

Teacher Notes



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

Activity 1 Investigating Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation

Activity Overview

In this activity, students will investigate selected Antebellum events that divided the North and South over the issue of slavery. Students will be placed into groups of five, and then each student will independently research their assigned event. Students will share their findings with their group, and the group will predict and discuss the effects these events had on the North and South. Students will then complete the chart, **Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation**,

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:** 90 minutes

Materials

- ◆ TI-83 Plus device
- ◆ Student Data Sheets: **Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation – Event Chart, Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation, Letter to the Editor**
- ◆ PC with Internet access
- ◆ NoteFolio™ Application
- ◆ TI-Navigator™, TI-GRAPH LINK™ Cable, USB Cable
- ◆ Unit-to-unit Cables
- ◆ TI External Keyboard

using this information. As a culminating activity, students will write a **Letter to the Editor** about their designated event from a Northern perspective.

Tips

- ◆ This activity requires that students have access to the Internet. If this is not possible, use the website, www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4, to print copies of the information students need to complete their research.

Note: Please remember to cite this source on any copies you distribute to students.

- ◆ Students are to be placed in groups of five. In the event that groups are uneven, you can do the following:
 - a. For groups with under five students, assign two students to share the research for the extra event;
 - b. For groups with over five students, assign two students the same event who will share their findings with the group.

Directions

Before the Activity Begins

Make sure each student has a TI-83 Plus device loaded with the NoteFolio™ application. Divide the class into groups of five students each. Assign each student a number from one to five within his/her group.

Distribute the Student Data Sheets: **Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation** and the **Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation: Event Chart**. Explain that they will be researching the event on the chart that corresponds to their number. Read and review the directions with the students.

During the Activity

Monitor the students' progress. Circulate and assist students in their research and guide their discussions, if necessary. Make sure that students do not fill in their charts during Part B of the activity to ensure that their attention will not be distracted from listening and discussing the events.

During Part C, assist students in connecting their TI-83 devices together, if necessary. Also, make sure you receive all NoteFolio™ AppVars that the students will submit to you on their assigned event.

Finally, distribute Student Data Sheet **Letter to the Editor** to students, and explain the directions and format for writing a letter to the editor (located on the handout.) Because these events occurred over a period of time, it is important to emphasize to the students the sequence of events and how they related to one another. Assist students by answering questions or clarifying

directions. When all students complete their letters, ask for volunteers to share their letters with the class.

After the Activity

Collect the students' letters. Debrief students on the activity by reviewing and discussing how the Antebellum events affected the North and South. Ask students to describe the sequence of events and their relation to one another. Encourage students to speculate on how these events could have contributed to the secession of the South.

Student Data Sheet

Name: _____

Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation

Date: _____

Directions

Part A

1. Each member of your group will independently research one event from the **Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation - Events Chart** and report their findings back to the group. The event you will research corresponds to the number that your teacher gave you within your group. For example, if you were assigned the number 1, you will research the Fugitive Slave Act; if you were assigned the number 2, then you will research the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
2. Search your textbook and the web address, www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/, to obtain the following information about your event:
 - Date of event
 - Brief description of event (who/what, where, why, how and outcome)
 - Effects of your event on the North and the South
3. Enter the information into the NoteFolio™ Application of your TI-83 Plus using your keyboard. Use the "Events" chart categories as headings for your document.

Part B

1. After every member of your group has completed the tasks in Part A, the group will reconvene and share their findings as the "expert" on their event.
2. Starting with the first event on the chart, the student will share the first two categories (Date and Description ONLY) of information about their event by reading from their NoteFolio™ file. After each event is explained, the group will discuss the event and the "expert" will answer questions from the group. Do NOT discuss the Effects category.
3. Next, the group will use this information to predict what effects this event had on the North and the South.
4. After the group is through discussing their predictions, the "expert" will debrief their group by explaining the Effects information from their NoteFolio™ file. The group should compare this information with their predictions.
5. Repeat this process until all events are explained and discussed.

Part C

1. Group members will link their NoteFolio™ files to each other to download information about each event, and then use this stored information to fill out their **Events** charts. Do not fill out the **Events** charts during Part B; all group members should be focused on listening and discussing the events, not filling in the charts.
2. Send the NoteFolio™ file for your event to the teacher for evaluation. You can keep your charts as a reference for the next activity.

Student Data Sheet

Name: _____

Antebellum Events that Divided the Nation – Event Chart

Date: _____

Event	Date	Description	Effects on North/South
1. Fugitive Slave Act			
2. Uncle Tom's Cabin Published			
3. Kansas-Nebraska Act "Bleeding Kansas"			
4. Dred Scott Case			
5. John Brown's Raid On Harper's Ferry			

Student Data Sheet
Letter to the Editor

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions:

You are a Northerner. On a separate sheet of paper or in a new NoteFolio™ file, write a letter to the editor about your assigned event from the previous activity. The letter should state your opinion about the event from a Northern point of view. Please identify yourself (some examples are: abolitionist, business owner, female, and free African American) to help further clarify your point of view. You should also make reference to at least two other events on the chart that occurred prior to your designated event, and explain how these events related to each other.* Use the information you learned from the **Events** chart and your group's discussion as guide. Be prepared to share your letter with the class.

*Note: If you are assigned to one of the earliest events (Fugitive Slave Act or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), you need to address related events that occurred prior to yours that are not listed on the chart, such as the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850.

The letter must meet the following requirements:

- ◆ Be one page in length
- ◆ State your identity
- ◆ Be dated with a date appropriate for the event
- ◆ Begin with the salutation, "Dear Editor"
- ◆ Be signed with your full name at the end
- ◆ Provide a brief summarization of the event and its outcome
- ◆ Provide a brief explanation of at least two events prior to yours and how they are related
- ◆ Explain the effects the event had on the North
- ◆ Contain your opinion on whether the event was beneficial or harmful for the North
- ◆ Contain at least two points/examples to support your opinion
- ◆ Contain a brief conclusion