

# Causes of the Civil War Guided Notes *Advanced*

## *Unit 8: Civil War*

Name:

Date:

Period:

### **Part I: Slavery, Sectionalism, and States' Rights**

On April 12, 1861, Confederates opened fire on Union troops at Fort Sumter off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina. This action began the Civil War, which would last four long years, destroy miles of land including entire towns, and take 750,000 American lives.

The Civil War was caused by increasing sectional divisions between the free states of the North and the slave states of the South over the issue of slavery. As the country expanded westward, both the North and South worked to increase the political power of their own region, with both sections of the country viewing the other as harmful to their own region's interests and way of life.

By the 1850s, sectionalism in the U.S. was at an all-time high, and a series of events throughout the decade brought the nation to the brink of war. In this lesson, we will examine several of the most significant events that led to the outbreak of the Civil War.

What was the Civil War, and what was the primary cause of the war? Explain your answer in complete sentences.

## The Missouri Compromise

- **What:** An 1820 law addressing the issue of slavery in the territory of Missouri.
- **Terms:**
  - Missouri admitted to the U.S. as a slave state
  - Maine admitted as a free state
  - Slavery was prohibited in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase north of the 36°30' line.

Which part(s) of the Missouri Compromise attempted to appease the Southern states? Explain

Which part(s) attempted to appease the Northern states? Explain

## The Compromise of 1850

- **What:** An 1850 law addressing the issue of slavery in the Mexican Cession Territory
- **Terms:**
  - California joined the U.S. as a free state.
  - Slavery would be decided by popular sovereignty (vote) in Utah and New Mexico.
  - Decreased the size of Texas
  - Ended the slave trade in Washington D.C.

Which part(s) of the Compromise of 1850 appeased the South? Explain.

Which part(s) appeased the North? Explain.

## The Kansas Nebraska Act

- **What:** An 1854 law addressing the issue of slavery in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska
- **Terms:**
  - Slavery would be decided in Kansas and Nebraska by popular sovereignty (vote)
- This law effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

Which part(s) of the Kansas Nebraska Act appealed the South? Explain

Which part(s) appealed the North? Explain.

## Bleeding Kansas

- Northerners and Southerners flooded into Kansas to try to influence the vote on slavery.
- From 1855 to 1859 violence broke out in Kansas between pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups.
- May 1856, a radical abolitionist named John Brown and his sons killed 5 pro-slavery supporters at the Pottawatomie Creek.

How did this event demonstrate the growing sectional division in the U.S.?

## The Dred Scott Case

- **What:** An 1857 Supreme Court case about the status of an enslaved man named Dred Scott.
- **The Case:** Scott argued that he should be free, because his master brought him into free states and territories.
- **The Verdict:**
  - The Supreme Court ruled that Scott was *not* free, and that he had no rights in court because Black people were not citizens of the U.S.
  - The court also ruled that Congress had no authority to ban slavery from a U.S. territory

Do you think Northerners or Southerners were more satisfied with the outcome of this case? Explain.

## John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry

- **When:** October 16, 1859
- **What:** Radical abolitionist John Brown led a raid on a federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia.
- **Why:** He wanted to steal federal weapons at the arsenal to arm slaves so they could revolt against Southern slave owners.
- **Outcome:** Brown and his men were captured and executed.

How do you think this event likely influenced sectional tensions and divisions?

## The Presidential Election of 1860

- A Northern, anti-slavery Republican named Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States.
- Southern states opposed the election of an anti-slavery president and began to secede from the Union.

Why do you think Southern states began to secede after **THIS** event, and not any earlier one?

### *Additional Activity:*

## Make a Timeline of the Road to the Civil War

**Directions:** Using the events covered in this lesson, create a timeline of the “Road to the Civil War,” demonstrating the chronological events leading to the war.

Your timeline should be accurate, neat, well-organized, clearly written, with good spelling and grammar, colorful, and creative. Include images (drawn or printed) when possible.

Your timeline should include a TITLE for the complete timeline. Each event should also have a title for the event, as well as the date of the event, and a three to five sentence description of each event.