

**A MORE PERFECT UNION:
THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
U.S. CONSTITUTION**

SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

Curriculum Unit: The Causes of the Civil War

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Massachusetts State Frameworks:

THE CIVIL WRECONSTRUCTION, 1860–1877

- **USI.35** Describe how the different economies and cultures of the North and South contributed to the growing importance of sectional politics in the early 19th century. (H)
- **USI.36** Summarize the critical developments leading to the Civil War. (H)
 - A. the Missouri Compromise (1820)
 - B. the South Carolina Nullification Crisis (1832–1833)
 - C. the Wilmot Proviso (1846)
 - D. the Compromise of 1850
 - E. the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*
 - F. the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
 - G. the Dred Scott Supreme Court case (1857)
 - H. the Lincoln-Douglas debates (1858)
 - I. John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry (1859)
 - J. the election of Abraham Lincoln (1860)
- **USI.37** On a map of North America, identify Union and Confederate States at the outbreak of the war. (H, G)
- **USI.38** Analyze Abraham Lincoln’s presidency, the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), his views on slavery, and the political obstacles he encountered. (H, C)
 - Seminal Documents to Read: The Gettysburg Address

Time Frame: 4-5 days

Objectives:

- to analyze primary source documents
- to understand how the different economies and cultures of the North and South created sectional politics
- to understand how the debate over the spread of slavery into the western territories created a rift between North and South
- to understand how Congress sought compromises when it came to the spread of slavery
- to assess the compromises themselves
- to understand how the compromises ultimately failed
- to understand how the Republican Party was formed and the results of the election of 1860

Background/Preparation:

Most of the major events during the Antebellum period in U.S. history, can be linked as causes of the Civil War. At this point in the school year, the students have studied some of the events that are considered precursory to the Civil War, but in a different context. This unit strives to get the students to understand how most events in history can be interlinked. It serves as a review of some events, while adding in others that are more immediate causes of the Civil War, while linking them all together. It also seeks to let the students see the issues leading up to the War from both the Southern and Northern perspectives.

Procedures:

Lesson 1 Introduction (1-2 days)- If lesson flows into a second day, start lesson two during day 2

- Activator Activity- (This task should be up while students enter the classroom)
 - “List as many reasons that you can think of that the United States fell into a civil war” (Collins Type 1 5-8 lines 4 minutes)
 - Class discussion

- Group students in heterogeneous groups of 3-4
 - Hand out (laminated sheets) “Causes of the Civil War” (These sheets explain what the problem was, but not the results or the solution which was attempted)
 - Students read each, then discuss which is least likely and most likely to cause a civil war
 - Students then rank from most likely to least likely
 - Groups write their results on the board

- Class Debate/Discussion

- Homework: Write a Type 1, 18-20 lines describing one of the events/problems studied today, and offering a solution to the problem

Lesson 2 Cornell Style notes on the Causes of the Civil War (2-3 days)

- Hand out Cornell style notes packets. These packets have the “Causes” from lesson 1 pre-typed, with lines for the students to take notes about the solutions/compromises
- Introduce the note packet by going over the cover page comparing the two views of slavery

- Notes packet:
 - Teacher review each problem/event already typed in notes packet.
 - Teacher uses appropriate overhead’s with each subject
 - Before the teacher explains the solutions/results of each event, he/she asks students to explain what they would do. (This is review of previous homework)
 - Teacher lectures on what the solutions/outcomes were
 - answers, and discuss the document

- Homework after each class (2-3) is for the students to write in questions on the left side of the note packet, which correspond to the notes on the right side.

Assessments

- Causes of the Civil War quiz
- Writing for understanding.
 - Prompt: Could the Civil War been avoided? If so, how. If not, why not? You must discuss at least 4 of the events we discussed in class
 - Collins type 3
 - FCA's
 - Topic sentence 10 points
 - Four events discussed and used to prove your opinion 30 points
 - Written in past tense 10 points

References:

Hofstadter, Richard. *Great Issues in American History*. New York: Vintage, 1958. Print.

Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: the Transformation of America, 1815-1848*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.

Major Events/Causes of the

CIVIL WAR

1. Missouri Compromise (1820)
2. South Carolina Nullification Crisis (1832-1833)
3. Wilmot Proviso (1846)
4. Compromise of 1850
5. Uncle Tom's Cabin (1851-1852)



6. Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
7. Dred Scott (1857)
8. Lincoln Douglas Debates (1858)
9. John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry (1859)
10. Election of Abraham Lincoln (1860)

Background: Two views on Slavery

North v. South

North

- In 1800 there were roughly 50,000 slaves in the Northern States
- By 1860 there were less than 20
- Most northerners did not know much about Africans; however they believed them to be inferior
- Free Africans living in the North were subject to many laws that limited their rights
- Not all northerners wanted to end slavery
- There was a minority of people called abolitionists living in the North, who did want to end slavery
- The big concern with Northern politicians was not to end slavery, but to limit new states from becoming slave states. This would help the North maintain political power

