

Cotton and Secession

Trace how slavery's expansion shaped Texas's choice in 1861.

7.5.A "explain the central role the expansion of slavery played in the involvement of Texas in the Civil War;"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show how slavery grew and mattered in Texas, then circle words or phrases that connect fears about slavery's expansion to secession.

Why Texas Seceded

- ① By 1860, slavery shaped Texas's economy and politics. Cotton plantations spread across the eastern and central parts of the state, and enslaved people supplied much of the labor that produced cotton for sale. Many white settlers had moved to Texas from other Southern states, bringing enslaved people and plantation practices with them. In the 1860 census, Texas counted more than 182,000 enslaved people, nearly one-third of the state's population. As slavery expanded, powerful planters gained influence in Texas. They wanted governments to protect slavery and allow it to grow.
- ② The expansion of slavery had become a national dispute. Some northern leaders and the new Republican Party opposed allowing slavery to spread into western territories. Texas slaveholders feared that limits on expansion would weaken slavery everywhere by surrounding slave states with free territories and reducing their political power. Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860 alarmed many Texans because Republicans opposed slavery's expansion. Although Lincoln had not called for immediate abolition in states where slavery already existed, Texans who supported secession saw his election as a threat.
- ③ In February 1861, a Texas convention voted to leave the United States, and voters later approved secession. The convention's declaration named the federal government's actions against slavery as a major complaint. Texas leaders argued that the Union no longer protected what they called their right to hold enslaved people as property. Texas then joined the Confederate States of America, whose government was built to defend slavery. Other issues mattered, including loyalty to the South and states' rights, but the expansion and protection of slavery drove the decision to secede and enter the Civil War.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the expansion of slavery affect Texas's economy and political power by 1860?

2 Why did Texas slaveholders fear limits on slavery in western territories?

3 What evidence from the Texas secession convention shows that slavery was connected to secession?

4 Why does the passage say that states' rights alone does not fully explain Texas's decision to secede?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences explaining why the expansion of slavery played a central role in Texas's involvement in the Civil War. Include two details from the passage and explain how those details led to secession.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that show how slavery grew and mattered in Texas, then circle words or phrases that connect fears about slavery's expansion to secession. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the expansion of slavery affect Texas's economy and political power by 1860?	Cotton plantations relied heavily on enslaved labor, and the growth of slavery gave powerful planters more influence in Texas.
2	Why did Texas slaveholders fear limits on slavery in western territories?	They feared that free territories would surround slave states, weaken slavery, and reduce the political power of slaveholding states.
3	What evidence from the Texas secession convention shows that slavery was connected to secession?	Its declaration named federal actions against slavery as a major complaint, and leaders said the Union no longer protected their claimed right to hold enslaved people as property.
4	Why does the passage say that states' rights alone does not fully explain Texas's decision to secede?	States' rights mattered, but Texas leaders focused on protecting slavery and its expansion. The Confederate government Texas joined was built to defend slavery.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Slavery's expansion was central to Texas's decision to join the Civil War because it shaped both the state's wealth and its political fears. Cotton plantations relied on enslaved labor, and more than 182,000 enslaved people lived in Texas in 1860. When Republicans opposed expanding slavery into western territories, many Texas leaders believed the Union might no longer protect slavery, so they supported secession.

Accept answers that connect Texas's cotton economy, enslaved population, or planter influence to fears about limits on slavery's expansion. Students should explain that these fears helped lead Texas to secede and join the Confederacy.