

US History 8
Thematic Essay
20th Sep for 8I and 8J

Note

The purpose of the Thematic Essay assignment is that you develop your own thoughts relative to the history we are studying. If I were to give you the answer to study and memorize in advance, I would defeat the purpose of the assignment. If you seek help on this assignment of the kind where someone tells you the answer to memorize and then just repeat on the essay, you are not doing the right thing. The topic is given in advance so that you, perhaps even with friends, develop possible responses and ways to present your ideas well in writing.

It is recommended that you use the graphic organizer below in preparing your essay. No notes or other aids are allowed to write the essay: it is expected you come to class actually knowing how you will respond. This is practice: as you grow older, teachers will not always give out essay topics in advance.

The Topic

The purpose for the Civil War, according to most people who fought on the Union side, was to preserve the Union. After the 1864 Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves became an additional purpose. After the war, the Union struggled to rebuild the South and return it to the Union. Part of this job required that the Union attempt to dismantle a centuries-old way of life and to establish life and liberty for newly freed slaves. This struggle characterizes Reconstruction.

In a well-organized essay, explain TWO important features of Reconstruction. These could be laws, policies, or other efforts by the Union to rebuild the South into a society that would fit in with the North. You might include details about Southern reaction to these policies to build a strong essay.

In your conclusion, judge how successful you think Reconstruction was. It will be very important here to explain the reasons for your thoughts. A review of textbook pages 521-533 would prove very useful.