South

- In 1800 there were almost 1 million slaves in the southern states
- By 1860 there was 4 million
- Many southerners believed that God wanted the Africans to be slaves
- Slaves were regarded as possessions/property
- Some southerners argued that their slaves were happier and healthier than wage workers, both black and white, in the North
- The majority of southerners wanted to preserve slavery
- For the South, slavery was a vital component to their economic well being

Missouri Compromise (1820) –

The Problem/Situation

- In 1819 Missouri was up for admission to the Union as a new state.
 - The states were evenly split at this point between slave states and free states
 - The North did not want Missouri to enter as a slave state, and the South did not want it to enter as a free state

The Solution/Results

- The Missouri Compromise:
 - Missouri would enter the Union as a slave state.
 - The northern territory of Massachusetts would become the new state of Maine and would be a free state.
 - Also draws a line from the southern boarder of Missouri to nation's western boundary: Any new state south of that border would be a slave state, any new state to the north of boarder would be a free state.
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South Carolina Nullification Crisis (1832-1833)

The Problem/Situation

- In 1832 the South Carolina legislature “*nullified*” a certain federal tariff. Nullify (*def.*) to announce legally void or inoperative.
 - South Carolina threatened to secede from (leave) the Union if federal troops were sent to enforce the tariff.
 - President Jackson felt that preserving the Union was more important than states rights.
 - Jackson threatened to send troops to enforce federal law (the tariffs).
 - Some other state legislatures passed anti-nullification laws in support of the president.
 - In 1833, Senator Daniel Webster (MA) pushed the Force Bill though Congress. This bill gave the president authorization to use force against South Carolina.

The Solution/Results

- President Jackson lowered the tariff to try to meet SC in the middle.
 - With the threat of force and the lower tariff, SC abolished the nullification of the tariff.
 - Tensions between the federal government and the South increased
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Wilmot Proviso (1846)

The Problem/Situation

- Wilmot Proviso- In 1846, the Whig party introduced a bill in Congress that would ban slavery in all areas gained from the war with Mexico. Year after year it passed in the House, but failed in the Senate.

Results

- This proposed bill split party unity, and divided Congress along sectional lines;
 - Northern representatives, both Whig and Democrats, where for the bill,
 - Southern representatives, both Whigs and Democrats, where against it.
 - Continues to be a problem between the North and the South.

Compromise of 1850

The Problem/Situation

- Statehood for California
 - Because of the Gold Rush, California's population increased rapidly. California skipped being a territory and went right to applying for statehood.
 - This worried the South, because California's constitution banned slavery in the state.
 - Some southern states start to talk of seceding from the union if California is admitted.

The Solution/Results

- Compromise of 1850
 - California would be admitted to the Union as a free state
 - When Utah and New Mexico become states they will decide whether to be free or slave states
 - Slave trading banned in Washington DC, but slavery still allowed
 - Stricter fugitive slave laws for slaves who escaped to the North. Anyone helping slaves in the North could be imprisoned
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Uncle Tom's Cabin (1851-1852)

The Problem/Situation

- Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes "Uncle Tom's Cabin". This novel did more to point out the brutality of slavery as well as show slavery as a moral problem, than any other piece of writing. It sold 300,000 copies in its first year

Results

- In the North, the book spread compassion for the rights of slaves and began to turn many people into abolitionists
 - In the South, the book infuriated people who felt it was putting down their way of life.
-

Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)

The Problem/Situation

- In 1854 Illinois Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas introduced a bill that proposed that the people who live in, or will move to, the Nebraska area should get to decide if they would become slave or free states. It seemed fair enough; democracy would decide the issue. However, this would repeal the Missouri Compromise that did not allow slavery in this area. Congress fiercely debated the issue.

The Solution/Results

- As a compromise, Douglas amended the bill to separate the territory into two areas. (Kansas and Nebraska) It was assumed that Kansas would be a slave state and Nebraska a free state. This becomes known as the Kansas Nebraska Act. The only problem was this new law did not explicitly state that either state would be free or slave.
- Bleeding Kansas- Many people, both northerners and southerners, began moving into Kansas. Each group wanted to outnumber each other to gain the political upper hand, so when it came time to vote, they could control the government. By 1855 both sides had set up governments in Kansas. Both these governments petitioned Congress for statehood. This led to violence and outright war between the two sides. Congress did not resolve the issue until after the Civil War started, accepting Kansas as a free state into the Union in 1861.

Dred Scott (1857)

The Problem/Situation

- Dred Scott, a slave whose owner had brought him to the free state of Illinois, sued in court for his freedom. He claimed that since he was in a free state he no longer was a slave. With help of abolitionists, Scott's case went all the way to the Supreme Court. Unfortunately for Scott, the Court ruled against him. In their decision the justices ruled that slaves were peoples' property and property was protected by the Constitution.

