



GOAL 1 | LESSON PLAN | HIGH SCHOOL

Pre-1860: Disunion

Grades: High School

Approximate Length of Time: 2 hours

Goal: Students will develop an argument for the major source of disagreement that leads to the outbreak of the American Civil War, supporting their argument with research.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to answer questions related to the content of primary and secondary source documents.
2. Students will be able to complete a graphic organizer, finding key information within primary and secondary sources.
3. Students will be able to address a question about a historic event, providing evidence from primary and secondary sources.

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.1

Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.

NCSS STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES:

- 1—Culture
- 2—Time, Continuity, and Change
- 3—People, Places, and Environment
- 5—Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- 6—Power, Authority, and Governance
- 10—Civic, Ideals, and Practices

Description: This is an inquiry lesson where students will do research to answer the main, inquiry question about the Cause of the American Civil War. Students will develop a hypothesis, search for evidence in multiple primary and secondary sources, and complete a graphic organizer. Through this process students will develop a strong answer to the inquiry question posed at the beginning.

Inquiry Question: What is the major source of disagreement which ultimately leads to the conflict known as the American Civil War?

Materials:

- Documents Packet
- Graphic Organizer
- Highlighters
- Civil War In4 Video: Coming of the War

Procedure:

1. Have students begin with a hypothesis to answer the inquiry question.
2. Students will then read through the *Document Packet*, filling out the *Graphic Organizer* as they progress.
3. Students should watch the *Civil War In4 Video: Coming of the War*. Students can take notes about the video on the back of their *Graphic Organizer* sheet.

Conclusion:

Students will answer the inquiry question either orally or in essay form. They should use evidence from their primary and secondary sources. They can use the documents, their notes, the video and their graphic organizer. Students can do additional research to bolster their argument.

Students can share their responses with the class.

Assessment in this Lesson:

1. A completed graphic organizer
2. Notes taken on graphic organizer, documents, or other notes sheets
3. A complete answer to the inquiry question with quotes from the provided documents

ADDITIONAL TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCES:

These resources can help you prepare for teaching this unit and can also help students with their essay and understanding.

1. [Glossary of 18th and 19th Century Political Terms](#)
2. [Glossary of Civil War Terms](#)
3. [National Archives Document Analysis Worksheets](#)
4. [Trigger Events of the American Civil War](#)
5. [The Missouri Compromise](#)
6. [The Nullification Crisis](#)
7. [The Wilmot Proviso](#)
8. [Bleeding Kansas](#)
9. [The Caning of Charles Sumner](#)
10. [The Lincoln-Douglas Debate](#)
11. [John Brown's War](#)
12. [Primary Document Collection](#)
13. [Virginia Center for Digital History](#) (For Virginia SOL's, but useful for other states.)



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Disunion Documents Packet

Document A

In 1820, in an effort to maintain the balance of power between free and slave states the Missouri Compromise is passed by the US Congress. This compromise concerned land acquired in the Louisiana Purchase and the new state of Maine. Maine enters as a free state while Missouri enters as a slave state and a line is drawn along the 36°30' parallel, dividing future territory entering the nation into slave in the South and free in the North with the exception of Missouri.

Letter to John Holmes
Thomas Jefferson
April 22, 1820

I thank you, dear Sir, for the copy you have been so kind as to send me of the letter to your constituents on the Missouri question. It is a perfect justification to them. I had for a long time ceased to read newspapers, or pay any attention to public affairs, confident they were in good hands, and content to be a passenger in our bark to the shore from which I am not distant. But this momentous question, like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper. I can say, with conscious truth, that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach, in any *practicable* way. The cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed, is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and *expatriation* could be effected; and, gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be. But as it is, we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other. Of one thing I am certain, that as the passage of slaves from one State to another, would not make a slave of a single human being who would not be so without it, so their diffusion over a greater surface would make them individually happier, and proportionally facilitate the accomplishment of their emancipation, by dividing the burthen on a greater number of coadjutors. An abstinence too, from this act of power, would remove the jealousy excited by the undertaking of Congress to regulate the condition of the different descriptions of men composing a State. This certainly is the exclusive right of every State, which nothing in the constitution has taken from them and given to the General Government. Could Congress, for example, say, that the non-freemen of Connecticut shall be freemen, or that they shall not emigrate into any other State

I regret that I am now to die in the belief, that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of 1776, to acquire self-government and happiness to their country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be, that I live not to weep over it. If they would but dispassionately weigh the blessings they will throw away, against an abstract principle more likely to be effected by union than by scission, they would pause before they would perpetrate this act of suicide on themselves, and of treason against the hopes of the world. To yourself, as the faithful advocate of the Union, I tender the offering of my high esteem and respect.

Thomas Jefferson: Writings, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 1433-1435.

Write a very brief summary what Thomas Jefferson says in this letter:

Document B

In 1859 John Brown, an abolitionist, leads men into Harper's Ferry, VA hoping to instigate a slave rebellion.

The Harper's Ferry Raid Nashville Republican Banner, 1859 (Excerpt)

This attempt to excite an insurrection among the slaves is one of the natural results of the agitation of the slavery question, originated and so persistently kept up by designing politicians, both of the North and the South for partisan purposes. It can be traced to no other cause, and unless the people of both sections rise in the majesty of their strength and put an end at once to this mischievous agitation, the page that records the bloody events of the last two days, will be but a preface to the history of a civil war in which the same scenes will be re-enacted on a larger scale, and end in the dissolution of our glorious Union.

