



## Andrew Johnson | Lesson Plan

How did Andrew Johnson handle the challenges of leading a divided country during Reconstruction?

Students will understand Andrew Johnson's role in the aftermath of the Civil War and the challenges he faced during Reconstruction. They will also learn about his impeachment and its significance in American history.

### Learning Objectives:

- Identify the key life events of Andrew Johnson.
- Explain Andrew Johnson's role in Reconstruction and his approach to reunifying the country.
- Compare the key hardships and key achievements of Andrew Johnson that shaped his presidency.
- Evaluate Andrew Johnson's leadership skills and the reasons behind his impeachment.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Impeachment:** The process of charging a public official with wrongdoing, potentially leading to removal from office.
- **Reconstruction:** The period after the Civil War focused on rebuilding the country and integrating freed slaves into society.
- **Veto:** When a president rejects a bill passed by Congress.
- **Secede:** To leave an organization or government.
- **Ku Klux Klan:** A group that emerged during Reconstruction, known for promoting white supremacy and violence against African-Americans.
- **Confederacy:** The group of Southern states that seceded from the United States to form their own country during the Civil War.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.9, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

**Academic Subject Areas:** Biography, U.S. Presidents, Reconstruction Era

### What You'll Need

- Video: *Guess or Mess: Andrew Johnson* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Guess or Mess: Andrew Johnson* (Click [Here](#))
- PragerU Kids biographical book: *Andrew Johnson* (Download [Here](#))
- Large paper or poster board for each group, along with markers

### Lesson Plan: Read and Discuss (60 minutes)

**Introduction to Johnson:** (5 minutes)



1. Begin with a brief discussion about U.S. presidents and the challenges they face during their terms. Ask students if they know any presidents who faced difficult situations during their presidency.
2. Display the *Andrew Johnson* digital book using an electronic device. Briefly highlight Johnson's significance as the 17th president, his rise from humble beginnings, and the challenges he faced during Reconstruction. Show images from the digital book to give a visual overview of his life and presidency.

**Johnson History Huddle:** (25 minutes)

1. Read the "Meet Andrew Johnson" section on page 2 together as a class, with the teacher leading this page to model fluent reading and set the tone for the lesson.
2. After completing the teacher-led reading, explain that students will now explore other key aspects of Johnson's life in small groups.
3. Split the class into small groups and assign each group a different section of the digital book to explore:
  - Group 1: *Young Andrew, Rise to Power* (pages 3-4)
  - Group 2: *Civil War, President* (pages 5-6)
  - Group 3: *Almost Assassinated, Alaska, Retirement* (page 7)
  - Group 4: *Legacy* (page 8)
4. Allow time for each group to read their assigned section, taking turns reading aloud. As students read, they should discuss the main ideas.
5. Provide each group with a large piece of paper or a poster board and markers to write down key points and any interesting facts or quotes they find.
6. Allow each group one to two minutes to present their findings to the class. After each presentation, provide time for classmates to ask questions and discuss the content.

**Worksheet Workshop:** (15 minutes)

1. Hand out individual copies of the worksheet to each student. Explain how to fill out each section of the worksheet with these instructions:
2. **Timeline:** Students should select key dates and events mentioned throughout the digital book. The following are recommendations, but the teacher and students can use many other dates mentioned in the book:
  - 1808 - Birth of Andrew Johnson
  - 1834 - Becomes Mayor of Greenville
  - 1865 - Becomes President after Lincoln's assassination
  - 1866 - Vetoes Civil Rights Bill, faces opposition
  - 1868 - Impeachment trial
  - 1875 - Death of Andrew Johnson
3. **Interesting Quote:** Have students choose a meaningful quote from the book to fill in the quote section on their worksheet.
4. **Interesting Fact:** Ask students to select an interesting fact about Andrew Johnson that stood out to them and write it in the space provided.

5. **Vocabulary Builder:** Instruct students to choose a word from the Glossary on page 10 that they find interesting and use it in a sentence that conveys its meaning.
6. **Multiple Choice:** Explain that students should complete the multiple-choice section of the worksheet individually. (Note: The multiple-choice section corresponds to the *Guess or Mess* episode about Andrew Johnson and can also be used to play along while watching. See “Extension Activity” below.)

**Reflection Round-Up:** (10 minutes)

1. Briefly summarize the key points covered about Andrew Johnson, focusing on his life, presidency, and legacy.
2. **Think-Pair-Share:** Ask students to recall one fact about Andrew Johnson and share it with a partner. Encourage them to discuss why that fact was significant.
3. Give each student a sticky note or index card and ask them to answer one of these three sample reflection questions:
  - What did you find most interesting about Andrew Johnson?
  - How do you think his presidency impacted the United States?
  - Can you think of a modern issue that relates to something Johnson dealt with?
4. **Bonus Activities:** If time allows, allow students to complete the puzzle on page 9 by finding hidden letters throughout the book. They can also explore and engage with the other interactive activities included in the book.

**Extension Activity:** (20 minutes)

*Guess or Mess* Trivia Show: After the lesson, students can participate in the *Guess or Mess* trivia show for Andrew Johnson—direct students to the multiple-choice section of the worksheet. Students can play along with the contestants to see if they can answer the trivia questions correctly.

**PragerU 5-Minute Videos:**

Did you know that PragerU has a comprehensive video catalog of U.S. Presidents in an easy-to-watch 5-minute format? Enhance this lesson plan with one of our insightful, engaging, and educational videos that provide students with a deep dive into the lives and legacies of America’s leaders. To view *Andrew Johnson: The President Who Wasn’t Lincoln*, click [here](#).

**Don’t have time for a full lesson? Quick Activity (30 minutes)**

Read the *Andrew Johnson* book together as a class, with students taking turns reading aloud. Then, watch the *Guess or Mess* video and play along with the trivia questions