



GOAL 1 | LESSON PLAN | ELEMENTARY

Pre-1860: Disunion

GRADES: Elementary

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TIME: 60 min. (not including the final essay)

GOAL: Students will be able to identify major causes leading to the outbreak of the American Civil War.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to compare the cultures and economies of the Northern and Southern states.
2. Students will be able to chronologically organize and summarize major events contributing to the outbreak of the American Civil War.
3. Students will be able to discuss the actions of John Brown at Harpers Ferry and the reaction of the country.

COMMON CORE:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9

Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

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—Civics, Ideals, and Practices

MATERIALS:

Download the lesson plan, along with the following materials and PowerPoints, at the bottom of this page.

1. KWL Chart
2. US Expansion PowerPoint
3. Comparing Cultures and Economies Chart
4. Scissors, glue, and large sheet of paper.
5. Disunion Information Cards (with questions)
6. John Brown PowerPoint
7. Disunion Essay

ANTICIPATORY SET:

1. Write on display the term, “Civil War”
2. Ask students what they know about this term
3. Help them define the term (a war between citizens of the same country.)
4. Begin a “KWL” chart, for the entire class, on the Coming of the American Civil War. Identify what they know and what they want to learn.
 - Ask students if they know about what happened right before America’s Civil War.
 - Maybe discuss what you have already covered in American history to this point.
 - Ask if they know when the war occurred (asking about how long ago).
 - Who fought.
 - What might be some reasons it was fought.
 - Where (in what region or states) it was fought.
 - What were the names of the groups who fought.

PROCEDURE:**Activity 1**

1. View the video of American expansion maps in the [US Expansion PowerPoint or Video](#) and complete the discussion questions within the presentation.
2. Ask students if there is something they could put in their ‘learned’ section of the ‘KWL’ chart.
 - Something they may have learned is that the country grew vastly at a very quick pace from the time of independence. This would bring up a number of logistical issues that the federal government would have to manage.

Activity 2

1. Hand out a *Comparing Cultures and Economies Chart*.
 - The information for this chart was created as a summary using the 1860 US census data, which can be found online at census.gov.
2. Read over the information as a class and discuss.
3. Ask students if there is anything they would like to put into their ‘learned’ section of their ‘KWL’ chart.
 - Something they may have learned from this information is that by the 1860s the Northern and Southern regions of the country were seeing some major differences.

Activity 3

1. Define the following words:
 - Antebellum - occurring or existing before a particular war, especially the American Civil War.

- Compromise - an agreement or a settlement of a dispute that is reached by each side making concessions.
 - Abolitionist - a person who favors the abolition (end) of a practice or institution, especially slavery.
 - Secede - withdraw formally from membership of a federal union, an alliance, or a political or religious organization.
 - See our [Glossary of Civil War Terms](#) or our [Glossary of 18th and 19th Century Political Terms](#).
2. Place students into small groups of 3 or 4.
 3. Give each group a set of *Disunion Information Cards*.
 4. Have students cut out the cards and place them in chronological order, gluing them onto a large sheet of paper.
 5. Each small group should read the information on the cards and work as a group to answer the associated questions.
 6. Our [Trigger Events of the Civil War](#) article can be useful for you and your students.
 7. Watch the first two-and-a-half-minutes of the [War Between the States In4](#) Video.
 8. Watch [The Coming of the War In4](#) Video.
 9. Discuss with the class what they can now enter into the 'learned' section of the 'KWL' chart.

Activity 4

1. Print the *John Brown PowerPoint* with the notes for yourself and the students.
2. Hand out copies of the *John Brown PowerPoint* with those notes.
3. Present the *John Brown PowerPoint*.
4. Complete the discussion questions on the last slide, either discussing as a class or having students write their answers.
5. Discuss with the class what they can now enter into the 'learned' section of the 'KWL' chart.

CLOSURE:

1. Review the 'KWL' chart. Discuss what the students have learn.
2. Students should complete the Disunion Essay; this can be done for homework or independently in class.

ASSESSMENT IN THIS LESSON:

1. KWL Chart and informal discussion of what was learned.
2. *Disunion Information Cards* and question sheet.
3. Informal assessment during John Brown presentation questions.
4. A completed Disunion Essay.



Comparing Cultures and Economies Chart

Name: _____
Date: _____

	North	South
Slavery	<p>Opposed</p> <p>By the 1840s slavery had ended in New England, NY, and MI. By 1850 slave labor ended in PA, OH, IN, IL, and WI. For the most part, Northerner states did not support slave labor. Some Northerners called themselves abolitionists and worked to end slavery.</p>	<p>Generally Supported</p> <p>While most Southerners did not own slaves, for the most part Southerners accepted the practice of slavery and the culture surrounding it. Many relied on slavery for social, economic, and political reasons.</p>
Cultural	<p>Urban</p> <p>While there were plenty of farms, eight of the ten largest cities, such as New York and Boston, existed in the North as well as many smaller cities.</p>	<p>Rural</p> <p>While large cities existed, homes and farms tended to be spread apart.</p>
Economic	<p>Manufacturing</p> <p>Most modern industrial factories were located in the North. Free citizens and immigrants were paid to work in these factories.</p>	<p>Agricultural</p> <p>While there was farming throughout the country, the large plantation style farms were in the South. Slave labor was used to work the plantations.</p>
Constitutional	<p>Federal</p> <p>Some Northerners felt strongly that the United States should remain a union of states with a strong, central federal government.</p>	<p>States' Rights</p> <p>Some southerners supported states' rights and, believed that the federal government should have less power while states should have more independence to govern themselves.</p>



Disunion Information Cards

1820

Missouri Compromise – In 1818, Missouri sought admission to the Union as a slave-holding state. After two years of bitter debate, the Missouri Compromise was agreed upon. This compromise admitted Missouri into the Union as a slave state and admitted Maine as a free state to maintain the slave-free state balance in the Senate. The compromise prohibited slavery north of latitude 36° 30' in the Louisiana Purchase territory, with the exception of Missouri, and slavery was allowed south of that line.

