

## Reconstruction Essay Outline

*Directions: Fill out this template for your Reconstruction Outline OR create your own outline/pre-write. Make sure whatever format you choose has the key requirements. Remember, an outline is generally completed in jot-dots.*

### **Intro:**

- Background on Reconstruction
  - Reconstruction was after the Civil War
  - One major goal of the Reconstruction was to give slaves freedom
  
- Your Definition of Freedom
  - Citizens have all political, economic, and social freedoms
  - All citizens can participate in their government.
  - All citizens have the right to own property.
  - All citizens have the freedom of assembly.
  - BUT people only have these freedoms as long as he/she
    1. Doesn't interfere with the law (except if the law is unconstitutional)
    2. Is on US land
  
- Thesis:
  - African Americans were not free as the result of Civil War and Reconstruction.

\*Body Paragraph 1 or 3 are great places to include a counter-argument.

### **Body Paragraph 1: Political Freedom**

- Topic Sentence:
  - African Americans didn't have political freedom.
- Evidence 1:
  - The Ku Klux Klan was a clan whose members hated blacks. They discriminated blacks and aimed to deprive blacks from their freedoms.
  - The Ku Klux Klan forced blacks to vote for the Democrats.
  - "One man said that I would get a bullet through me if I voted for the Republicans; or I would be driven home without anything to eat and would be attacked. I voted for the Democrats only to save the lives of myself and my family." (KKK Testimony)
  
- Analysis: How does your evidence connect to your definition of freedom?

- To have freedom people need to have political freedom.
- Blacks didn't have political freedom, because they couldn't vote for the party they wanted to.
- That means, African Americans didn't have freedom, because they lacked political freedom.
  
- Evidence 2:
  - South Carolina wanted the state to cast votes for the Democrats. They used racist plans to achieve this.
  - Poll tax was a tax that required voters to pay a tax when they voted. Whites could afford this tax, but blacks couldn't afford it.
  - Literary tests were tests when voters were required to read parts of the Alabama Constitution. There were easier and harder parts of this document. Whites usually had to read easier parts, but blacks had to read harder parts.
  
- Analysis: How does your evidence connect to your definition of freedom?
  - Poll taxes and literary tests discriminated blacks, even though they didn't seem to be racist.
  - They limited African Americans' political freedom and therefore African Americans didn't experience true freedom.

**Body Paragraph 2: Economic freedom**

- Topic Sentence:
  - African Americans not only lacked political freedom, but they also lacked economic freedom.
- Evidence 1:
  - Blacks got land from Sherman's Field Order 15. This field order gave freedmen abandoned land along the coast of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.
  - Blacks had to leave St. Catherine's Island when its owner arrived. President Johnson ordered that Confederate land seized by the troops must be given back to the plantation owners.
  
- Analysis: How does your evidence connect to your definition of freedom?
  - African Americans didn't have economic freedom because the government took away their land.
  - Economic freedom is required to be free. African Americans did not have economic freedom and therefore they did not experience true freedom.

- Evidence 2:
  - Black Codes prohibited blacks from renting or keeping a house in the town of Opelousas. That means, they didn't have the right to own property.
  - "No negro or freedman shall be permitted to rent or keep a house in town under any circumstances."
- Analysis: How does your evidence connect to your definition of freedom?
  - The right to own property is economic freedom. African Americans didn't have economic freedom and therefore they weren't free.

### **Body Paragraph 3:**

- Topic Sentence:
  - African Americans also lacked social freedom.
- Evidence 1:
  - The Black Codes also prohibited blacks from making meetings in the town of Opelousas. That means, blacks didn't have the freedom of assembly.
  - "No public meetings of negroes or freedmen shall be allowed within the town."
  - People say that blacks did in fact have freedom of assembly, because the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment solved the problems of the Black Codes.
- Analysis: How does your evidence connect to your definition of freedom?
  - If the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment solved the problems of Black Codes, African Americans did have social freedom.
  - That means, African Americans had social freedom.
- Evidence 2:
  - It isn't true that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment solved the problems of the Black Codes. It only solved some of them.
  - The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment didn't give blacks the freedom of assembly. That means, blacks still lacked the freedom of assembly.
- Analysis: How does your evidence connect to your definition of freedom?
  - African Americans didn't have social freedom, because they didn't have the freedom of assembly.
  - That means, African Americans didn't experience true freedom, because they didn't have social freedom.

**Conclusion:**

- Restate thesis
  - African Americans were not free as the result of Civil War and Reconstruction.
  
- Connection to freedom in America in 2020
  - Legal immigrants have freedom in 2020
  - Political freedom: They can vote
  - Economic freedom: They can choose their job
  - Social freedom: They can hold meetings, so they have the freedom of assembly
  - Legal immigrants have all political, economic and social freedoms, so they do experience true freedom