

Grade 8 U.S. History, Quarter 3, Unit 1 of 3

The Causes of the Civil War

Overview

Overall days: 13 (1 day = 50-55 minutes)

Purpose

In this unit, students will learn about the causes of the momentous conflict that put the United States as one nation at risk. Students should appreciate the importance and lasting effects of the festering debate over the power of the federal government versus states' rights and should reflect on the breakdown of a democratic political system as sectional conflict swept the country in the 1850s.

Content to be learned

- Explain the birth of the Republican Party.
- Understand the causes of the failures of attempts to compromise on the issue of slavery.
- Recognize the merits and flaws of the Dred Scott decision.
- Evaluate the causes of the Civil War, including the importance of slavery as a source of conflict.
- Analyze cause-and-effect relationships in the events leading to the secession of the southern states.

Processes to be used

- Explain how popular movements cause changes in the platforms of the major political parties.
- Judge the quality of antebellum compromises.
- Justify a position on whether the Dred Scott decision was upheld by the Constitution.
- Challenge arguments of historical inevitability by analyzing the causes of the Civil War and posing ways in which the conflict might have been averted.
- Construct the chronology, process, and reasoning behind the secession of the southern states.

Essential questions students should be able to answer by end of unit

- What was the Compromise of 1850, and why did it fail to quell sectionalism?
- Why did the Lincoln–Douglas debates and John Brown's raid increase tensions between the North and South?
- How did the rise of the Republican Party and the election of Abraham Lincoln spark the secession of southern states?

Written Curriculum

Grade Span Expectations

C&G 5: As members of an interconnected world community, the choices we make impact others locally, nationally, and globally.

C&G 5 (7-8)-2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the benefits and challenges of an interconnected world by...

- a. identifying and discussing factors that lead to the breakdown of order among societies and the resulting consequences (e.g., abolition of slavery, ~~terrorism, Fall of Roman Empire~~, civil war)

National Standards for History (U.S. History, Grades 5-12)

Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

Standard 1: The causes of the Civil War

- 1A The student understands how the North and South differed and how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.

Identify and explain the economic, social, and cultural differences between the North and the South. [**Draw upon quantitative data to trace historical developments**]

Explain how events after the Compromise of 1850 and the Dred Scott decision in 1857 contributed to increasing sectional polarization. [**Analyze cause-and-effect relationships**]

Explain the causes of the Civil War and evaluate the importance of slavery as a principal cause of the conflict. [**Compare competing historical narratives**]

Chart the secession of the southern states and explain the process and reasons for secession. [**Analyze cause-and-effect relationships**]

Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

Reading

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

WHST.6-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

- a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

- b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.
- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

WHST.6-8.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Notes, Clarifications, and Prerequisites

This unit deals primarily with the study of the causes of the Civil War and the differences between the North and South. Students will learn about the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas–Nebraska Act, and the Dred Scott decision. Instruction for this unit is at the introductory/conceptual level.

Taught Curriculum

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Interpret the conditions in which the Republican Party took form in the 1850s. (2 days)
- Judge the efficacy of the Compromise of 1850 and explain how the Kansas–Nebraska Act reopened the issue of slavery in the territories. (3 days)
- Debate the merits of the decision in the Dred Scott case. (2 days)
- Contrast Abraham Lincoln’s and Stephen Douglas’s views on slavery. (2 days)
- Explain the relationships between the results of the election of 1860 and the secession of each of the southern states from the Union. (4 days)

Resources

America: History of Our Nation, Pearson, 2011 (pp. 404-405, 478-507)

Assessment Rubrics (p. 6)

Facing History and Ourselves

- Anticipation Guide, <http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/anticipation-guides>
- Iceberg Strategy, <http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/iceburg-diagrams>
- Character Charts, <http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/character-charts>
- Socratic Seminar, <http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/socratic-seminar>

Step Up to Writing, Sopris West, 2008

- Summary Writing Scoring Guide (pp. 448-449) Tool 10-20a

- Informal Outlines of Various Lengths (pp. 160-161)
Tool 4-11c

Other Resources

Interactive Reading and Study Guide (pp. 214-228)

Pearson Primary Sources CD: Dred Scott v. Sandford; Uncle Tom's Cabin, by Harriet Beecher Stowe

All-in-One Teacher Resources, Unit 5

- Anticipation Guide—Slavery (p. 16)
- Anticipation Guide—Compromise of 1850 (p. 17)
- Anticipation Guide—Coming of the Civil War (p. 19)
- Election of 1860 (pp. 23-24)
- Dred Scott/Harriet Beecher Stowe (p. 36)

Materials

Overhead projector, TV, DVD player

Instructional Considerations

Key Vocabulary

civil war

controversy

crisis

fugitive

historical inevitability

isolate

nullification

propaganda

secede

sovereignty

Planning and Instructional Delivery Considerations

In this unit, students will learn about the causes of the momentous conflict that put the United States as one nation at risk. They should appreciate the importance and lasting effects of the festering debate over the power of the federal government versus states rights and should reflect on the breakdown of a democratic political system as sectional conflict swept the country in the 1850s.

