White and black Americans had different ideas of what a population of educated, voting, and government-assisted freed blacks looks like in society. *How did White Americans view a free black population in contrast to how African Americans viewed a free black population?*

Document A: "Holy Horror of Mrs. McCaffrey," *Harper's Weekly*, February 24, 1866.



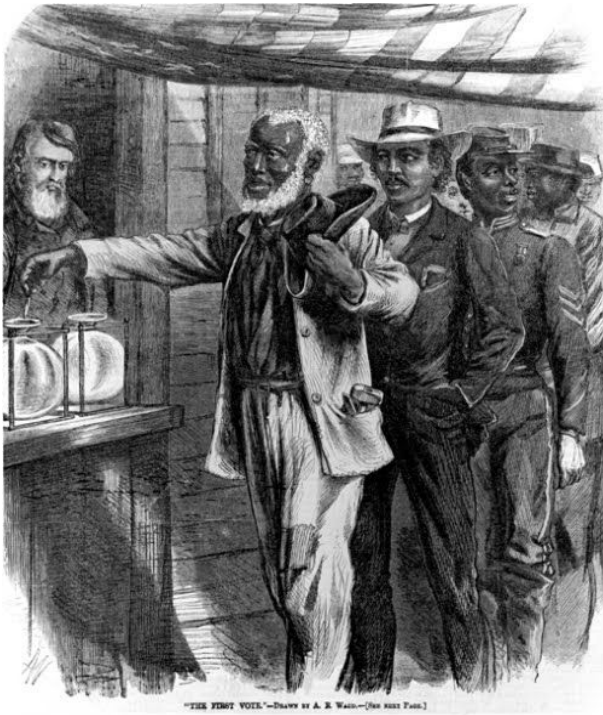
1. Who looks more civilized and refined?
2. Explain this cartoon from the perspectives of ...
 - a. Anti-suffrage white southerner
 - b. Pro-suffrage free black

Document B: "We Accept the Situation," *Harper's Weekly*, April 13, 1867.



1. What does the body language of the man on the right say about how he "accepts the situation"?
2. Based on the body language of the man on the left, how does the man on the right perceive African Americans with the right to vote?

Document C: "The First Vote," Harper's Weekly, November 16, 1867



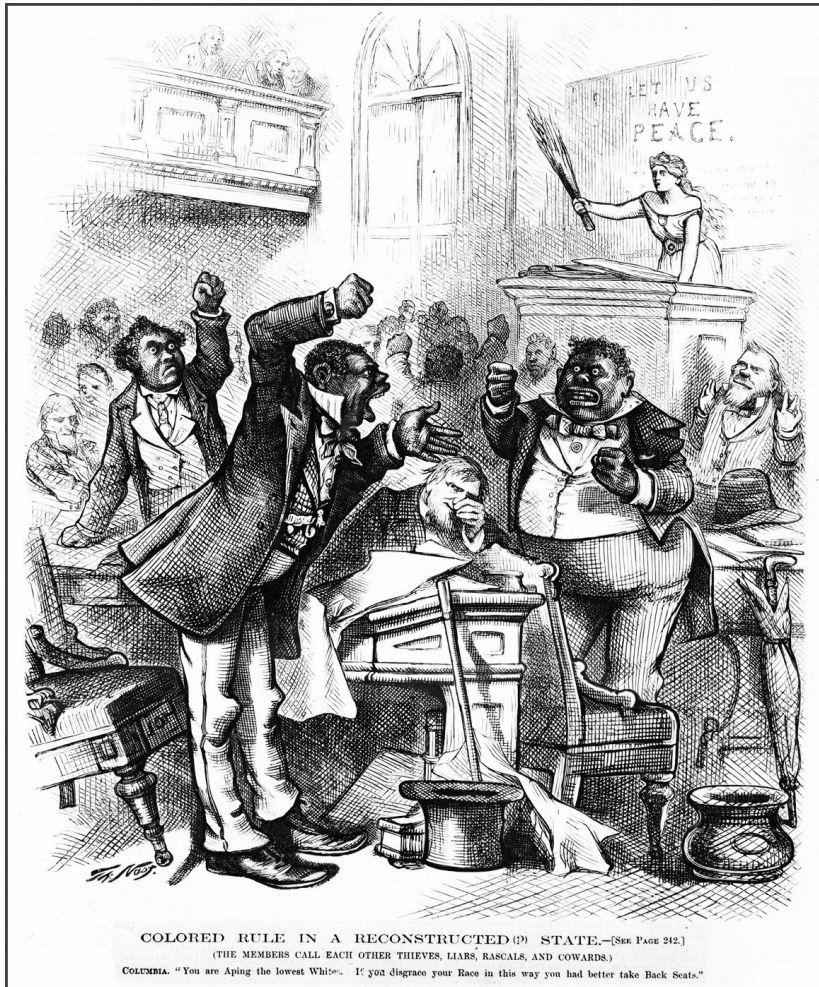
Document D: "Freedman's School," Harper's Weekly, June 23, 1866



