

Teacher Notes



The Antebellum Period – The Issue of Slavery and the Question of Secession

Activity 3 To Secede or Not to Secede?

Activity Overview

In this activity, the students, acting as “representatives” from their region of the South, will synthesize and evaluate the information from Activities 1 and 2 in order to develop a position statement expressing their region’s intent to secede or stay with the Union. The representatives from each region will then take a vote to decide on the secession of the South. Each student was assigned their region at the end of the last activity.

Activity at a Glance

- ◆ **Subject:** Social Studies
- ◆ **Subject Area:** U. S. History
- ◆ **Category:** Westward Expansion and Reform
- ◆ **Topic:** The Antebellum Period
- ◆ **Grade Level:** 8 - 11
- ◆ **Prerequisites:** Students should be familiar with the political, economic, and socio-cultural long-range causes of the Civil War, such as states’ rights, tariffs, and the differences between the North and the South. Students should also understand the meaning of “secession.”
- ◆ **Total Teaching Time:** 80 minutes

Materials

- ◆ TI-83 Plus device
- ◆ Student Data Sheets: **The Meeting and The Vote**
- ◆ LearningCheck™ edc resource files, **Activity3-1Pos** and **Activity3-2Vote**
- ◆ LearningCheck™ App
- ◆ TI-Navigator™, TI-GRAPH LINK™ Cable, USB Cable
- ◆ TI External Keyboard
- ◆ Notes from Activities 1 and 2
- ◆ Teacher Debriefing Guide with Suggested Rubrics

Directions

Before the Activity Begins

Make sure each student has a TI-83 Plus loaded with the LearningCheck™ App.

After you have assigned each student to a specific region within their groups of three, explain that they will be drafting a position statement stating whether or not their region should secede or stay loyal to the Union.

Send students the **Activity3-1pos** edc resource file, **To Secede or not to Secede?**, using the TI-Navigator™. Explain to students that they will type their statements using the TI External Keyboard connected to the TI-83 Plus. The students should open the **Activity3-1pos** file, then select and open the item entitled **Explanation**. Read and review the directions with the students. Answer any questions.

During the Activity

Circulate and monitor the students' progress. Guide students to information relevant to their region, if needed. If necessary, provide technological assistance.

Have the small groups formed in Activity 2 reconvene. In these groups, have each student representative read their position statement to the other representatives. When all representatives are finished reading their statements, have the group members discuss and debate their region's position on secession. If positions within the group differ, encourage students to try and sway the other members of the group to change their decision. If a student is convinced to change their position, they can change their position statements. Instruct students to send their position statements to the teacher via the TI-Navigator™.

The student representatives must now take a vote on whether or not the South should secede from the Union. Send students the **Activity 3-2Vote** edc resource file, **The South Decides...**, using the TI-Navigator™. Explain to students that they will type their statements using the TI External Keyboard connected to the TI-83 Plus. Hand out the Student Data Sheet, **The Meeting and The Vote**, to reinforce the goals of this exercise.

The students should open the **Activity 3-2Vote** file, then select and open the item entitled **Explanation**. Read and review the directions with the students. Answer any questions.

Have the class form three new groups, based upon the region they represent. Each region votes separately. That is, ask all of the representatives of the Upper South to place their votes, then the Middle, and then the Lower South. After each region votes, have the students send their votes to you via the TI-Navigator™. Calculate the results by region as well as by total.

When it is time for a particular region to vote, tell the representatives of that region to open the Standard Response section titled "The Vote" and place their vote by choosing "yes" to secede, or "no" to stay loyal to the Union. Then, have them send their votes to the teacher using the TI-Navigator™.

After all students have voted, use the TI-Navigator™ to automatically calculate and graphically display the votes. Make sure to do a regional and a total calculation.

Display the results to the students. Encourage students to discuss why they decided to secede or stay loyal, if their votes differed from their position statements, and if their positions were swayed by the representatives from other regions in their groups during their debate/discussion.

After the Activity

Debrief students by showing them a list of the states that actually seceded from the Union and when they seceded. Have them make observations about the list and compare it to the results of their “vote.” They should notice that the states that seceded first were from the Lower South, those that seceded second (after Ft. Sumter) were from the Middle South, and those that are not listed, and thus stayed loyal to the Union, comprised the Upper South.

Ask a student from each region whose vote matched the actual decision of their region to share their position statements with the class. Use their statements to generate discussion and to glean insights about why each region made their particular decision.

Finally, explain that the election of Lincoln was an immediate cause of the Civil War, because it influenced the Lower South's decision to secede. Emphasize that although Secession was another immediate cause of the Civil War, the issue of slavery was a major underlying factor in both Secession and the War itself. Most of the long-range causes (such as states' rights, expansion of free/slave states, and so forth) involved the issue of slavery.

Suggested Activities for Further Study

Explore the economic, political and social progress made by African Americans since the Civil War, as well as the continuing challenge of ensuring equal rights and opportunities in our country.

Investigate current instances of human rights violations (such as child labor, sweat-shop labor, contemporary slavery) and their economic relationship (corporate profit/consumer benefits), and compare this relationship to the enslavement of African Americans in our country.

Student Data Sheet

Name: _____

The Meeting and The Vote

Date: _____

The Meeting

You are attending a meeting of Southern states as a representative from your region. You will now be asked to vote on whether or not the South should secede from the Union. Think carefully about your decision, as the fate of your region, the South as a whole, and the nation may hinge upon your vote.

When your region is asked to place their vote, open the Standard Response section titled "The Vote."

The Vote

Should the South secede from the Union, and declare itself an independent nation?

Read the Ballot and vote "yes" to secede or "no" to stay loyal to the Union.

Send your vote to your teacher using the TI-Navigator™.

Teacher Debriefing Guide

Evaluating Students' Position Papers

Multiply the score by 20 to get a scale of 100. You may use half-points. For example, a score of 4.5 would equal a score of 90.

5=Exceeds standard

4=Meets standard

3=Approaching standard

2=Partially meets standard

1=Other

5=The statement demonstrates understanding of the content. The statement is thorough and complete. The statement is accurate and provides ample and detailed evidence to support the position. Format criteria a-d has been met.

4=The statement demonstrates general understanding of the content. The statement is substantial. The statement is generally accurate but may include some minor errors. There is general evidence to support the position. Format criteria a-d has been met.

3=The statement demonstrates partial understanding of the content. The statement is incomplete but on topic. The statement may include errors. There is some evidence to support the argument. Format criteria a-d is incomplete.

2=The statement demonstrates limited understanding of the content. The statement is incomplete and may include off-topic information. The statement includes misunderstandings and errors. The response lacks meaningful evidence. Format criteria a-d is incomplete.

1=Other