

Borders and Bondage

Trace the arguments over slavery, territory, and political power.

SS.8.A.4.2 "Describe the debate surrounding the spread of slavery into western territories and Florida."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each argument supporting the spread of slavery, and circle each argument opposing it. Number 1 beside a detail about Florida and number 2 beside a detail about western territories.

A Nation Divided Over New Land

- ① After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the nation gained vast land west of the Mississippi River. Americans disagreed about whether slavery could spread into this land. Many white southern leaders said Congress should protect enslavers' property rights and let settlers take enslaved people west. Many northern leaders argued that slavery should not expand because it was unjust and gave slave states more political power. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state. It also drew a line limiting slavery in much of the remaining Louisiana Territory.
- ② Florida raised related questions after Spain ceded it to the United States in the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. The United States took possession in 1821 and organized Florida Territory in 1822. Slavery already existed there, and some incoming settlers brought enslaved workers to farms and plantations. Supporters of slavery expected Florida to strengthen southern influence. Opponents feared that every new slave state would upset the balance between free and slave states in the Senate. When Florida entered the Union as a slave state in 1845, that concern became real.
- ③ The Mexican Cession of 1848, gained after the Mexican-American War, made the debate sharper. Representative David Wilmot proposed banning slavery in territory gained from Mexico. His proposal, called the Wilmot Proviso, did not become law, but it showed the conflict. Some Americans argued that Congress had power to keep slavery out of territories. Others claimed Congress could not deny settlers the right to bring enslaved people. Thus, arguments about Florida, Missouri, and new western lands involved both human freedom and the political balance of power between sections.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What did many southern and northern leaders disagree about after the Louisiana Purchase?

2 Why did opponents of slavery's expansion worry about Florida becoming a slave state?

3 What did the Wilmot Proviso propose, and what happened to it?

4 According to the passage, what two larger issues were involved in arguments over Florida and western lands?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write four sentences that describe the debate over slavery's spread. Include one argument supporting expansion, one argument opposing it, a reference to Florida, and a reference to western territories.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each argument supporting the spread of slavery, and circle each argument opposing it. Number 1 beside a detail about Florida and number 2 beside a detail about western territories. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did many southern and northern leaders disagree about after the Louisiana Purchase?	They disagreed about whether slavery should spread into the western territory. Southern leaders wanted settlers to be able to take enslaved people west, while northern leaders opposed expansion.
2	Why did opponents of slavery's expansion worry about Florida becoming a slave state?	They feared that another slave state would upset the balance between free and slave states in the Senate and increase southern influence.
3	What did the Wilmot Proviso propose, and what happened to it?	It proposed banning slavery in territory gained from Mexico. It did not become law.
4	According to the passage, what two larger issues were involved in arguments over Florida and western lands?	The arguments involved human freedom and the political balance of power between sections.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Supporters believed settlers in western territories and Florida should be allowed to bring enslaved people because they viewed them as property. Opponents argued that slavery was unjust and should not enter new territories. Florida's admission as a slave state could increase southern influence in the Senate. The same struggle over freedom and political power appeared in the western lands gained from Mexico.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the competing arguments, as long as students accurately connect slavery's expansion to both Florida and western territories. In the open response, check for all four required elements and historically accurate reasoning.