

Causes of the Civil War Guided Notes *Grade Level*

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. Many people in both sections of the country viewed 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. 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.

Place a checkmark next to each TRUE statement about the Civil War.

- ☐ The North and the South shared essentially the same economic systems, which caused a great deal of competition between the two sections.
- ☐ Southerners wanted their system of slave-based plantation agriculture to be permitted to expand into new western territories.
- ☐ Northerners supported slavery because it kept wages for White workers high.
- ☐ New states in the West could increase political power for the North or the South, depending on whether the new Western states allowed slavery or not.
- ☐ The North and the South fought the Civil War because of the issue of Texas annexation.
- ☐ Sectional divisions increased during the 1850s, which ultimately led to a deadly war between the North and the South.

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.

The Northern states were probably happy that _____

The Southern states were probably happy that _____

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.

The Northern states were probably happy that _____

The Southern states were probably happy that _____

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.

The Northern states were probably

happy that _____

The Southern states were probably

happy that _____

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.

This event demonstrates that sectional divisions between the North and the South were

increasing / decreasing. One

piece of evidence that supports

this claim is _____

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

I think that Northerners /

Southerners were probably more

satisfied with the Dred Scott ruling

because _____

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.

I think John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry

probably increased / decreased sectional

divisions between the North and the South

because _____

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?