

Why the Union Split

Trace regional viewpoints and the immediate crisis of 1860.

7.8c "Perspectives on the causes of the Civil War varied based on geographic region, but the election of a Republican president was one of the immediate causes for the secession of the Southern states."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline long-term tensions over slavery. Circle Lincoln's election as the immediate trigger. Star the two waves of secession in paragraph 3.

Sectional Views and Secession

- ① During the 1850s, disputes over slavery intensified sectional conflict. Many Northerners supported free labor and opposed slavery's expansion into western territories, fearing increased slaveholder power. Many white Southern leaders defended an economy and social order built on enslaved labor. They viewed restrictions on slavery as threats to their wealth and influence. Disputes over federal power and states' rights centered on protecting or restricting slavery. Compromises reduced tensions only temporarily.
- ② In the North, people did not all agree, but Republicans gained support by opposing slavery's extension into the territories. Many white Southern leaders saw this position as a danger to slavery and to states' rights. The presidential election of 1860 made the crisis immediate. Republican Abraham Lincoln won the presidency without carrying any Southern state. Although Lincoln had said he would not abolish slavery where it already existed, Southern leaders feared his administration would restrict slavery's future growth.
- ③ After Lincoln's election, seven Deep South states seceded before he took office in March 1861: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. They joined to form the Confederate States of America. Four more states, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina, seceded after fighting began at Fort Sumter. Other slave states, including Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, remained in the Union. Secession showed that regional fears and political choices had broken the nation apart during 1861.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did many Northerners oppose the spread of slavery into western territories?

2 How did many white Southern leaders view Republican opposition to slavery's expansion?

3 What immediate event made the crisis over secession urgent in 1860?

4 Which seven states seceded before Lincoln took office?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In four sentences, explain why some white Southern leaders supported secession in 1860-1861. Connect a long-term conflict over slavery to Lincoln's election and their response, using passage evidence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline long-term tensions over slavery. Circle Lincoln's election as the immediate trigger. Star the two waves of secession in paragraph 3. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did many Northerners oppose the spread of slavery into western territories?	They supported free labor and feared that slavery's expansion would give slaveholding leaders more power in Congress.
2	How did many white Southern leaders view Republican opposition to slavery's expansion?	They saw it as a danger to slavery and to states' rights.
3	What immediate event made the crisis over secession urgent in 1860?	The election of Republican Abraham Lincoln as president.
4	Which seven states seceded before Lincoln took office?	South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

White Southern leaders sought to protect slavery and the power it gave them. For years, disputes over slavery's expansion increased sectional tension. Lincoln's election convinced many of these leaders that slavery's future expansion was threatened. They chose secession to protect their interests even though Lincoln had not promised immediate abolition where slavery already existed.

Accept evidence-based explanations connecting slavery, sectional tension, Lincoln's election and secession. Distinguish white secessionist leaders from all Southern residents.