Peace After War

Lincoln's vision and the struggle over Reconstruction

8.C.13.1.A "Evaluate Lincoln's plans for reconciliation, as expressed in his Second Inaugural Address, and the impact of his assassination on Reconstruction."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Lincoln's goals for peace, circle actions after his death that could work against those goals, and draw a line connecting one goal to one challenge.

What Would a Just Peace Require?

1 On March 4, 1865, as the Civil War neared its end, Abraham Lincoln spoke from the Capitol steps. In his Second Inaugural Address, he said slavery had been a cause of the war and urged Americans to face its terrible cost. He called for "malice toward none" and "charity for all," asking the country to "bind up the nation's wounds." He also urged care for soldiers and their families and a just, lasting peace. These were goals for reconciliation, not detailed rules for rebuilding Southern governments.

2 Just weeks later, on April 14, Lincoln was shot; he died the next morning. Vice President Andrew Johnson became president and offered pardons to many former Confederates. His plan let Southern states form new governments quickly, but it did not require those states to protect the voting rights of formerly enslaved people. Many former Confederate leaders returned to power. Southern lawmakers passed Black Codes that restricted Black people's freedom and work. Rapid reunion might have helped heal a divided nation, but these policies put Lincoln's hope for a just peace at risk.

3 Members of Congress argued that reunion without equal rights was not a just peace. They pushed back against Johnson's policies, passed a civil rights law in 1866 over his veto, and proposed the Fourteenth Amendment, which later guaranteed citizenship and equal protection under the law. Reconstruction became a struggle over who would shape the reunited nation and protect freedom. Lincoln's assassination did not cause every later conflict, and no one knows exactly what he would have done. It removed the president who had publicly tied reunion to mercy and justice.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What was one strength and one limit of Lincoln's plan for reconciliation in his address?

2. How could Johnson's plan both support and threaten Lincoln's goals?

3. How did Congress's response move Reconstruction closer to Lincoln's vision? Use one action from the passage.

4. Why did Lincoln's assassination matter to Reconstruction, even though we cannot know what he would have done next?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise Congress in 1866. In four sentences, propose one specific step not named in the passage, explain how it fits Lincoln's vision, and use two details from the passage to explain why it matters after his death.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · 8.C.13.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Lincoln's goals for peace, circle actions after his death that could work against those goals, and draw a line connecting one goal to one challenge. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What was one strength and one limit of Lincoln's plan for reconciliation in his address?	**He called for a just peace without revenge, but he gave no detailed rules for rebuilding Southern governments.**
2	How could Johnson's plan both support and threaten Lincoln's goals?	**Quickly restoring Southern governments could help reunite the country, but failing to require protection of voting rights threatened a just peace.**
3	How did Congress's response move Reconstruction closer to Lincoln's vision? Use one action from the passage.	**Congress passed a civil rights law over Johnson's veto, seeking to protect rights as part of a just peace.**
4	Why did Lincoln's assassination matter to Reconstruction, even though we cannot know what he would have done next?	**His death put Johnson in charge. Johnson's policies allowed a quick reunion without requiring protections for formerly enslaved people, changing how Reconstruction began.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress should fund local offices where Black workers can report unfair labor rules. This would help build the just, lasting peace Lincoln called for, not merely reunite states. Southern Black Codes restricted Black people's work, so workers need a way to challenge those rules. Johnson's quick return of Southern governments makes independent reporting especially important.

Accept other supported judgments that distinguish reunion from a just peace. Do not require students to claim that Lincoln had a detailed Reconstruction plan or that his survival would have prevented later conflicts.