

Period 5: 1844-1877

AP US History ■ Period 5

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What we will cover

- 1 Manifest Destiny and Expansion
- 2 Why Expansion Broke the Political System
- 3 Secession and the Civil War
- 4 Reconstruction
- 5 The Failure of Reconstruction
- 6 Comparison in Period 5



Manifest Destiny and Expansion

Period 5 runs from 1844 to 1877. It is the period in which the argument over slavery stops being political and becomes military.

Advocates justified annexation through **Manifest Destiny** – the claim that the United States was destined, and superior enough, to spread across the continent.

Expansion: what it added, and what it cost

the Mexican-American War

added **enormous territory** in the West, and with it the question of whether slavery would follow

the Homestead Act

wartime legislation that gave settlers land, accelerating settlement of the plains

Mexican Americans

people already living on the annexed land – their property and legal rights were repeatedly disputed

American Indians

government interaction produced **displacement and violence** as settlement advanced

the resources

natural and mineral wealth drew migrants and capital, and set the pattern of Western economies

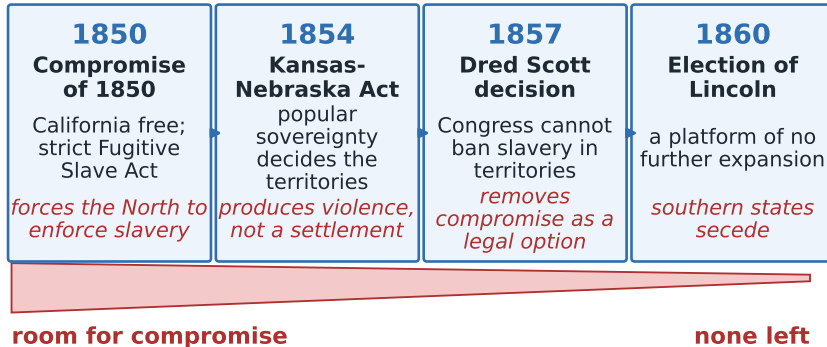
Every acre added reopened the slavery question, which is why expansion and sectional crisis are one story rather than two.



Each settlement failed, and left less room for the next

- The **Compromise of 1850** 1850 admitted California as free and included a strict **Fugitive Slave Act** , which enraged the North by requiring its citizens to participate in enforcement.
- **Popular sovereignty** - letting territorial settlers decide - produced violence in Kansas rather than a settlement.

Each settlement failed, and left less room for the, in detail



each settlement dealt with slavery in the TERRITORIES - that is the question expansion forced

Each compromise dealt with slavery in the territories, and each collapse left less room for the next one

Why Expansion Broke the Political System

Acquiring land forced a question that could not be avoided: **would slavery expand into the new territories?** Every attempt to answer it produced a temporary settlement that then failed.

- The **Compromise of 1850** 1850 admitted California as free and included a strict **Fugitive Slave Act** , which enraged the North by requiring its citizens to participate in enforcement.
- **Popular sovereignty** – letting territorial settlers decide – produced violence in Kansas rather than a settlement.
- The **Dred Scott decision** · held that Congress could not ban slavery in the territories, removing compromise as a legal option.

Why Expansion Broke the Political System, continued

Ideological and economic differences produced **diverging responses** to slavery, from abolitionism to proslavery arguments defending it as a positive good.

By the 1850s slavery dominated political discussion, destroying the existing party system and producing the new **Republican Party** .

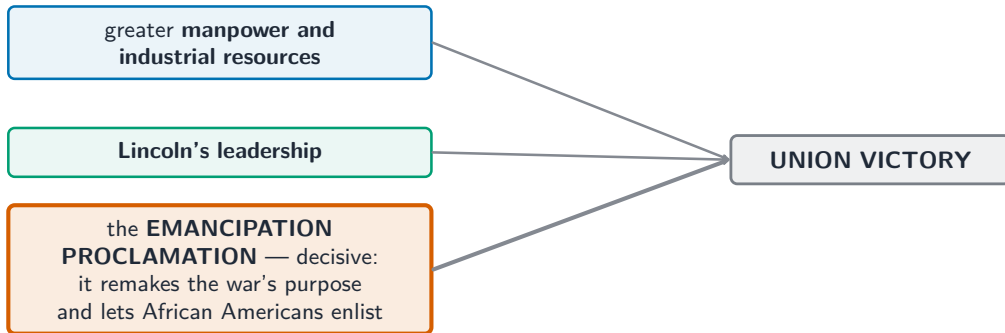


Secession and the Civil War

The **election of 1860** 1860 brought **Abraham Lincoln** to power on a platform of preventing slavery's expansion. Southern states responded by **seceding** , and the war followed.

African Americans' service and the actions of enslaved people who freed themselves by reaching Union lines shaped the outcome as well.

Capacity to win, against what winning meant



Resources explain the **capacity** to win; emancipation changed **what winning meant** – and a causation answer has to say which kind of cause it is using

Why the Union could outlast the Confederacy

Greater manpower and industrial resources

The Union had **greater manpower and industrial resources**: more people, more factories, more railroad miles.

Natural and mineral resources

And more **natural and mineral resources** – iron, coal, food – so it could replace what it lost.

What that did not decide

Advantages take time to tell. Confederate strategy only had to make the war too costly to continue.

What was stripped away

By 1865 the Confederacy's capacity was **stripped away**: its ports blockaded, its railroads broken, its currency worthless.

