Slavery and Expansion

Trace the motives and changes that shaped slavery across regions.

6-12.US1.19 "Explain the social and economic motivations and developments surrounding the enslavement of peoples in the northern and southern states and territories."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline economic reasons for slavery or its expansion, circle social beliefs or pressures that supported or challenged it, and number changes in laws or settlement that affected slavery.

A Divided Country Moves West

1. In colonial New York, an enslaved worker might unload a ship, clean a house, or work on a farm. Northern merchants also earned money shipping goods tied to slavery, including sugar from the Caribbean. Enslaved labor saved employers wages, while laws and racist beliefs treated people as property. After the Revolution, antislavery organizing and ideas about liberty helped push northern states toward gradual abolition. These laws often freed children only when they reached adulthood, so slavery did not end at once. Even as slavery declined in the North, many free Black people faced discrimination, and some northern businesses continued to profit from southern cotton.

2. In the South, plantation owners forced enslaved people to grow tobacco and rice, then cotton on expanding lands. The cotton gin made it easier to remove seeds from short-staple cotton, increasing the demand for enslaved workers to plant and pick it. White planters gained wealth and political power from this labor. Slaveholding laws and racist claims that Black people were inferior helped them defend that power. Enslaved families faced sale and separation as traders moved people from older southern states to new cotton regions. Not all white southerners owned enslaved people, but slavery shaped the region's economy and social order.

3. As settlers moved west, they argued over whether new territories would allow slavery. Southern slaveholders wanted land for cotton and feared losing power in Congress if new states banned slavery. Many northerners opposed slavery's spread because they rejected human bondage or wanted western jobs and land reserved for free white workers. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 limited slavery in much of the Louisiana Purchase. In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act let settlers in those territories vote on slavery, undoing that earlier limit there. Supporters and opponents rushed to Kansas, where their competing goals fueled fraud and violence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did slavery decline in northern states after the Revolution, and why did northern businesses still have ties to it?

2. How did the cotton gin affect the demand for enslaved labor in the South?

3. Why did some northerners and southern slaveholders disagree about allowing slavery in western territories? Give one motive for each side.

4. How did the Kansas-Nebraska Act change an earlier limit on slavery, and what happened as groups tried to influence Kansas?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence speech for a Kansas town meeting in 1854. Compare a northern change and a southern change from the passage, then predict how each could shape the fight over slavery in Kansas.

ANSWER KEY

Slavery and Expansion

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.19

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline economic reasons for slavery or its expansion, circle social beliefs or pressures that supported or challenged it, and number changes in laws or settlement that affected slavery. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did slavery decline in northern states after the Revolution, and why did northern businesses still have ties to it?	**Antislavery organizing and ideas about liberty helped bring gradual abolition. Some northern businesses still profited from southern cotton.**
2	How did the cotton gin affect the demand for enslaved labor in the South?	**It made short-staple cotton easier to process, encouraging cotton farming to expand and increasing demand for enslaved people to plant and pick it.**
3	Why did some northerners and southern slaveholders disagree about allowing slavery in western territories? Give one motive for each side.	**Southern slaveholders wanted cotton land or feared losing power in Congress. Some northerners opposed human bondage, while others wanted western land and jobs reserved for free white workers.**
4	How did the Kansas-Nebraska Act change an earlier limit on slavery, and what happened as groups tried to influence Kansas?	**It let settlers vote on slavery in territories where the Missouri Compromise had limited it. Supporters and opponents rushed to Kansas, and their conflict fueled fraud and violence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Neighbors, northern states have passed gradual abolition laws, although some northern businesses still earn money from southern cotton. Those laws show that many northerners have begun to challenge slavery, and some may travel here to oppose its spread. In the South, the cotton gin helped expand cotton farming and demand for enslaved workers. Slaveholders may come to Kansas hoping for new land and more political power. If both groups try to control the vote, arguments over slavery could turn into violence.

Accept other passage-supported economic or social motives for Question 3. For the speech, look for a northern change, a southern change, and plausible predictions connecting both to the Kansas dispute.