Paths to War

Trace how disputes over slavery became a national crisis.

6-12.US1.24 "Analyze how economic, political, and social events led to the Civil War, including, but not limited to: • Slavery • Virgina and Kentucky Resolutions • Nullification Crisis • Missouri Compromise • Compromise of 1850 • Publication of Uncle..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the economic stake in slavery, circle three government decisions, and number two changes in public opinion or fear so you can trace how the conflict grew.

How Conflict Grew

1. Cotton profits made enslaved labor central to the Southern economy, while many Northerners opposed slavery's spread into western territories. Earlier disputes had raised another question: could a state resist a federal decision? The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 argued that states could judge federal laws unconstitutional. In the 1832 Nullification Crisis, South Carolina tried to reject a federal tariff, not a slavery law. These arguments did not cause the war by themselves, but they sharpened disputes over federal and state power. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 then admitted Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, while limiting slavery in much of the Louisiana Purchase.

2. The Compromise of 1850 admitted California as a free state but included a stronger Fugitive Slave Act, which required the return of people who escaped slavery. Some Northern states passed personal liberty laws to protect free Black residents and people accused of escaping, creating fights over federal authority. Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* portrayed slavery's cruelty and stirred more Northern opposition. In 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska Act let settlers vote on slavery and repealed the Missouri Compromise's limit in those territories. Violence in Kansas showed that a vote could deepen conflict rather than settle it.

3. Opponents of slavery's expansion formed the Republican Party, whose candidate John C. Frémont lost the 1856 presidential election but won many Northern votes. In 1857 the Dred Scott decision ruled that Congress could not ban slavery in the territories, alarming many Northerners. John Brown's 1859 raid on a federal arsenal in Virginia, meant to spark an uprising against slavery, intensified fear in the South. In 1860 Republican Abraham Lincoln won the presidency without winning any Southern states. Southern states began to secede. The proposed Crittenden Compromise would have protected slavery in more territories, but it failed; leaders could not agree on slavery's future.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the spread of slavery into western territories matter to both the Southern economy and the Missouri Compromise?

2. How did the Fugitive Slave Act and Northern personal liberty laws create a conflict over government power?

3. How did the Kansas-Nebraska Act undo an earlier attempt to settle the slavery question, and what happened in Kansas?

4. Why did Lincoln's election and the failure of the Crittenden Compromise make a peaceful agreement less likely?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write five sentences connecting *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the Dred Scott decision, and John Brown's raid to the rising conflict. Explain how the Southern economy, a political ruling, and public fears or opinions made these events matter.

ANSWER KEY

Paths to War

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.24

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the economic stake in slavery, circle three government decisions, and number two changes in public opinion or fear so you can trace how the conflict grew. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the spread of slavery into western territories matter to both the Southern economy and the Missouri Compromise?	**Enslaved labor was central to the cotton economy, so slavery's expansion mattered to the South. The Missouri Compromise tried to manage that expansion by limiting slavery in much of the Louisiana Purchase.**
2	How did the Fugitive Slave Act and Northern personal liberty laws create a conflict over government power?	**The federal act required the return of people who escaped slavery. Northern personal liberty laws offered protections to free Black residents and accused people, creating disputes over federal authority.**
3	How did the Kansas-Nebraska Act undo an earlier attempt to settle the slavery question, and what happened in Kansas?	**The act repealed the Missouri Compromise's limit on slavery in those territories and let settlers vote. Violence in Kansas showed that this approach deepened conflict.**
4	Why did Lincoln's election and the failure of the Crittenden Compromise make a peaceful agreement less likely?	**Lincoln won without winning any Southern states, and Southern states began to secede. The proposed compromise to protect slavery in more territories failed, leaving leaders without an agreement on slavery's future.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Cotton profits tied the Southern economy to enslaved labor, so challenges to slavery threatened powerful interests. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* showed slavery's cruelty and stirred Northern opposition. The Dred Scott decision blocked Congress from banning slavery in the territories, making a political solution harder. John Brown's raid frightened many Southerners because he tried to start an uprising against slavery. Together, growing opposition, the court ruling, and fear of rebellion made compromise less likely.

Accept other supported explanations of how the events increased conflict. In Part 3, look for connections among economic interests, the court ruling, and changing opinions or fears, not just a list of events.