In this unit, students will use a variety of graphic organizers and textual supports from Pearson Chapter 14, *The Nation Divided*, to study growing tensions over slavery, failed compromises, propaganda, emerging political parties, and the coming of the Civil War.

The *Interactive Reading and Study Guide*, *Pearson Primary Sources CD*, and *All-in-One Teacher Resources* listed in the Other Resources section contain additional strategies for the concepts being studied and directly support the stated learning objectives.

Select from the activities and readings in the Pearson text to provide students with background information and critical thinking opportunities that align to the learning objectives. The strategies listed represent a menu of choices and possibilities to support each learning objective.

- **To ensure that students will be able to interpret the conditions in which the Republican Party took form in the 1850s (2 days):**

Lead a class discussion about third-party movements.

1. Provide background about contemporary third-party movements. Begin by drawing a side-by-side comparison of a few of the core values of the current Democratic and Republican parties. Why would Democratic voters choose to vote for a Green Party candidate instead? Why would Republican voters choose to vote for a Tea Party candidate instead? What effect might the Tea Party have on the core values of the Republican Party? What purpose does a third-party movement serve today?
 2. Have a volunteer act as the class recorder for the next segment. She will draw a similar core value chart for the Whig and Democratic parties in the 1850s, and will populate that chart with the suggestions from the class as they skim the text.
 3. Which party would likely lose votes to the Free-Soil Party?
 4. Why was there a need for the Republican Party? What was missing from the existing parties that was provided by the Republicans? What values did they appeal to?
 5. Ask volunteers to offer explanations for why the Republican Party was successful. **Standard 5: Historical issues-analysis and decision making**
- **To ensure that students will be able to judge the efficacy of the Compromise of 1850 and explain how the Kansas–Nebraska Act reopened the issue of slavery in the territories (3 days):**

Revisit the section “The Extension of Slavery” on Pearson pages 404-405, which describes the reasons for and points of the Missouri Compromise. Ask students to explain how the Missouri Compromise reflects a short-term solution to a long-term problem. Ensure that students recognize that, in addition to the balancing of free and slave states, it also gave slave owners the right to track fugitive slaves into free territory and take them back.

Divide the class into small groups. Have the students refer to their texts and any other materials you choose to provide as they gather facts about the Compromise of 1850. Provide the following questions to help guide their research:

1. What was the problem that the compromise was meant to solve?
2. What was the logic behind the solution?
3. What were the main points of the compromise?
4. Which point(s) most upset northerners?
5. What is “popular sovereignty”? Why is it a good idea or a bad idea, regardless of the issue that the citizens would be voting on?

Lead a class discussion of the merits of the Compromise of 1850. Was it better than the Missouri Compromise? Why or why not?

Have the students refer to their texts and any other resources you choose to provide as they gather facts about the Kansas–Nebraska Act. Have the students in each group develop their own guiding questions. It’s OK if they choose to use the same guiding questions as for the Compromise of 1850.

Have a student volunteer lead a class discussion about the Kansas–Nebraska Act. How was it like the previous compromises? How was it different? How did it reopen the issue of slavery in new territories? As a permanent solution, what specifically made it better or worse than the compromises?

To extend, hold a class debate on the concept of popular sovereignty as it might apply to individual states’ agreeing to take part in war, taxes, marriage rights, smoking, etc. Is it OK for a state to “opt out” of a federal policy? Why or why not? **Standard 4: Historical research.** Take the opportunity to implement writing standard for literacy in history/social studies WHST.6-8.7.

- **To ensure that students will be able to debate the merits of the decision in the Dred Scott case (2 days):**

Have student volunteers read “The Dred Scott Decision” on Pearson page 495 aloud. Have a student volunteer lead a class discussion about the case. Provide him or her with the following prompts:

1. Who was involved?
2. What did Dred Scott want?
3. Why did he feel his request was justified?
4. What was the Court’s decision?
5. What was the Court’s justification for the decision?
6. Was the Constitutional argument valid? Why or why not?
7. What would you have decided if you were a Supreme Court justice?
8. How is your decision based on the Constitution? Remember, the 14th Amendment was not ratified until 1868 (see Pearson, pp. 553-554).

