

# THE Civil War Curriculum

by the CIVIL WAR TRUST | [Civilwar.org/curriculum](http://Civilwar.org/curriculum)

GOAL 1 | LESSON PLAN | HIGH SCHOOL

## Pre-1860: Disunion

**GRADES:** High School

**APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TIME:** 50 minutes

**GOAL:** Students will be able to assess and explain the causes of the American Civil War.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Using primary and secondary sources, students will be able to analyze events, motivations, conditions and actions leading up to the Civil War.
2. Using primary and secondary sources, students will be able to identify and give examples of major compromises that permitted or restricted slavery in relation to territorial expansion.
3. Students will be able to compare and contrast the cultures and economies of the Northern and Southern states.

**MATERIALS:**

1. National Expansion Map
2. Compromise Scenario Cards
3. Compromise Notes Sheet
4. Comparing the North and South
5. Disunion PowerPoint

**ANTICIPATORY SET/HOOK**

Discuss with students the causes of war. How can disagreements be settled so that they do not lead to war? Briefly review and comment on suggestions. Add “compromise” if not suggested during brainstorming, and have students define the term before asking students to identify the benefits and drawbacks of compromise and provide examples of compromises that they have made. What might happen if a compromise doesn’t work or people change their mind?

Explain that in the 1800s the United States was growing from the original 13 colonies and adding new states and territories. Citizens had varying ideas about how the land should be settled, either with free labor (define, if necessary) or with slave labor. They needed to compromise.

**PROCEDURE:**

Print out the PowerPoint with notes prior to class. There are notes included with the slides that can be on the printed slides, but won't be seen by your students during the presentation.

Print out one copy of the *Compromise Scenario Cards*, cut them out, and place them in a hat. You will use these during the PowerPoint presentation.

## Activity 1

1. Hand out the *National Expansion Map*, have students follow the directions and answer the question.
2. Hand out the *Compromise Notes Sheet* and *Comparing the North and South*.
3. Explain that throughout the PowerPoint presentation scenarios will be read and discussed; after each scenario they will:
  - a. fill out the *Compromise Notes Sheet*, noting the person in each scenario's particular interests.
  - b. use *Comparing the North and South* as a reference to help them develop their answers.
4. Follow the *Disunion PowerPoint* and associates notes throughout the lesson.

**CLOSURE:**

Print out one or more copies of the *Compromise Scenario Cards* so that there is a card for each of your students. Cut these out and place them in a hat.

