



THE Civil War Curriculum

by the CIVIL WAR TRUST | Civilwar.org/curriculum

GOAL 1 | LESSON PLAN | ELEMENTARY

Pre-1861: Disunion

GRADES: Elementary

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TIME: 50 min.

GOAL: Students will be able to identify the causes 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 summarize the main points of the Missouri Compromise, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the Declaration of Causes of the Seceding States.
3. Students will be able to discuss the actions of John Brown at Harpers Ferry and the reaction of the country.

MATERIALS:

1. Chart Paper
2. Sticky notes
3. Comparing Cultures and Economies Chart
4. Drawing Paper
5. Crayons
6. Scissors
7. Glue
8. Disunion Information Cards (with questions)
9. John Brown PowerPoint
10. Comparing Cultures and Economies Essay

ANTICIPATORY SET/HOOK:

1. Ask: What is your favorite thing to do? Have students their response on a sticky note and put the note on a sheet of chart paper labeled “Our Favorite Things.”

2. Read aloud a few of these items.
3. Tell students to consider no longer being able to do the things they like the most.
4. On a new sticky note, have students write how losing things makes them feel.
5. Put these on a separate sheet of chart paper labeled “Losing Our Favorite Things,” and have several students discuss their feelings.
6. Ask the students to think about what it might be like to never have the opportunity to do a favorite activity again- or how their lives may be different if they could no longer play with or use something they love. Example: What might it be like to never be able to play with your best friend again, or how would you feel if there were no more television shows to watch or video games to play?
7. Now we are going to learn about a time when some people felt they were losing their way of life, while others who never had the opportunity to experience certain things were able to for the first time.

PROCEDURE:

Activity 1

1. Hand out a *Comparing Cultures and Economies Chart* to each child.
2. Read over the information as a class and discuss.
3. Ask for suggestions as to how you could illustrate the information on the chart.
4. Work in small groups, using the information on the chart to draw an illustration of life in the North and life in the South.
5. Display these pictures around the classroom or in the hallway.

Activity 2

1. Place students into small groups of 3 or 4.
2. Give each group a set of *Disunion Information Cards*.
3. Have students cut out the cards and place them in chronological order.
4. Ask each small group to read the information on the cards.
5. Have each small group use the cards to answer the associated questions as a group.

Activity 3

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.

CLOSURE:

1. Ask: Based on what we learned today, do you think people knew a war was coming? Do you think they could have worked harder to solve their problems without violence? What else do you think they could have done before going to war?
2. Using the *Comparing Cultural and Economies Essay*, discuss the differences between the Northern and Southern states.

ASSESSMENT IN THIS LESSON:

1. Illustration of life in the North and life in the South.
2. *Disunion Information Cards* and question sheet.
3. Informal assessment during John Brown presentation questions.
4. A Written paragraph comparing the cultural and economic differences between the Northern and Southern states.



Comparing Cultures and Economies Chart

Name: _____
Date: _____

	North	South
Slavery	<p>Opposed</p> <p>For the most part, Northerners 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 supported the practice of slavery. Many relied on slavery for social, economic, and political reasons.</p>
Cultural	<p>Urban</p> <p>While there were plenty of farms, large 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>While there were factories throughout the country, most were in the North. Free citizens were paid to work in these factories.</p>	<p>Agricultural</p> <p>While there was farming throughout the country, the large plantation farms were in the South. Slaves worked on the plantations.</p>
Constitutional	<p>Federal</p> <p>Many in the North felt strongly that the United States should remain a union of states with a supportive federal government.</p>	<p>States' Rights</p> <p>Many in the South supported states' rights and, believed that the federal government should have less power.</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 to the Union as a slave state and admitted Maine as a free state to maintain the balance in the Senate. The compromise prohibited slavery north of latitude 36° 30' in the Louisiana Purchase territory, with the exception of Missouri, and allowed it 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 part, or suspected part, 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 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 slaves to rise up. 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 murderer.

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 1850 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 South benefitted from the _____, which required U.S. marshalls 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 in the South.
11. Early in the morning on April 12, 1861, Confederate forces fired on _____ in South Carolina.

