

Learning Objectives

- 1) Understand the general condition of the nation at the time leading up to the Civil War.
 - a) The country was expanding westward (e.g., Louisiana Purchase, Lewis and Clark Expedition, Oregon Trail, railroad, etc.).
 - b) The East was becoming more divided. The North and the South disagreed in many matters of politics, economics, and slavery.
- 2) Realize the economic differences between the North and the South.
 - a) The North was very industrial. Eighty percent of the country's factories were in the North. Because of this, the population was much greater. Northerners owned most of the railroads, built canals, and controlled most of the banks.
 - b) The South was very agricultural. Most Southerners were farmers. They raised "cash crops" and sold them to the North and Europe. Nearly 90% of the world's raw cotton came from the South.
- 3) Understand the division caused by tariffs. Congress created a tariff taxing all imported European goods. They wanted the South buying from the North instead of from Europe. This made the South economically dependent on the North. Senator John Calhoun argued that Congress did not have the right to use a tariff to protect the manufacturing industry of the North at the cost of the agricultural South.
- 4) Know the different views regarding slavery. The South had become dependent on the free labor of African slaves, but many people in the North believed that slavery was wrong.
- 5) Understand the different views regarding politics. The Northern states were gaining more power in the federal government. With their growing population, they had more representation in congress. The South was afraid the North was becoming too powerful. They didn't want a strong federal government but rather wanted each state to set its own laws (i.e., states' rights).
 - 6) Recognize some of the compromises passed by the Congress. These were typically over which states would be free or slave. The Missouri Compromise (Henry Clay, 1820) prohibited slavery in the lands of the Louisiana Purchase, north of Missouri's southern border. In the Compromise of 1850, California was admitted as a free state, and the territories of New Mexico and Utah were given the right to decide if they wanted to be free or slave states. This compromise also enacted tougher fugitive slave laws, and slavery was forbidden in the District of Columbia. The Kansas Nebraska Act (1854) gave both of these territories the right to decide to become free or slave states.
 - 7) Realize what happened with the Dred Scott Decision. Dred Scott, a slave, argued his freedom before the Supreme Court because he and his owner had once lived in free states. The court said that he, as a slave, was not a citizen and thus could not sue the courts. They also ruled the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional. This was very good for the Southern cause.
 - 8) Recognize some of the important abolitionists.
 - a) Frederick Douglas was an escaped slave who made speeches and wrote articles against slavery. He believed all people were equal and should be treated as equal under the law
 - b) William Lloyd Garrison published a newspaper called the *Liberator*.
 - c) Sojourner Truth, another former slave, gave speeches on equality and abolition.
 - d) Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This book made many people in the United States and Europe aware of the poor treatment of the slaves in the South.
 - e) Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave, "conducted" the Underground Railroad, which was an organization of people who helped more than three hundred slaves escape to freedom.
 - f) John Brown tried to help slaves fight for their freedom. They seized weapons from Harper's Ferry, Virginia, but were stopped by local militia and federal troops.
 - 9) Know that Abraham Lincoln, a Northerner, was elected president in 1860. He was against slavery and believed in a strong federal government.
 - 10) Understand the formation of the Confederate States of America. It began when South Carolina seceded in December of 1860. Next, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas left the Union. They elected Jefferson Davis as their president.
 - 11) Know how the Civil War started. In April of 1861, the Confederates ordered Union soldiers to evacuate Fort Sumter in South Carolina. When the Union army refused to leave, the Confederates opened fire.

Suggested Activity

Ask the students why they think people would want to go to war against other people from their own country—sometimes even family members. See if they have any ideas for what caused the Civil War. When finished with the discussion, show the video.

Vocabulary

Slave — A person owned by other people and forced to do work for them without pay.

Abolitionist — A person who wanted slavery to end.

Secede — To leave the Union.