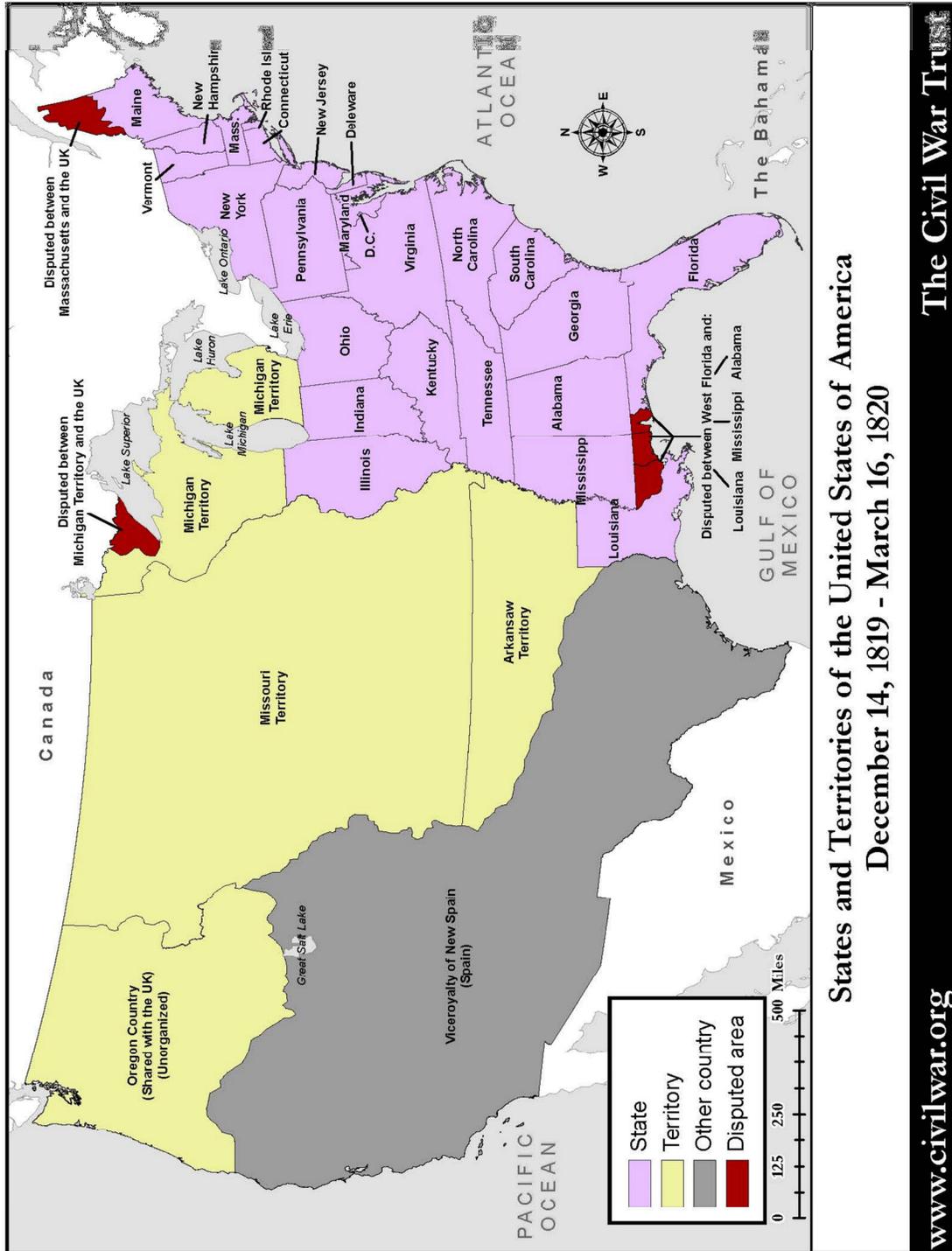
1. Have students pick out a *Scenario Card* from the hat. In their journal or on a blank sheet of paper, have your students complete the following:
  - a. Identify your state and persona.
  - b. Discuss whether your persona would agree or disagree that the compromises solved the issues of territorial expansion and slavery. Why or why not?

**ASSESSMENT IN THIS LESSON:**

1. Informal assessment through discussions related to the personas and the compromises
2. Completed *Compromise Sheet*
3. Completed final essay on persona's opinion of the compromises that took place prior to the war.



# National Expansion Map



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Free States (Free Soil)	Slave States (Slave labor)
Connecticut	Delaware
Massachusetts	Georgia
New Hampshire	Maryland
New Jersey	North Carolina
New York	South Carolina
Pennsylvania	Virginia
Rhode Island	Kentucky
Vermont	Tennessee
Ohio	Louisiana
Indiana	Mississippi
Illinois	Alabama

**Directions:** Draw a line showing the border between the Free Soil states and Slave Labor states

**Question:** At this point, the number of free and slave states is even. Consider the implications if only one slave labor OR one Free Soil territory petitions for statehood.



## Compromise Scenario Cards

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### **ALABAMA**

You are a farmer, and you rent the land you farm. You do not own slaves. You believe that white men are the only real, legal, moral and civil proprietors of your state and country. You cannot vote.

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### **CONNECTICUT**

You are an emancipated black man. You are a tailor, and you are saving your salary to buy your wife and children from their owners. You are treated like a second-class citizen. You cannot vote.

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### **DELAWARE**

You are a farmer owns three slaves. You believe you should be able to bring your property into any state or territory that you want. You believe that manual labor is the proper work for slaves.

