A Deal That Delayed

Why the Compromise of 1850 brought a pause, not a solution

8.C.11.1.B "Explain why the Compromise of 1850 may have succeeded as a temporary solution but proved that compromise could not offer a permanent solution to the issue of slavery."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that explain why the deal could pass, circle two details that threaten lasting peace, and draw an arrow from one underlined detail to a related circled detail.

The Compromise of 1850

1. In 1850, Congress faced a crisis over land gained after the Mexican-American War. Would slavery be allowed in new territories? California asked to enter the Union as a free state, which upset the balance between free and slave states in the Senate. Southern leaders feared losing political power. Northern leaders feared slavery would spread west. Some politicians warned that the Union itself might split. Senator Henry Clay proposed a package of laws that offered different sides something they wanted, rather than settling their disagreement about slavery.

2. Congress passed the Compromise of 1850 as separate laws. California entered as a free state. In the Utah and New Mexico territories, Congress did not ban slavery, leaving the question to be decided later. Texas gave up a claim to part of New Mexico in exchange for federal payment of its debts. Congress ended the slave trade, but not slavery, in Washington, D.C. A stronger Fugitive Slave Act required the return of people who had escaped slavery. These bargains gave lawmakers enough votes to pass the package and eased the immediate crisis.

3. The peace did not last. The Fugitive Slave Act forced people in free states to help return escapees and denied accused people a jury trial. Many Northerners resisted the law, while many Southerners demanded that it be enforced. Meanwhile, the status of slavery in western territories remained unsettled. In 1854, a new law opened Kansas and Nebraska to decisions by settlers about slavery, leading to bitter conflict in Kansas. The 1850 deal had delayed a showdown, but it had not resolved whether slavery could expand or whether Americans would accept laws protecting it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did offering different sides something they wanted help Congress pass the compromise?

2. Why did California's admission settle one immediate dispute but leave a larger question unanswered?

3. How did the stronger Fugitive Slave Act both help the deal pass and make lasting peace less likely?

4. How does the conflict in Kansas show a limit of the Compromise of 1850?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence newspaper editorial dated 1850. Praise one part of the deal, criticize a different part, and predict how those choices might bring both short-term calm and future conflict.

ANSWER KEY

A Deal That Delayed

GRADE 8 · 8.C.11.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that explain why the deal could pass, circle two details that threaten lasting peace, and draw an arrow from one underlined detail to a related circled detail. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did offering different sides something they wanted help Congress pass the compromise?	**The package combined provisions that appealed to different sides, giving lawmakers enough votes to pass it and ease the immediate crisis.**
2	Why did California's admission settle one immediate dispute but leave a larger question unanswered?	**California entered as a free state, but Congress left the question of slavery in the Utah and New Mexico territories to be decided later.**
3	How did the stronger Fugitive Slave Act both help the deal pass and make lasting peace less likely?	**It addressed Southern demands, helping win support for the package. Its demands on people in free states led many Northerners to resist it.**
4	How does the conflict in Kansas show a limit of the Compromise of 1850?	**The compromise left slavery's expansion unsettled. When a later law let settlers decide the issue in Kansas, bitter conflict followed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

California's admission as a free state may ease the crisis for those who feared slavery spreading west. Southern leaders can point to the new fugitive law as proof that their demands were heard. Yet forcing people in free states to help return escapees could turn neighbors against federal law. Congress has bought time, but it has not made Americans agree about slavery.

Accept other accurate links between a provision's immediate appeal and its limits. The editorial should use a viewpoint plausible in 1850, not knowledge of later events.