

Writing the Essay.

1. The introduction may best be depicted as an inverted pyramid. The introduction starts out with a general description in 5-8 sentences of the broader topic – Reconstruction, its historical context and central issues. The introduction narrows down to a clearly stated thesis that takes the following form:

Reconstruction may be considered a success (because of) (due to) (with respect to)  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

or

Reconstruction was a failure (because...)(due to...)(with respect to...)  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The body paragraphs are organized around this clearly stated thesis. Use a topic sentence for each.

3. The conclusion should re-state and answer the thesis but also **raise a thoughtful question** and/or **look ahead**.

A thoughtful question might be: It is interesting to think how Reconstruction and the struggle for equality might have been affected by redistributing land from the former slave owners to the freedmen.

Looking ahead might take the form of: The United States would continue to struggle mightily with the problem of race for another hundred years.