

Different Reconstruction Plans

The Important Questions

Americans had to answer the following questions:

1. **What conditions** should be placed upon the southern states before permitting them to return to the Union and assume their former rights.
2. **Which branch of the federal government** – executive or legislative – should determine the conditions for the return of the southern states?
3. What **political, economic or social rights** should be granted to blacks and how should these rights be enforced?

Lincoln Hopes to Heal Wounds

Lincoln believed the Confederate States had never legally seceded. An important purpose of the war was to affirm that secession was not constitutionally possible.

Lincoln believed **it was individuals who had rebelled**. And the Constitution gave the President the **power to pardon** individuals.

Lincoln Hopes to Heal Wounds

Lincoln eager to restore Union as quickly as possible. He wanted a Reconstruction that was **lenient and forgiving.**

December 1863 – proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction:

Lincoln's Plan

A. granted **pardon** to all Confederates who would **swear allegiance** to the Union and promise to obey its laws.

Pardon did not include high officials of the Confederacy.

B. A confederate state could form a state government **as soon as ten percent took an oath to uphold the US Constitution**. That state could then send its representatives and senators to Congress.

Congressional Reaction

Congress dissatisfied.

- Many, especially the Republican radicals, wanted the **political power of the slave-owning class destroyed.**
- They also wanted Southern black people to be given **full citizenship** – meaning all civil rights, including the right to vote.

Congressional Plan

In July 1864, Radicals in Congress adopted their own plan – the **Wade-Davis Bill**.

- **Congress, not the President** is responsible for Reconstruction. Southern states were conquered territories.
- For a former Confederate state government to be acceptable, **a majority – not just 10%** - would have to take an oath to support the Constitution.

Lincoln simply ignored the bill and then killed it with a pocket veto.

Congressional Argument:

The Radicals in Congress believed the Confederate states actually **had seceded**.

They were **now territories seeking admission** to the Union. **Congress**, not the president, controlled territorial matters.

Long and intense dispute between President and Congress.

13th Amendment

Lincoln was **re-elected** in 1864 with **55%** of the popular vote.

Lincoln viewed his reelection as a mandate to end slavery permanently by **amending the Constitution.**

On January 31, 1865, the **Thirteenth Amendment**, banning slavery in the United States, passed in the House of Representatives and was sent to the states for ratification.

Johnson Retains Lincoln's Views on Reconstruction

Andrew Johnson is thrust into the Presidency in 1865 by Lincoln's assassination.

He was a pro-Union Tennessee Democrat.

continues Lincoln's conciliatory reconstruction plan;

- **offers pardons** to most Southerners who pledged allegiance to the Union and who agreed to the abolition of slavery;
- accepted the government of every southern state that **disowned its act of secession** and **ratified the Thirteenth Amendment**.

Southerners Re-established

By early 1866, white southerners had **reestablished all their state governments** and had elected Senators and Representatives to Congress.