

Union Under Strain

Trace how disputes over slavery and power pushed Georgia toward secession.

SS8H5.a "Explain the importance of key issues and events that led to the Civil War; include slavery, states' rights, nullification, Compromise of 1850 and the Georgia Platform, the Dred Scott case, Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each key issue or event that increased conflict between North and South, then number the underlined ideas in the order they appear.

Georgia and a Dividing Nation

- ① By the 1850s, slavery stood at the center of a growing national conflict. Enslaved people produced valuable cotton, and many white Georgia leaders wanted slavery protected and allowed to expand westward. Opponents argued that Congress could limit slavery in territories. Supporters often used states' rights, the belief that states held powers the federal government could not take away. Earlier, South Carolina's nullification crisis had tested a similar claim when it tried to reject a federal tariff. President Andrew Jackson insisted that federal law was supreme, showing how disputes over power could threaten the Union.
- ② The Compromise of 1850 admitted California as a free state and used popular sovereignty in Utah and New Mexico territories. It also strengthened the Fugitive Slave Act, which required help in returning people who escaped slavery. Georgia's leaders accepted the compromise in the Georgia Platform, but warned that Georgia would resist future federal limits on slavery. In 1857, the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision said that Congress could not ban slavery in the territories and that Black people of African descent were not U.S. citizens. The ruling angered many Northerners and deepened distrust.
- ③ When Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election of 1860, he received no electoral votes from Georgia or other Deep South states. Lincoln opposed the expansion of slavery, although he had not called for ending it where it already existed. Many Georgia secessionists feared that his election would weaken slavery and their political power. Other Georgians urged caution and wanted to remain in the Union. At a January 1861 convention, delegates voted for Georgia to secede. The debate showed that Georgia was divided, yet the decision moved the state toward Civil War.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did disagreement over slavery in the western territories connect to arguments about states' rights?

2 What happened during the nullification crisis, and what did President Andrew Jackson's response show?

3 How did the Georgia Platform show both acceptance of and concern about the Compromise of 1850?

4 Why did Lincoln's election lead to a debate over secession in Georgia?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly six sentences that explain how three or more issues or events from the passage helped lead Georgia toward secession. Show how the issues or events connected to one another.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each key issue or event that increased conflict between North and South, then number the underlined ideas in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did disagreement over slavery in the western territories connect to arguments about states' rights?	Many Georgia leaders wanted slavery protected and expanded westward, while opponents said Congress could limit slavery in territories. Supporters of slavery argued that states had powers the federal government could not take away.
2	What happened during the nullification crisis, and what did President Andrew Jackson's response show?	South Carolina tried to reject a federal tariff. Jackson insisted that federal law was supreme, showing that disputes over government power could threaten the Union.
3	How did the Georgia Platform show both acceptance of and concern about the Compromise of 1850?	Georgia's leaders accepted the Compromise of 1850, but the Georgia Platform warned that Georgia would resist future federal limits on slavery.
4	Why did Lincoln's election lead to a debate over secession in Georgia?	Lincoln opposed the expansion of slavery, and many secessionists feared his election would weaken slavery and their political power. Other Georgians wanted to remain in the Union, but delegates voted to secede in January 1861.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Slavery made the western territories a major source of conflict because leaders disagreed about whether it could expand. States' rights arguments made some southern leaders claim that the federal government could not limit slavery. The Georgia Platform temporarily accepted the Compromise of 1850, but it also threatened resistance to future limits. The Dred Scott decision increased northern anger by protecting slavery in the territories. After Lincoln's election, many Georgians feared for slavery and political power. Georgia's divided debate ended in secession, pushing the state toward war.

Accept answers that accurately connect slavery, federal power, and at least three named issues or events to Georgia's decision to secede. Students may use a different logical order if their cause-and-effect explanation remains accurate.