Building a Confederacy

Trace how secession led to a government under Jefferson Davis.

8.C.12.1.E "Trace the formation of the Confederate States of America under the leadership of Jefferson Davis."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the reason southern leaders wanted to secede, circle dates, and number four events that show how separate states formed a government led by Jefferson Davis.

From Secession to Government

1. When Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election in November 1860, many white leaders in the South feared that his opposition to the spread of slavery would weaken their power. Slavery was central to the southern economy and to the secession movement. On December 20, 1860, South Carolina voted to leave the United States, becoming the first state to secede. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas followed by February 1861. These states had left one country, but they still needed to build a new government together.

2. On February 4, 1861, delegates from six of those states met in Montgomery, Alabama, to organize the Confederate States of America. Texas had voted to secede but did not send delegates to that first meeting; it joined the new government soon afterward. The delegates wrote a temporary constitution, which set rules for governing until a permanent one could be adopted. The Confederate constitution protected slavery. On February 9, the delegates chose Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as provisional president. He was a former United States senator and secretary of war.

3. On February 18, Davis took the oath of office in Montgomery. As president, he had to appoint officials, work with Confederate lawmakers, and prepare the new government for war. His leadership linked the states that had seceded to a single national government, though each state still guarded its own authority. Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina on April 12, 1861, beginning the Civil War. After that attack and Lincoln's call for troops, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina joined the Confederacy. The Confederate capital moved to Richmond, Virginia, later that year.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Trace the events from Lincoln's election to the secession of seven states. What concern drove secession?

2. After states seceded, what two steps did delegates take to form a shared government?

3. How did Davis's role change between February 9 and February 18, and what work did his new role require?

4. How did the Confederacy change after fighting began at Fort Sumter?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- or six-sentence museum label explaining how seceded states became a government under Davis. Include a cause of secession, at least three dated steps, Davis's role, and one change after fighting began.

ANSWER KEY

Building a Confederacy

GRADE 8 · 8.C.12.1.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the reason southern leaders wanted to secede, circle dates, and number four events that show how separate states formed a government led by Jefferson Davis. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Trace the events from Lincoln's election to the secession of seven states. What concern drove secession?	**Lincoln won in November 1860. Southern leaders feared his opposition to the spread of slavery would weaken their power. South Carolina seceded first on December 20, and six more states followed by February 1861.**
2	After states seceded, what two steps did delegates take to form a shared government?	**Delegates wrote a temporary constitution and chose Jefferson Davis as provisional president.**
3	How did Davis's role change between February 9 and February 18, and what work did his new role require?	**Delegates chose Davis as provisional president on February 9, and he took the oath on February 18. His duties included appointing officials, working with lawmakers, and preparing for war.**
4	How did the Confederacy change after fighting began at Fort Sumter?	**After the attack and Lincoln's call for troops, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina joined the Confederacy. Its capital later moved to Richmond, Virginia.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Lincoln's election in November 1860 raised fears among southern leaders that limits on slavery would weaken their power. On December 20, South Carolina became the first state to secede, and six others followed by February. On February 4, delegates from six states met in Montgomery to organize a new government. They wrote a temporary constitution and chose Jefferson Davis as provisional president on February 9. Davis took the oath on February 18 and began appointing officials and preparing for war. After Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter in April, four more states joined the government he led.

Accept accurate sequences that distinguish a state's decision to secede from the delegates' later work to establish a government. Students may describe the post-Fort Sumter change as additional states joining or the capital moving to Richmond.