

Title of Lesson: *African American Life After the Civil War – Sharecropping*
(Suggested grade level: 4, 5)

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Author Information: Yolanda Moore (Cohort 1: 2009-2010)

Uniontown Elementary School
Perry County School System
Uniontown, AL

Background Information:

Background information for teacher:

- The sharecropper contracts may need to be transcribed for student use as they are difficult to read. There are seven sharecropper contracts linked in the lesson. Review and use those contracts which will be most appropriate for your class.
- Read the article on sharecropping on the [Encyclopedia of Alabama](#) Web site for additional information.
- Suggested Grouping Strategy: Before beginning, prepare a set of colored index cards or construction paper cut to card size. You will need 3-4 cards each of 5-6 different colors (depending on class and group size). Prepare each color set as follows: in the upper left of each card, write a number from 1-4; in the upper right, write a letter from A-D; in the lower left, draw a shape (circle, triangle, square, or rectangle); and in the lower right, write a direction (north, south, east, or west). After passing out the cards, you can then quickly group and/or regroup students by color, number, shape, letter, or direction.

Overview of lesson: The students work in collaborative groups to analyze primary sources related to sharecropping as they learn about economic and social issues facing African Americans following the Civil War.

Content Standards

[Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies](#) (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)

Fourth Grade: Standard 9, p. 31

Fifth Grade: Standard 13, p. 40

National Standards for History, 1996

Standards in History for Grades 5-12 (p. 101)

Era 5, Standard 3 – How various reconstruction plans succeeded or failed.

3B – The student understands the Reconstruction programs to transform social relations in the South.

National Council for the Social Studies, (Bulletin 89, 1994)

Standard VII – Production, Distribution, and Consumption – High School

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, so that the learner can:

- a. explain how the scarcity of productive resources (human, capital, technological, and natural) requires the development of economic systems to make decisions about how goods and services are to be produced and distributed.

Primary Learning Objective(s):

The student will explain the reasons for the development of the sharecropping system in post-Civil War South. The student will describe the effects of sharecropping on the lives of African Americans in the South.

Additional Learning Objective(s):

- Students will analyze primary sources.
- Students will work cooperatively with their peers.
- Students will gather information from a variety of sources.

Time allotted: 60 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

Copies of sharecropper contracts:

[Contract between Emily Thetford and eight African Americans](#)

[Contract for six African Americans in Lowndes County](#)

[Contract between freedman Shade Moore and W. G. McCondichie](#)

[Contract for Fred, a freedman, in Lowndes County](#)

[Contract between two freedmen and Washington Wallace of Lowndes County](#)

[Contract between J. Miller and William Hall](#)

[Contract between sixteen freedmen and H. L. Whipple of Montgomery](#)

Copies of [Written Document Analysis Worksheet](#) from the National Archives

Typing paper, chart paper, pencils, markers, sticky notes, scissors, tape

Technological Resources:

- Computer with internet access
- LCD projector

Background/Preparation:

The students should have a general knowledge of United States history through the Civil War.

Procedures/Activities:**Engagement/Motivation Activity:**

- The teacher will say, “It is 1865 and the Civil War has ended. Your parents, who were slaves, tell you that your family is now free. List ways that you anticipate that your life will change and challenges that might lie ahead for you and your family.”
- Allow students to share their lists with the class. Discuss reasonable and unreasonable responses.
- The teacher will ask the following questions and lead the students in discussing the ideas presented.
 - What if the plantation owner said that your family could stay in your house, you could farm some of his land, and he would loan you tools, seeds, and other things your family will need to farm. What do you think your family’s response to this offer would be?
 - How do you think your family will earn a living?
 - What jobs will your parents have?

- Where will they live?
- Discuss the job skills and experiences of the newly freed slaves.
- Ask students to consider former plantation owners. How are they going to earn a living? What jobs will they do? Where will they live?
- Tell students they will be learning more about the challenges that faced freed African Americans after the Civil War.

