

Compromise Under Pressure

Trace how western expansion made the slavery conflict harder to settle.

7.8b "As the nation expanded geographically, the question of slavery in new territories and states led to increased sectional tensions. Attempts at compromise ended in failure."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the names of the three laws that tried to settle the slavery question, and number them 1 through 3 in time order. Circle two details that show sectional tensions grew instead of ending.

Expansion and Unfinished Agreements

- ① As the United States gained western land, settlers and lawmakers argued over whether slavery could expand. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 paired Maine's admission as a free state with a path to Missouri's admission as a slave state. It also barred slavery in most of the Louisiana Purchase territory north of latitude 36°30'. Missouri entered in 1821, preserving the balance between free and slave states. Yet it did not end the argument about slavery in lands the nation might acquire.
- ② After the Mexican-American War, the United States gained vast territory in the West. The Compromise of 1850 admitted California as a free state and let settlers in Utah and New Mexico territories decide the slavery question. It also created a stricter Fugitive Slave Act, which angered many Northerners. Each section believed the deal protected the other side too much. In 1854, opponents of slavery's expansion formed the Republican Party, adding a new political force to the dispute.
- ③ The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 allowed settlers in those territories to vote on slavery. It repealed the Missouri Compromise line, opening land once closed to slavery. Rival groups rushed into Kansas, and violence there earned the name Bleeding Kansas. In *Dred Scott v. Sandford* in 1857, the Supreme Court ruled that Congress could not ban slavery in the territories. This decision weakened earlier compromises and convinced more Americans that peaceful agreements were failing. Sectional distrust helped lead to the Civil War in 1861.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did gaining western land create a sectional conflict?

2 How did the Missouri Compromise try to balance the interests of free and slave states?

3 Name two parts of the Compromise of 1850. Why did this agreement fail to settle the conflict for long?

4 How did the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Dred Scott decision make compromise more difficult?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write 4 or 5 sentences that explain why compromise failed to end sectional tensions. State a claim and use evidence from at least two events in the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the names of the three laws that tried to settle the slavery question, and number them 1 through 3 in time order. Circle two details that show sectional tensions grew instead of ending. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did gaining western land create a sectional conflict?	Americans disagreed over whether slavery could expand into the new territories.
2	How did the Missouri Compromise try to balance the interests of free and slave states?	It paired free Maine with slaveholding Missouri, admitted in 1821, and barred slavery in most Louisiana Purchase territory north of 36°30'.
3	Name two parts of the Compromise of 1850. Why did this agreement fail to settle the conflict for long?	It admitted California as a free state, allowed Utah and New Mexico settlers to decide about slavery, and created a stricter Fugitive Slave Act. Both sections believed the deal favored the other side too much.
4	How did the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Dred Scott decision make compromise more difficult?	The Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri Compromise line and led to violence in Kansas. Dred Scott said Congress could not ban slavery in the territories, weakening earlier compromises.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Compromise failed because each new western territory reopened the conflict over slavery. The Missouri Compromise created a boundary, but the Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed it and led to violence in Kansas. The Compromise of 1850 also left both sections angry, especially over the Fugitive Slave Act. When the Dred Scott decision said Congress could not ban slavery in territories, many Americans saw fewer peaceful choices.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect expansion, slavery in territories, and rising sectional distrust. For the open response, look for a clear claim and accurate evidence from at least two events.