

Compromise Under Pressure

Trace how political agreements tried to settle conflicts over slavery.

8.21.C “summarize historical events in which compromise resulted in a resolution such as the Missouri Compromise, Compromise of 1850, and Kansas-Nebraska Act.”

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the conflict in each paragraph, circle the compromise terms, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside phrases that tell what happened after each agreement.

Three Attempts at Settlement

- ① In 1820, Congress faced a dispute over Missouri’s request for statehood. Adding Missouri as a slave state could upset the equal number of free and slave states in the Senate. The Missouri Compromise admitted Missouri as a slave state and admitted Maine as a free state. It also barred slavery in most of the Louisiana Purchase north of latitude 36°30’, except Missouri. This agreement preserved a political balance and reduced conflict for a time, but it did not end arguments over slavery’s expansion.
- ② By 1850, land gained after the Mexican-American War raised a new question: would slavery expand west? The Compromise of 1850 was a package of laws. California entered as a free state, while Utah and New Mexico territories would decide slavery by popular sovereignty. The package also ended the slave trade, but not slavery, in Washington, D.C., settled Texas’s boundary and debt, and strengthened the Fugitive Slave Act. These terms eased an immediate crisis, yet the harsher fugitive law increased anger in the North.
- ③ In 1854, Senator Stephen Douglas backed the Kansas-Nebraska Act to organize the Kansas and Nebraska territories. The act let settlers use popular sovereignty to decide slavery there. To do this, it repealed the Missouri Compromise’s restriction on slavery north of 36°30’. Supporters hoped local voting would resolve the dispute and open the territories to settlement. Instead, proslavery and antislavery settlers rushed into Kansas, and violence followed. The act replaced one compromise with another plan, but it deepened sectional conflict rather than creating a lasting resolution.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 In one sentence, summarize the conflict that led to the Missouri Compromise and its immediate resolution.

2 Identify two terms of the Compromise of 1850 and explain how the package tried to settle the crisis over western land.

3 Why did supporters think the Kansas-Nebraska Act would resolve a dispute, and what actually happened?

4 What pattern connects the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one agreement from the passage. Write a four-sentence summary of 75 to 90 words that explains the conflict, key terms, immediate result, and one limit or consequence of the agreement.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the conflict in each paragraph, circle the compromise terms, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside phrases that tell what happened after each agreement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In one sentence, summarize the conflict that led to the Missouri Compromise and its immediate resolution.	Missouri's statehood threatened the Senate balance between free and slave states, so Missouri entered as a slave state and Maine entered as a free state.
2	Identify two terms of the Compromise of 1850 and explain how the package tried to settle the crisis over western land.	Answers may name any two terms, such as California entering free, popular sovereignty in Utah and New Mexico, the end of the slave trade in Washington, D.C., settlement of Texas's boundary and debt, or a stronger Fugitive Slave Act. The package tried to address several sectional demands at once.
3	Why did supporters think the Kansas-Nebraska Act would resolve a dispute, and what actually happened?	Supporters thought settlers could decide slavery through popular sovereignty. Instead, opposing settlers rushed into Kansas, violence followed, and sectional conflict deepened.
4	What pattern connects the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act?	Each was an attempt to settle disputes about slavery's expansion through political agreement or law. The first two reduced conflict temporarily, while the Kansas-Nebraska Act increased conflict.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Compromise of 1850 addressed arguments about slavery in land the United States gained after the Mexican-American War. California entered the Union as a free state, and Utah and New Mexico could use popular sovereignty. Other laws settled Texas's boundary and debt, ended the slave trade in Washington, D.C., and strengthened the Fugitive Slave Act. The package calmed the crisis for the moment, but the stricter fugitive law angered many Northerners, showing that the settlement did not solve the larger conflict.

Accept accurate summaries that identify the conflict, describe major terms, and explain the agreement's immediate result or later consequence. For Part 3, accept any selected agreement if the response has four sentences, contains 75 to 90 words, and includes all four required elements.