Standard 8.83 Lesson

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8.83 Analyze the choice of Andrew Johnson as Vice-President, his succession to the Presidency, his plan for Reconstruction and his conflict with the Radical Republicans. (H,P,TN) Reconstruction

In which John Green teaches you about Reconstruction. After the divisive, destructive Civil War, Abraham Lincoln had a plan to reconcile the country and make it whole again. Then he got shot, Andrew Johnson took over, and the disagreements between Johnson and Congress ensured that Reconstruction would fail. The election of 1876 made the whole thing even more of a mess, and the country called it off, leaving the nation still very divided. John will talk about the gains made by African-Americans in the years after the Civil War, and how they lost those gains almost immediately when Reconstruction stopped. You’ll learn about the Freedman’s Bureau, the 14th and 15th amendments, and the disastrous election of 1876. John will explore the goals of Reconstruction, the successes and ultimate failure.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=newsS7pMApI

White House - President Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction
Andrew Johnson, the 17th President of the United States, was pro-slavery throughout his career in the Senate and as the Military Governor of Tennessee.

**President #17 - Andrew Johnson**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgT9qopK-VU

The History Channel Biography of Andrew Johnson

http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/andrew-johnson

In 1864, Republican Abraham Lincoln chose Andrew Johnson, a Democratic senator from Tennessee, as his Vice Presidential candidate. Lincoln was looking for Southern support. He hoped that by selecting Johnson he would appeal to Southerners who never wanted to leave the Union.

Johnson, like Lincoln, had grown up in poverty. He did not learn to write until he was 20 years old. He came to political power as a backer of the small farmer. In speeches, he railed against "SLAVEOCRACY" and a bloated
“Southern aristocracy” that had little use for the white working man.

The views of the Vice President rarely matter too much, unless something happens to the President. Following Lincoln’s assassination, Johnson’s views now mattered a great deal. Would he follow Lincoln’s moderate approach to reconciliation? Would he support limited black suffrage as Lincoln did? Would he follow the Radical Republicans and be harsh and punitive toward the South?

Johnson believed the Southern states should decide the course that was best for them. He also felt that African-Americans were unable to manage their own lives. He certainly did not think that African-Americans deserved to vote. At one point in 1866 he told a group of blacks visiting the White House that they should emigrate to another country.

He also gave amnesty and pardon. He returned all property, except, of course, their slaves, to former Confederates who pledged loyalty to the Union and agreed to support the 13th Amendment. Confederate officials and owners of large taxable estates were required to apply individually for a Presidential pardon. Many former Confederate leaders were soon returned to power. And some even sought to regain their Congressional seniority.

Johnson’s vision of Reconstruction had proved remarkably lenient. Very few Confederate leaders were persecuted. By 1866, 7,000 Presidential pardons had been granted. Brutal beatings of African-Americans were frequent. Still-powerful whites sought to subjugate freed slaves via harsh laws that came to be known as the BLACK CODES. Some states required written evidence of employment for the coming year or else the freed slaves would be required to work on plantations.

In South Carolina, African-Americans had to pay a special tax if they were not farmers or servants. They were not
even allowed to hunt or fish in some areas. Blacks were unable to own guns — and even had their dogs taxed. African-Americans were barred from orphanages, parks, schools and other public facilities. The FREEDMEN’S BUREAU, a federal agency created to help the transition from slavery to emancipation, was thwarted in its attempts to provide for the welfare of the newly emancipated. All of these rules resulted in the majority of freed slaves remaining dependent on the plantation for work.

Andrew Johnson’s policies were initially supported by most Northerners, even Republicans. But, there was no consensus as to what rights African-Americans received along with Emancipation. Yet a group of Radical Republicans wanted the rights promised in the Declaration of Independence extended to include all free men, including those who were formerly slaves. A political power struggle was in the offing.

**The Impeachment of President Andrew Johnson**

http://www.andrewjohnson.com/11biographieskeyindividuals/andrewjohnson.htm
The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson, who became the 17th President of the United States after Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, was one of the most dramatic events in the political life of the United States during Reconstruction. The first impeachment of a sitting United States president, it was the culmination of a lengthy political battle between the Southern Democrat Johnson and the "Radical Republican" movement that dominated Congress and sought control of the South through Reconstruction policies.

Johnson was impeached on February 24, 1868, in the U.S. House of Representatives on eleven articles of impeachment detailing his "high crimes and misdemeanors", in accordance with Article Two of the United States Constitution. The House's primary charge against Johnson was with violation of the Tenure of Office Act, passed by Congress the previous year. Specifically, he had removed Edwin M. Stanton, the Secretary of War (whom the Tenure of Office Act was largely designed to protect), from office and replaced him with General Ulysses S. Grant.

The House agreed to the articles of impeachment on March 2, 1868. The trial began three days later in the Senate, with Chief Justice of the United States Salmon P. Chase presiding. The trial concluded on May 16 with Johnson’s acquittal. The final tally of votes for conviction was one fewer than the two-thirds required.

The impeachment and subsequent trial gained a historical reputation as an act of political expedience, rather than necessity, based on Johnson’s defiance of an unconstitutional piece of legislation and with little regard for the will of the public (which, despite the unpopularity of Johnson, opposed the impeachment). Until the impeachment of Bill Clinton 131 years later (which also ended in an acquittal), it was the only impeachment trial of a President in the history of the United States.