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### **GEORGIA**

You are a wealthy tobacco planter originally from New York. Your plantation has 250 slaves. You believe the slaves are better off here in America than they would be in Africa. You are also a U. S. senator.

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### **INDIANA**

You are an 18-year-old carpenter's apprentice. You do not want to compete for a job with a black man, who will work for less wages. You are in favor of keeping the status quo. You cannot vote.

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**ILLINOIS**

You are a farmer. You don't have an opinion on slavery, but you think the Southern states have too much influence in the government. You are in favor of new states joining the Union.

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**KENTUCKY**

You raise and train racehorses. You own ten slaves. You treat them well, and you believe they are happy, content, and devoted to you and your family. You believe the Union will dissolve if legislators cannot compromise.

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**LOUISIANA**

You are an overseer on a large cotton plantation in charge of 500 slaves. You believe they are better suited for the climate and labor than white men. You cannot vote.

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**MARYLAND**

You are a cotton broker. You believe Cotton Is King. The more cotton the North needs, the more you profit. Slavery makes good economic sense to you.

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**MASSACHUSETTS**

You are a newspaper editor in the city, and you ardently believe that it is the government's responsibility to abolish slavery. You write editorials denouncing the evils of slavery. Your views are not always popular.

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**MISSISSIPPI**

You are a lawyer, and your best clients are plantation owners. You uphold the Slave Code, but you privately have doubts about the morality of slavery and question that the Constitution protects the institution of slavery.

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**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

You are country doctor. You believe slavery will eventually and gradually die out as the South becomes more industrial. You are concerned that the majority of presidents have been slaveholders.

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**NEW JERSEY**

You are a college graduate and a teacher who was tutor to a planter's family in the South. When you were warned not to teach the slaves, you left your position to return home. You believe that slaves should be repatriated to Africa.

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**NEW YORK**

You are a minister who traveled through the South. You witnessed a slave auction. You are opposed to slavery on moral grounds and believe it is inconsistent with the Declaration of Independence.

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**NORTH CAROLINA**

You own a small farm. You resent the plantation aristocracy and would like to see them overthrown. You believe Southerners should invest their money in the South rather than send it North. You see slavery as a necessary economic evil.

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**OHIO**

You are a store clerk. You are a Quaker and a secret member of the Union Humane Society. You keep your membership secret because your neighbors do not agree that all men are born equal.

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**PENNSYLVANIA**

You live in a town near the Mason-Dixon line. Sometimes escaped slaves stop by your house for help, but you don't want to break the law by helping them. You deny any knowledge of them when their owners post a reward.

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**RHODE ISLAND**

You are a wealthy merchant whose family fortune was made in the slave trade. You now own a mill that processes cotton imported from the South. You employ immigrant labor. You dispute charges that mill workers are like slaves. You are making your family's second fortune.

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**SOUTH CAROLINA**

You are a slave trader. Your business auctions three classes of slaves: servants, town slave, and field hands. You would like to expand your business. The more cotton the world needs, the more slaves you can auction.

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**TENNESSEE**

You are a poor farmer. You don't own slaves and cannot afford to rent them to help with the harvest. You remember Gabriel Prosser and you are worried about slave rebellion.

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**VERMONT**

You believe a free man has more motivation to work and succeed than an enslaved man. You believe where the manual labor of a country is performed by slaves, labor dishonors the hands of free men.

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**VIRGINIA**

You are a free black man. You must carry a certificate of freedom, have a license to do business, and observe a curfew. You own three barber shops and several slaves.

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**ARKANSAS**

You are a veteran of the Mexican-American War. Your service and the sacrifice of your comrades helped the United States acquire the new territories. You believe you have a right to establish slavery in the territories as long as it is below the line established by the Missouri Compromise.

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**IOWA**

You are a banker. You own two slaves: a housekeeper and a handy man. Sometimes you rent out the handy man so that you can earn extra income. You believe abolitionists are attacking the Southern way of life and that abolition and the Union cannot co-exist.