1831

Nat Turner's Rebellion – Nat Turner, a slave, along with 60 other slaves, led a violent rebellion that resulted in the deaths of more than 50 Virginians. Nat and many others were executed for their role, or suspected role, in the revolt. Nat Turner's Rebellion struck long-term fear in the hearts of slave owners, who placed new restrictions on slaves, and it prompted a national debate on the slavery question.

1852

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* – This book was published in response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold two million copies worldwide within its first two years. After the Bible, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the highest selling book of the 19th century. President Lincoln read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* before announcing the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, and when he met Stowe, he exclaimed, “So this is the little woman who started this great war!”

1852

Declaration of Causes, South Carolina – In April of 1852 South Carolina declared that the federal government has violated the state's rights under the U.S. Constitution. South Carolina, however, did not secede at this time.

1861

The Civil War Begins – On April 12 at 4:30 a.m., the Civil War began when the Confederates fired on Union-held Fort Sumter (South Carolina). “Our Southern brethren have done grievously wrong, they have rebelled and have attacked their father’s house and their loyal brothers. They must be punished and brought back, but this necessity breaks my heart.” –

Major Robert Anderson, commanding officer at Fort Sumter

1860

Presidential Election – Abraham Lincoln was elected President. Lincoln was a member of the Republican Party, which wanted to ban slavery in the territories. Many Southerners feared that Lincoln would ban slavery not only in the territories, but also try to abolish it nationwide.

1854

Kansas-Nebraska Act – This act repealed the Missouri Compromise, which stated that states north of latitude 36° 30' would be free states. This allowed settlers in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide whether they would allow slavery within their borders when they applied for statehood. The Kansas-Nebraska Act split the Democratic Party and virtually destroyed the Whig Party. The northern Whigs joined the antislavery Democrats to form the Republican Party.

1857

Dred Scott Decision – Dred Scott, a slave, sued for his freedom on the grounds that since his master had taken him to live in free territories, he should be free. The controversial decision of the U.S. Supreme Court stated that no slave or descendant of a slave could be a U.S. citizen. As a non-citizen and a slave viewed as property, Scott was not entitled to file suit. The Court also ruled that Congress had no power to exclude slavery from the territories; therefore, the Missouri Compromise and other legislation limiting slavery were unconstitutional.

1850

Compromise of 1850 – Disagreements erupted over whether land acquired from Mexico after the Mexican-American War would become slave or free states. The compromise admitted California as a free state, and the inhabitants of the territories of New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah would be allowed to decide whether or not to permit slavery in their territories when they applied for statehood. The compromise included the **Fugitive Slave Act**, which denied captured blacks legal power to prove their status as free persons and required U.S. marshals and deputies—everywhere—to help slave owners recapture their property. The compromise also ended the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

1859

John Brown's Raid – John Brown, an abolitionist, and his followers seized the U.S. armory and arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia killing civilians and taking hostages in the process. Brown hoped his actions would inspire a slave rebellion. Brown and his followers were quickly killed or captured and later hanged for their actions. While the slaves did not rise up and follow Brown, his raid sparked debate. Northern abolitionists viewed Brown as a martyr, while many Southerners viewed Brown as a criminal.

Pre- 1861: Disunion

In your group, put your event cards in chronological order. Then use the cards to answer the following questions.

1. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted the state of _____ as a slave state and the state of _____ as a free state.
2. In 1831 Nat Turner led a slave revolt in Virginia. He was captured and _____.
3. In the _____ of 1850, the territories of New Mexico, _____, _____, and Utah would be allowed to decide for themselves whether to enter as free or slave states.
4. The Southern slave-holding states benefitted from the _____, which required U.S. marshals to assist in the recapture and return of runaway slaves.
5. A document similar to the Declaration of Independence, the _____ of Causes for South Carolina, said that states could function as individual countries.
6. Harriet Beecher Stowe's book _____ sold more than two million copies in two years. Written in response to the Fugitive Slave Law, Lincoln read this book before issuing the Emancipation Proclamation.
7. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 stated that the states could decide for themselves to enter the Union as a _____ state or a free state.
8. Dred Scott was a slave who sued the United States for his freedom based on his master taking him to a free territory. The Court denied his suit, saying that Scott was not a _____ and considered _____; therefore, he had no right to sue.
9. _____ led a raid on the armory and arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia in hopes of causing _____ to rebel.
10. Abraham Lincoln was elected _____ of the United States in 1860. The Southern states feared he would _____ slavery.
11. Early in the morning on April 12, 1861, Confederate forces fired on _____ in the bay of Charleston, South Carolina.

Pre-1860:Disunion—Traditional Elementary School KWL Chart

What Do We Know	What Do We Want to Know	What Did We Learn



Disunion Essay

Using the KWL chart you created as a class, the Comparing Cultures and Economies Chart, the Disunion Information Cards, and the John Brown Presentation discuss the following:

What drove the United States to war in 1861? Describe in detail two major trigger events and discuss how they contributed to the outbreak of the American Civil War.



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