Step 1	Group students (using pre-established groups or prepared index cards). Give each student a Written Document Analysis Worksheet and each group a different sharecropping contract. Allow groups to share information to complete the worksheets, but stress that each group member must turn in his/her completed worksheet. Have groups share their answers with the class. Discuss similarities and differences among the sharecropper contracts.
Step 2	If students aren't familiar with making a three-tab booklet , prepare an example for them to follow. Distribute one sheet of typing paper to each student and have each create a three-tab booklet. The teacher will instruct the students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label the entire booklet 'Sharecropping.' • Label the first tab 'Definition and Description.' • Label the middle tab 'Advantages.' • Label the third tab 'Disadvantages.' Allow students to add information to their booklets under the appropriate tabs.
Step 3	Show a sharecropping video from APT <i>Alabama Stories Online</i> , Sharecroppers in Alabama . (You will need Microsoft <i>Silverlight</i> to view this file. This is a free program that can be downloaded from the APT Web site or you can choose to view it in an outside player.) This video is 56 minutes long.
Step 4	Allow students to complete their booklets.
Step 5	Write "Definition and Description," "Advantages," and "Disadvantages" on three separate pieces of chart paper and tape them to the board. Have students write three things they learned on three sticky notes. Allow students to place their sticky notes on the appropriate chart paper.

Assessment Strategies:

- Review foldables to make sure that students have 2-3 details written under each flap.
- Have students write a five-sentence paragraph that describes sharecropping and explains how it affected the lives of African Americans in the South. See attached rubric.

Extension:

Referring back to the sharecropping contracts from Step 2, have students compute hourly, weekly, and monthly wages. Students may then wish to visit www.measuringworth.com to calculate purchasing power.

Remediation:

- Students needing remediation may be paired with a peer tutor.
- Preview the lesson (key terms and concepts) with these students beforehand.
- If your textbook comes with lesson summaries, the summary for this material may be reviewed with students beforehand or afterward.

Accommodation:

- Students needing accommodations may be paired with a peer tutor.
- They may be given a foldable that has already been cut and/or labeled.
- You may also wish to give them several sentences that they paste or copy under the correct flap of their foldable.
- Students may be allowed to use their foldables to write their paragraphs.

Modification:

- Review Individualized Education Plans, 504 Plans, and Gifted or ELL Plans for instructional and assessment accommodations or modifications.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension and mastery of appropriate learning objectives.

Sharecropping Paragraph Rubric

Directions: Write a five-sentence paragraph which describes sharecropping and explains how it affected the lives of African Americans in the South. You may refer to your notes.

Student Name _____

Category	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 points	Score
Topic Sentence	The paragraph has a clear and thoughtful topic sentence that refers to the effects of sharecropping on African Americans in the South.	The topic sentence contains the main idea of the assigned topic.	The topic sentence is relatively clear and addresses the main point fairly well.	There is no clear topic sentence.	
Main Body/ Supporting Sentences	The paragraph contains at least three sentences that support the main idea.	The paragraph contains at least two supporting sentences.	The paragraph contains one supporting sentence that supports the main idea.	The paragraph contains no clear supporting sentences.	
Conclusion	The conclusion sums up the main idea of the paragraph.	The conclusion wraps up the paragraph fairly well and refers to the main idea.	The conclusion repeats the topic sentence.	There is no evidence of a conclusion.	
Ideas	Ideas are expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It is easy to figure out what the letter was about.	Ideas are expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could be better.	Ideas are somewhat organized, but are not very clear. It takes more than one reading to figure out what the letter is about.	The letter seems to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It is very difficult to figure out what the letter is about.	
Grammar/Spelling	Paragraph has no errors in spelling, punctuation, or capitalization.	Paragraph contains one or two errors in spelling and/or punctuation which do not distract from the quality of the paragraph.	Paragraph contains three or more errors in spelling and/or punctuation which do not distract from the quality of the paragraph.	Paragraph contains several errors in spelling and/or punctuation which distract from the quality of the paragraph.	

Total _____