Impress upon students the fact that one can acknowledge the **logic** or **legality** of Chief Justice Taney’s decision without actually supporting slavery itself. Logic never justifies immoral or unjust ends, even if they’re technically legal. There is no right way to do the wrong thing. The Dred Scott case exposed the need for the law to be changed, as it eventually was, to align with the main of American ideals. **Standard 3: Historical analysis and interpretation**

- **To ensure that students will be able to contrast Abraham Lincoln’s and Stephen Douglas’s views on slavery (2 days):**

Have students build a Venn diagram to organize facts about both men. Divide the class into small groups. Each group should include a recorder who will draw a Venn diagram titled “Lincoln vs. Douglas.” The left side will be labeled “Lincoln,” and the right side will be labeled “Douglas.” Have students refer to the text and to any other resources you choose to provide. Attributes that apply to both men should be entered in the overlap area in the center of the diagram.

After 5-7 minutes, or after most groups are done, have each presenter share one of that group’s entries on the diagram. Record these on a large Venn diagram. Discuss each of the entries, how they relate to the other entries for that person (Lincoln or Douglas), and how they differ from the entries for the other person.

Give students a few minutes to write conclusion statements based on the information in the Venn diagram. Call on volunteers to share their statements.

- **To ensure that students will be able to explain the relationships between the results of the election of 1860 and the secession of each of the southern states from the Union (4 days):**

Have students use an iceberg diagram to organize factors contributing to the secession of the southern states from the United States. Creating a “durable” version of this diagram that can be posted in the

classroom will permit additions and subsequent reference during other lessons/assessments.

Introduce students to the concept of “the tip of the iceberg.” Draw a large representation of the classic iceberg—a massive oval shape, with a small portion peeking above a waterline. Note that, typically, only about one ninth of an iceberg appears above the water’s surface. What one sees is only a tiny portion of the whole thing. So it is with historical events. What one sees is tiny compared with the many factors and personalities that constitute the whole story.

On the drawing, which will be titled “Attack on Fort Sumter,” have students refer to the Infographic “Attack on Fort Sumter,” on Pearson page 502, as they suggest facts to be entered in the tip of the iceberg. What happened? Who did it, and to whom? When did it happen? Where did it happen? What did this event signify?

Divide the class into small groups. The recorder (scribe) for each group will write down the factors suggested by the others in the group as they refer to the text and any other resources you provide. Students should consider the following questions:

1. What was the proximate (immediate) cause of the attack?
2. What events led up to the attack?
3. Why had the southern states seceded?
4. Did they all secede for the same reasons?
5. What were the issues that motivated the actors?
6. What decisions, elections, accidents, disasters, inventions, etc., were contributing factors?

On the whole-class diagram, in the area “below the water,” write the factors shared out by the groups’ reporters. It may be helpful to divide the iceberg into social, political, economic, etc., factors.

With the factors organized, have students use the information during a discussion (or independently, in writing) in response to the following questions:

1. Which factors were the most important?
2. What could have happened to prevent this from happening?
3. Are there pieces of information missing? That is, can you think of questions related to this event that we should have answers for? How might we find answers to those questions?
4. How would you write a conclusion statement based on this information?
5. How does your understanding of this event—and the factors that contributed to it—help you to understand what’s happening now in Providence, the U.S, or the world?

See the *Facing History and Ourselves* website’s Iceberg Diagrams page for more information. This is a good opportunity to implement reading standard for literacy in history/social studies RH.6-8.7.

Alternative Teaching Strategies

The following activities from *Facing History and Ourselves* offer opportunities to expand upon the learning objectives for students. (See the Facing History website for more information about the activities.)

- **Anticipation Guide:** To begin investigating the conflict over slavery in the U.S., prepare a list of statements that address underlying causes and themes of the conflict. Have students determine whether they think the statements, which are often designed to surface possible misconceptions and opinions, are true or not. The guide is followed by a discussion that leads to predictions about the upcoming unit. Possible statements could include: The Civil War was inevitable; the Civil War was

fought only over slavery; only Northerners thought slavery should be abolished; etc.

- **Character Charts:** To identify Abraham Lincoln’s and Stephen Douglas’s views on slavery, use graphic organizers to help students organize information about Lincoln and Douglas. The completed character charts are useful tools for writing essays and studying for tests.
- **Socratic Seminar:** To summarize the issues involved in the Dred Scott decision, have students read “Opinion of the Court in the Dred Scott Decision” and hold a Socratic Seminar. The goal is for students to help one another understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in a specific text. Through a process of listening, making meaning, and finding common ground, students work toward shared understanding rather than trying to prove a particular argument. A Socratic Seminar is not used for the purpose of debate, persuasion, or personal reflection.

