

A Nation Divided

Trace how slavery's expansion deepened conflict between regions.

8.8.B "explain the central role of the expansion of slavery in causing sectionalism, disagreement over states' rights, and the Civil War;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three details that connect the expansion of slavery to conflict, then label each detail S for sectionalism, R for states' rights, or W for war.

Slavery and a Growing Divide

- ① In the early 1800s, cotton farming spread across the South, and enslaved labor made large profits possible. As settlers moved west, national leaders faced a repeated question: would new territories allow slavery? Each decision could change the balance of power in Congress between slaveholding and free states. Many white Southerners feared that limits on slavery would weaken their economy and political influence. Many Northerners opposed slavery's expansion, even when they did not support full equality for African Americans. The argument became a national crisis.
- ② Congress tried several compromises, but each one showed how deeply the sections disagreed. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, while restricting slavery in much of the Louisiana Purchase north of 36°30'. In 1850, California entered as a free state, and Congress strengthened the Fugitive Slave Act. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 let settlers vote on slavery in two territories. Its repeal of the earlier restriction led to violent conflict in Kansas.
- ③ Disputes over expansion also raised arguments about states' rights and federal power. Southern leaders said a state or territory should be able to protect slavery from federal limits. Some Northern states resisted helping capture freedom seekers under the Fugitive Slave Act, arguing that state laws and personal liberty should be protected. In 1857, the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision said Congress could not ban slavery in the territories. After Abraham Lincoln's 1860 election, several slave states seceded, and the Civil War began in 1861.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the debate over slavery in new territories increase sectionalism between the North and South?

2 What policy did the Kansas-Nebraska Act create, and what result did its repeal of the earlier restriction have?

3 What conflicting states' rights arguments did Southern leaders and some Northern states make?

4 How did the Dred Scott decision and Lincoln's election connect the dispute over slavery's expansion to the Civil War?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly five sentences that explain a cause-and-effect chain from slavery's expansion to the Civil War. Use at least two named events from the passage, and include sectionalism and a states' rights disagreement.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three details that connect the expansion of slavery to conflict, then label each detail S for sectionalism, R for states' rights, or W for war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the debate over slavery in new territories increase sectionalism between the North and South?	It divided Northerners who opposed slavery's expansion from Southerners who feared limits on slavery would weaken their economy and political power.
2	What policy did the Kansas-Nebraska Act create, and what result did its repeal of the earlier restriction have?	It let settlers vote on slavery in two territories. Repealing the earlier restriction led to violent conflict in Kansas.
3	What conflicting states' rights arguments did Southern leaders and some Northern states make?	Southern leaders argued that states or territories should protect slavery from federal limits. Some Northern states resisted helping capture freedom seekers, arguing that state laws and personal liberty should be protected.
4	How did the Dred Scott decision and Lincoln's election connect the dispute over slavery's expansion to the Civil War?	Dred Scott said Congress could not ban slavery in the territories, making the expansion dispute harder to settle. After Lincoln's election, several slave states seceded, and war began in 1861.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Debates over slavery in western territories made Northern and Southern leaders distrust each other. The Kansas-Nebraska Act increased sectional conflict because it reopened the question of slavery where an earlier law had limited it. Southern leaders claimed that local governments should protect slavery, while some Northern states resisted enforcing the Fugitive Slave Act. The Dred Scott decision made compromise harder by limiting Congress's power to ban slavery in territories. When slave states seceded after Lincoln's election, the long dispute over slavery helped cause war.

Accept equivalent explanations that show slavery's expansion as the central issue linking sectional conflict, states' rights arguments, and secession. For the open response, check for exactly five sentences, two named events, and a clear causal chain.