

DBQ #3- The Impeachment of President Andrew Johnson

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Background

President Johnson was the only senator from the South to stay loyal to the Union. That was a main reason why he was chosen as Lincoln's Vice Presidential candidate for the election of 1864. The impeachment of President Andrew Johnson took place from March of 1868 until May of 1868 and was the first time in our history that a president was brought up on formal charges. The President was staunch on keeping with President Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction and soon lost the confidence of his Republican party because of his choice.

Essay

After looking over the items below dealing with the impeachment of President Johnson and answering the questions that follow, please think about what we have talked about in our class room discussions and activities. What led Congress to this point? Did he have a chance of coming out of this as President? What kind of support system did he still have?

In a well-written essay supported by facts, explain why Andrew Johnson should or should not be impeached.

Document 1:

Ticket of admission to the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson, 1868.



1. Above is a copy of the ticket used for admission to the trial. Why do you think this might have been a popular ticket?
2. Who was the person issuing the ticket and what was his position?

Document 2:

This picture shows the formal notice of the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, at the bar of the Senate, 25th February 1868. The vote to impeach Johnson had been held in the House of Representatives on the preceding day. Here the representatives of the House, Congressmen Thaddeus Stevens and John A. Bingham, formally notify the Senate of this vote. Under the Constitution, the Senate would have to try the president.



1. Did Johnson have support from the members of the House and Senate? Do you really think they wanted to vote him out?
2. What does the picture tell you? Does it look like a heated debate or just business as usual? Explain your answer.

George T. Brown, sergeant at arms of the Senate, serving the summons on President Andrew Johnson, from *Harper's Weekly*, March 28, 1868. In 1868 the House of Representatives impeached Andrew Johnson on the grounds that he violated the 1867 Tenure of Office Act prohibiting the president from removing cabinet members without Senate approval. The law was designed to protect Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who oversaw the military occupation of the

South and implemented Republican Party Reconstruction reforms that Johnson opposed. Johnson disregarded the law and dismissed Stanton. In retaliation, congressional Republicans, fearing the return of Southern white supremacy, impeached Johnson. The Senate acquitted him by one vote.



1. In this picture President Johnson is being served with a summons detailing his impeachment. Does he look worried in this portrait?
2. It almost looks in this picture that the gentleman handing the summons to President Johnson is not looking him in the eye. What is your opinion?

Andrew Johnson- 17th President of the United States



1. This portrait was taken sometime after 1866. Does this look like a dishonest man to you? Why or why not?

2. If you could paint a portrait of President Johnson after the impeachment process was over how do you think yours would look compared to this one?