Results

- The South hailed the decision as a victory for their way of life. The North was outraged and saw it as a Southern conspiracy. Some northerners even suggested that the North should succeed from the Union.
-

Lincoln Douglas Debates (1858)

The Situation

- By 1855 the Whig party had virtually disappeared. In its place rose the Republican party which basically was the coming together of many anti-slavery parties.
- In 1858 Republican Abraham Lincoln and Democrat Stephen Douglass were running against each other for Senator. They agreed to a series of debates which were viewed by thousands of Americans. Lincoln argued that the Dred Scott decision was wrong and that slavery was immoral. Douglass argued that it was up to the people of each state to decide whether or not to have slavery. (Popular sovereignty)

Results

- Many people believed Lincoln won the debates, however Douglas won the election.
 - Because of these debates Lincoln became widely known outside of Illinois.
-

John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry (1859)

The Problem/Situation

- In 1859 a radical abolitionist, John Brown decided that slavery should be put down with violence. His plan was to attack a weapons arsenal at Harpers Ferry Virginia. He hoped to inspire slaves to take up arms against slave holders. His plan did not succeed however. Locals captured Brown and his men in the arsenal. Brown was sentenced to death and was hanged.

Results

- Some southerners believed that Brown's attack was sponsored by Republicans.
 - While many northerners condemned Brown's tactics of violence, he did become a martyr in abolitionist's eyes.
 - Many Americans now feared that the slavery question might only bring more and more violence.
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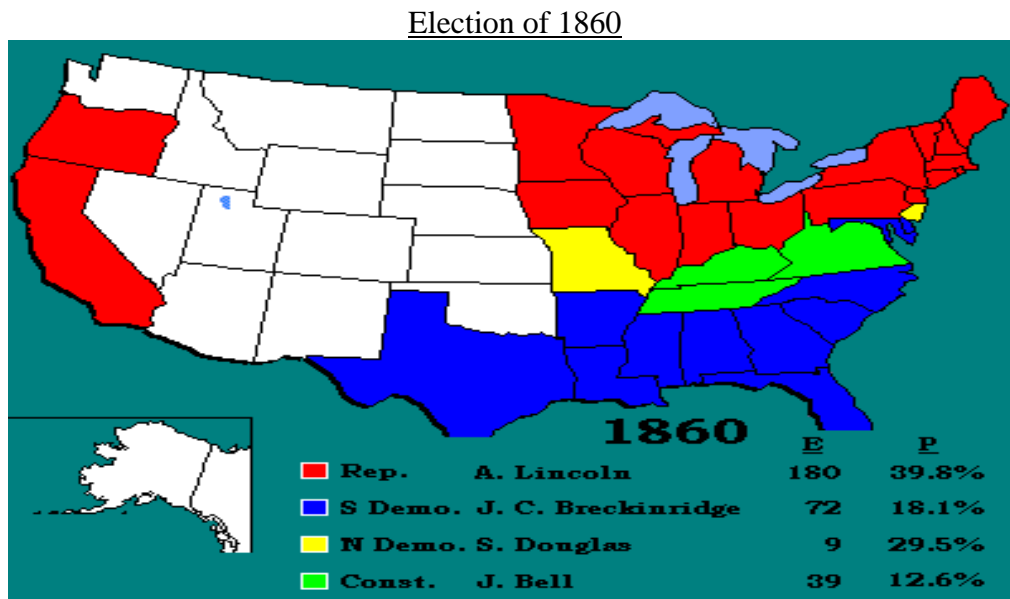
Election of Abraham Lincoln (1860)

The Situation

- In 1860 the newly formed Republican party nominated Abraham Lincoln for POTUS.
- The Democrats nominated Lincoln's old foe, Stephen Douglas. However when Douglass, a northern Democrat who believed in popular sovereignty to settle the question of slavery in each state, refused to come out firmly in favor of slavery, his party split. Southern Democrats nominated their own candidate John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky.
- To make matters even more confusing the Whigs, with one last attempt to gain power, put up their own candidate, John Bell. They now called themselves the Constitutional Union Party.

Republicans	<i>Northern Democrats</i>	<i>Southern Democrats</i>	<i>Constitutional Union</i>
Abraham Lincoln	Stephen Douglas	John Breckenridge	John Bell
Illinois	Illinois	Kentucky	Tennessee
Platform: Slavery should not be allowed in the western territories	Platform: Popular sovereignty should decide the issue of slavery in the territories when they become states	Platform: The Federal government must protect slavery	Platform: The Federal government should protect slavery and defend the Union

The Results



- With the opposition split three ways, Lincoln won an easy victory. However a majority of Americans voted for one of the other three candidates. (This is especially true in the South)
- Southerners began outright calls for secession from the Union.
- Lincoln desperately wanted to keep the country together. On December 20th 1860, he assured the South that he would not abolish slavery in the South. He also said he would rigorously enforce the fugitive slave law.
- Unfortunately the message did not come in time. On the same day, South Carolina voted for secession. Six more states soon followed South Carolina's lead. (Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas)
- What would Lincoln do when he would be inaugurated three months later on March 4, 1861?

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- 15. Uncle Tom's Cabin (1851-1852)



- 16. Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
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The Problem/Situation

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Results/Compromise

Compromise of 1850

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The Results

Election of 1860