Secession Era Editorials Project. "The Harper's Ferry Riot." Nashville Republican Banner, October 24, 1859. <http://history.furman.edu/benson/docs/tnnbjb59a24a.htm> Accessed March 6, 2018.

What does the author blame as the cause for Brown's actions?

Document C

Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union (Excerpt) December 24, 1860

...We assert that fourteen of the States have deliberately refused, for years past, to fulfill their constitutional obligations, and we refer to their own Statutes for the proof.

The Constitution of the United States, in its fourth Article, provides as follows: "No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

This stipulation was so material to the compact, that without it that compact would not have been made. The greater number of the contracting parties held slaves, and they had previously evinced their estimate of the value of such a stipulation by making it a condition in the Ordinance for the government of the territory ceded by Virginia, which now composes the States north of the Ohio River.

The same article of the Constitution stipulates also for rendition by the several States of fugitives from justice from the other States.

The General Government, as the common agent, passed laws to carry into effect these stipulations of the States. For many years these laws were executed. But an increasing hostility on the part of the non-slaveholding States to the institution of slavery, has led to a disregard of their obligations, and the laws of the General Government have ceased to effect the objects of the Constitution. The States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, have enacted laws which either nullify the Acts of Congress or render useless any attempt to execute them. In many of these States the fugitive is discharged from service or labor claimed, and in none of them has the State Government complied with the stipulation made in the Constitution. The State of New Jersey, at an early day, passed a law in conformity with her constitutional obligation; but the current of anti-slavery feeling has led her more recently to enact laws which render inoperative the remedies provided by her own law and by the laws of Congress. In the State of New York even the right of transit for a slave has been denied by her tribunals; and the States of Ohio and Iowa have refused to surrender to justice fugitives charged with murder, and with inciting servile insurrection in the State of Virginia. Thus the constituted compact has been deliberately broken and disregarded by the non-slaveholding States, and the consequence follows that South Carolina is released from her obligation.

The ends for which the Constitution was framed are declared by itself to be "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the

common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

These ends it endeavored to accomplish by a Federal Government, in which each State was recognized as an equal, and had separate control over its own institutions. The right of property in slaves was recognized by giving to free persons distinct political rights, by giving them the right to represent, and burthening them with direct taxes for three-fifths of their slaves; by authorizing the importation of slaves for twenty years; and by stipulating for the rendition of fugitives from labor.

We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assume the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.

For twenty-five years this agitation has been steadily increasing, until it has now secured to its aid the power of the common Government. Observing the *forms* [emphasis in the original] of the Constitution, a sectional party has found within that Article establishing the Executive Department, the means of subverting the Constitution itself. A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States, whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the administration of the common Government, because he has declared that that "Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free," and that the public mind must rest in the belief that slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

This sectional combination for the submersion of the Constitution, has been aided in some of the States by elevating to citizenship, persons who, by the supreme law of the land, are incapable of becoming citizens; and their votes have been used to inaugurate a new policy, hostile to the South, and destructive of its beliefs and safety.

On the 4th day of March next, this party will take possession of the Government. It has announced that the South shall be excluded from the common territory, that the judicial tribunals shall be made sectional, and that a war must be waged against slavery until it shall cease throughout the United States.

The guaranties of the Constitution will then no longer exist; the equal rights of the States will be lost. The slaveholding States will no longer have the power of self-government, or self-protection, and the Federal Government will have become their enemy.

Sectional interest and animosity will deepen the irritation, and all hope of remedy is rendered vain, by the fact that public opinion at the North has invested a great political error with the sanction of more erroneous religious belief.

We, therefore, the People of South Carolina, by our delegates in Convention assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, have solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing between this State and the other States of North America, is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State; with full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do.

"Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union." Civil War Trust. Accessed March 8, 2018.
https://www.civilwar.org/learn/primary-sources/declaration-causes-seceding-states#South_Carolina.

What two reasons does South Carolina cite as cause for leaving the Union?

Document D

Lincoln's First Inaugural Address (Excerpt)

March 4, 1861

The Chief Magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have referred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the States. The people themselves can do this if also they choose, but the Executive as such has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present Government as it came to his hands and to transmit it unimpaired by him to his successor.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences, is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

By the frame of the Government under which we live this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief, and have with equal wisdom provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance no Administration by any extreme of wickedness or folly can very seriously injure the Government in the short space of four years.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new Administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

Lincoln, Abraham. "Lincoln's First Inaugural Address." Speech, Presidential Inauguration, Washington, DC, March 4, 1861. <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/primary-sources/lincolns-first-inaugural-address>

What does Lincoln say will cause a war?

The Inquiry Civil War Curriculum, Goal 1
Pre-1860: Disunion



Name: _____

Date: _____

	According to the document what is or could be a cause for internal conflict in the United States? Provide evidence from the text.	What can you infer about the time period before the Civil War from this document?
Document A		
Document B		
Document C		
Document D		



Name: _____

Date: _____

Essay

What is the major source of disagreement which ultimately leads to the conflict known as the American Civil War?

Be sure to:

- Provide your response to the inquiry question
- Support your response with evidence – using quotes and data from primary and secondary source material
- Write your essay and present your information in an organized way.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that supports the argument presented.