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**FLORIDA**

You are a slave catcher. Slavery is protected by the Constitution. You believe the Southern economy will collapse without the institution of slavery.

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**WISCONSIN**

You live in a city and have never met a black person but you believe everything that you have heard about slaves: that they are lazy and shiftless. You don't have strong convictions one way or the other; you are too concerned with keeping a steady job to support your family.

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**TEXAS**

You are a slave whose master is a Fire-Eater—he believes the North wants to rule the South and he thinks the South would be better off not being part of the Union. Your master is a good Christian who finds biblical justification for slavery. He believes that you are happy. You cannot vote.

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**MAINE**

Your free state was created as a result of the Missouri Compromise. You are opposed to slavery, and in 1836 you petitioned Congress to abolish slavery and the slave trade in Washington, D.C. You believe that there is a law higher than the Constitution.

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**MISSOURI**

You are a river boat captain. Your state was created as a result of the Missouri Compromise. You think the balance of power between the slave states and the free states is important. You are concerned that North will become too powerful because of greater representation in Congress.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Compromise Notes Sheet

### Compromise of 1820 (Missouri Compromise)

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Tell a little about yourself:

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Do you think Missouri should enter the Union as a free or slave state? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want that?

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How do you feel about the Missouri Compromise decision?

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### Compromise of 1850

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Tell a little about yourself:

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Do you think the new territories should enter the Union as free or slave states? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want that?

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How do you feel about the Compromise of 1850 decision?

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How do you feel about the Fugitive Slave Act? Is it fair? Why or why not?

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### **Kansas-Nebraska Act**

Do you think Kansas and Nebraska should enter as free or slave states? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want that?

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How do you feel about the Kansas-Nebraska Act decision?

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### **Dred Scott Case**

According to the editorial, what group do the authors believe the Supreme Court decision favors?

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Who do you think it favors?

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## Comparing the North and South

Free States	Slave States
<b>Geography</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate favors smaller family farms</li> <li>• Short growing season</li> <li>• Natural resources: coal, timber, iron, water power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate favors larger farms and plantations</li> <li>• Long growing season</li> <li>• Soil and climate to grow crops including: tobacco, cotton, rice, sugar</li> </ul>
<b>Culture</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/4 population lived in urban areas</li> <li>• Larger population that was growing rapidly due to immigration</li> <li>• High literacy rate (95%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/10 population lived in urban areas along rivers or coasts (shipping ports)</li> <li>• Smaller population</li> <li>• Lower literacy rate (50% among blacks &amp; whites)</li> </ul>
<b>Economy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free labor (created monopolies – 5% of population owned 70% of total property)</li> <li>• Industrial (mass production)</li> <li>• Farming</li> <li>• Canals and roads financed by states and banks</li> <li>• 2/3 of all railroad lines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slave labor (2/3 population did not own slaves)</li> <li>• Some industry</li> <li>• Agrarian (mass production)</li> <li>• Exported raw material to free states &amp; Europe</li> <li>• 35% of railroad lines – transportation difficult</li> </ul>
<b>Political Beliefs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposed the expansion of slavery</li> <li>• Favored government intervention in economy and social issues</li> <li>• States' rights (Personal Liberty Laws)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favored expansion of slavery</li> <li>• Opposed government interference in economy or social issues</li> <li>• States' rights (citizens have a right to take property &lt;slaves&gt; anywhere)</li> </ul>
<b>Government</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democrat (1800–) National party - favored slavery</li> <li>• Whig (1834–1854) 2 wings: loyal to Union &amp; antislavery / loyal to region &amp; slavery</li> <li>• Free Soil (1848–1854) – opposed slavery</li> <li>• Republican (1854–) Sectional party – opposed expansion of slavery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democrat (1800–) National party - favored slavery</li> <li>• Whig (1834–1854) 2 wings: loyal to Union &amp; antislavery / loyal to region &amp; slavery</li> </ul>