Use both Document C & D for the following questions:

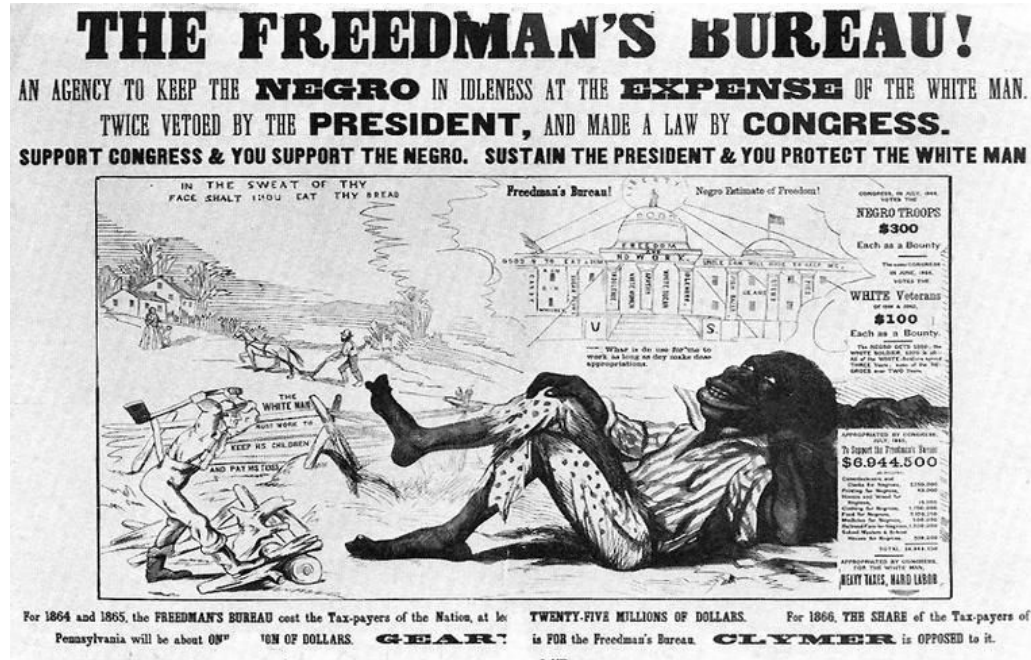
1. What descriptive words would you use to describe the appearance and behavior African Americans in these two newspaper images?
2. What is the significance of the ages of the African Americans exercising their right to vote and attending the Freedman's School?
3. What kinds of activities are African Americans doing in the newspaper images?

Document E: "Colored Rule in a Reconstructed State," *Harper's Weekly*, March 14, 1874.



1. How would you describe the body language of the whites in this cartoon?
2. What has disturbed Lady Liberty, and what caused the disturbance?
3. What descriptive words would you use to describe the African Americans?

Document F: "Freedmen's Bureau!" woodblock print, 1866



1. What descriptive words would you use to describe the African American in this newspaper image?
2. Does the author favor or oppose the Freedmen's Bureau? What are the signs that give it away?
3. According to the author of this cartoon, what does the future for southern whites look like under the power of the Freedmen's Bureau?