Use the activities and readings in the Pearson text to provide students with background information and critical thinking opportunities that align to the learning objectives (pp. 478-507).

- Have students use the Visual Preview (pp. 480-481) to consider answers to the question, “How did the nation try but fail to deal with growing sectional differences?”
- Use the activities and selections in Section 1 (pp. 482-485) to explain why conflict arose over the issue of slavery in the territories after the Mexican–American War, to identify the goal of the Free Soil Party, and to describe the compromise Henry Clay proposed to settle the issues that divided the North and South.
- Use the activities and selections in Section 2 (pp. 486-493) to summarize the main points of the Compromise of 1850, to describe the impact of the novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, to explain how the Kansas–Nebraska Act reopened the issue of slavery in the territories, and to describe the effect of the Kansas–Nebraska Act.
- Use the activities and selections in Section 3 (pp. 494-498) to explain why the Republican Party came into being in the 1850s, to summarize the issues involved in the Dred Scott decision, to identify Abraham Lincoln’s and Stephen Douglas’s views on slavery, and to describe the differing reactions in the North and the South to John Brown’s raid.
- Use the activities and selections in Section 4 (pp. 499-503) to describe the results of the election of 1860, to explain why southern states seceded from the Union, and to summarize the events that led to the outbreak of the Civil War.
- Complete the Historian’s Apprentice activity to determine relevance within a primary source document (p. 504).

Assessed Curriculum

Formative Assessments

Provide feedback to students through daily monitoring of student understanding using a variety of methods. For example, use exit cards. Have students answer questions on paper before they leave the class. Keep the activity prompt specific and brief to check for understanding of the day’s concepts. For instance, to check students’ comprehension of the Compromise of 1850, ask students to respond to the following question: “What was one reason many northerners did not like the Compromise of 1850?”

To assess the progress of understanding:

- **how to interpret the conditions in which the Republican Party took form in the 1850s**, have students write the following terms as you dictate them: Whig, Republican, Free-Soil, Democratic, slavery. Instruct the students to write a sentence for each term, in which they describe how that term is related to one of the others.
- **how to judge the efficacy of the Compromise of 1850 and explain how the Kansas–Nebraska Act reopened the issue of slavery in the territories**, have students write a paragraph about how popular sovereignty reopened the issue of slavery in the territories. Use *Step Up to Writing* Tool 10-20a to show students how their summaries will be assessed, and use the same tool to assess.
- **how to debate the merits of the decision in the Dred Scott case**, call on volunteers to describe aspects of the case. Ask others to explain their position on why Chief Justice Taney was right or wrong.
- **how to contrast Abraham Lincoln’s and Stephen Douglas’s views on slavery**, have students pair off. One of the pair will represent Lincoln’s views on slavery, and the other will represent Douglas’s views. Give the teams 5-7 minutes to prepare. Then call on one or more teams to stand and present their arguments. Allow the class to ask questions of the presenters.
- **how to explain the relationships between the results of the election of 1860 and the secession of each of the southern states from the Union**, have students refer to their iceberg diagrams. Divide the class into small groups. Each group will create a product (e.g., poster, chart, essay, skit, etc.) in which they explain the relationships between the election of Abraham Lincoln and the order of the secession of the southern states from the Union. Use the appropriate Pearson Assessment Rubric or *Step Up to Writing* rubric for that type of product.

Other Formative Assessments

Section 1 Check Your Progress (Pearson, p. 485)

Section 2 Check Your Progress (Pearson, p. 491)

Section 3 Check Your Progress (Pearson, p. 498)

Section 4 Check Your Progress (Pearson, p. 503)

Have students complete the Chapter Challenge (Pearson, p. 505) connecting the knowledge gained about all learning objectives. Students should provide a short answer for the question: How might history have been different if Stephen Douglas had won the election of 1860?

Chapter 14 Review and Assessment (Pearson, pp. 506-507)

Summative Assessment

Have students refer to their notes and any other resources you choose to provide to write a response to the following prompt:

- “How did the nation try, but fail, to deal with growing sectional differences?” (Pearson, p. 505). Support your answer with evidence. Be sure to consider at least three of the following key points:

The Compromise of 1850

Kansas–Nebraska Act and the issue of popular sovereignty

Dred Scott

John Brown’s raid

Emergence of the Republican Party

Lincoln–Douglas Debates

Election of 1860

Secession

Use *Step Up to Writing Informal Outlines of Various Lengths* (pp. 160-161, Tool 4-11c) to support the organization and writing process. Use *Assessment Rubrics* (p. 6) to provide a common means to measure the product. This assignment provides an opportunity to implement WHST 6-8.2.

Notes