Material advantage explains the outcome, not the length. Both halves of that sentence are needed for a causation question.



Reconstruction

The constitutional achievement is the **Reconstruction Amendments** :

- The **13th Amendment** abolished slavery.
- The **14th Amendment** granted citizenship and equal protection.
- The **15th Amendment** prohibited denial of the vote on grounds of race.

Reconstruction, continued

The **women's rights movement** was both **emboldened and divided** by the 14th and 15th Amendments, because they extended rights on the basis of race while introducing the word "male" into the Constitution.

Reconstruction, and why it failed

Radical and moderate Republicans

worked to change the balance of power **between Congress and the presidency**, and the status of freedpeople

the amendments

the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth – **none was ever repealed**

segregation

separated the races in law and in practice

violence

organised terror suppressed Black voting and officeholding

Supreme Court decisions

read the amendments narrowly, hollowing them out

local political tactics

poll taxes, literacy tests and grandfather clauses did the rest

The rights survived on paper and were destroyed in practice – which is exactly why the same amendments could be revived in the 1950s and 1960s.

None was repealed – each stopped working

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None was repealed – each stopped working, in detail

AMENDMENT	WHAT IT GUARANTEED	HOW IT STOPPED WORKING
13th 1865	slavery abolished	convict labour and debt peonage rebuild forced labour
14th 1868	citizenship and equal protection of the laws	read narrowly by the courts; “separate but equal” in 1896
15th 1870	the vote, regardless of race	poll taxes, literacy tests and violence, none of them written as racial

The **14th Amendment** granted citizenship and equal protection.

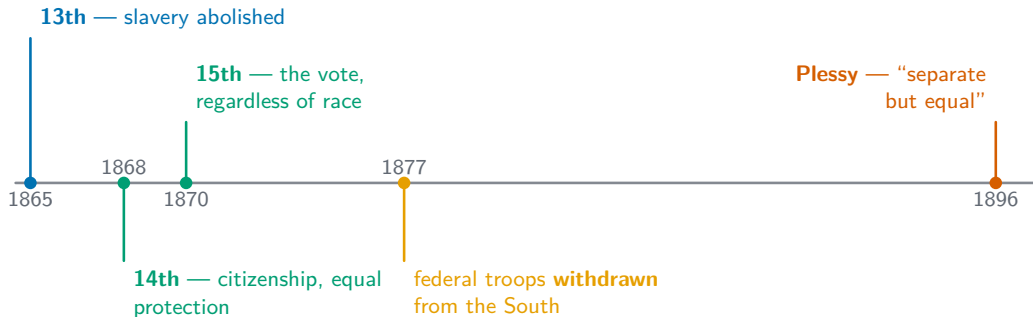


The Failure of Reconstruction

Reconstruction's gains were reversed, and the exam expects the mechanisms, not just the outcome.

Southern plantation owners **continued to own most of the region's land** even after emancipation, so formerly enslaved people entered arrangements such as **sharecropping** that produced dependence and debt rather than economic independence.

Reconstruction, to scale



Five years of **guarantees**, thirty of **dismantling**. The failure is the long half of this line, and that is where the marks are



Comparison in Period 5

The period's reasoning skill is **comparison**.

Useful comparisons: the North and South before the war; the aims of Reconstruction against its outcomes; and the status of African Americans in 1865 against 1877.

Worked example – holding change and reversal together

2023 long essay: “Evaluate the extent to which the definitions of United States citizenship changed from 1865 to 1920.”

- **Scoring:** *“Definitions of citizenship changed substantially between 1865 and 1920, as the 14th and 15th Amendments established birthright citizenship and barred racial barriers to voting – yet segregation, violence and Supreme Court decisions made those definitions far less meaningful in practice by 1900.”*
- For a period that both expanded and reversed rights, hold the **legal** change and the **practical** one together.

An essay that names only the amendments has answered a different question from the one asked.

Exam tips

- Expansion is the **cause** of the sectional crisis. Every compromise from 1850 onwards is an attempt to answer whether slavery could expand.
- Name the mechanism, not the mood. "Tensions rose" earns nothing; the **Fugitive Slave Act**, **Dred Scott**, and **Bleeding Kansas** do.
- Give the **Emancipation Proclamation** its strategic role: it redefined the war's purpose and enabled Black enlistment.
- Learn the three **Reconstruction Amendments** by what each one does; questions often turn on the difference between them.
- For Reconstruction's failure, name **sharecropping**, **segregation**, **violence**, and **Court decisions** – the four mechanisms.
- On comparison prompts, develop **both** sides. An answer that treats one side in a clause has answered half the question.



Period 5 – key takeaways

1

Cause

expansion: can slavery move west?

2

Mechanisms

Fugitive Slave Act, Dred Scott, Bleeding Kansas

3

Emancipation

redefined the war; enabled Black enlistment

4

Reconstruction

sharecropping, segregation, violence, the Court

Check yourself

- 1 What is the cause of the sectional crisis?
- 2 Name two mechanisms, not “tensions rose”.
- 3 What did the Emancipation Proclamation do strategically?
- 4 Name two reasons Reconstruction failed.

Answers: whether slavery could expand ▪ e.g. Dred Scott, Bleeding Kansas ▪ redefined the war / Black enlistment ▪ sharecropping, violence, courts, segregation