

Causes Behind Secession

Identify the central cause and the factors that added to the crisis.

VS.7.b "describing how the institution of slavery was the cause of the Civil War, and secondary factors that contributed to the secession of the southern states;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence that identifies slavery as the central cause of secession. Circle three phrases that name secondary factors, so you can separate the main cause from factors that increased tension.

Why Southern States Seceded

- ① In the United States before the Civil War, millions of enslaved African Americans were forced to work without freedom or pay. Slavery shaped life in the South, especially on large farms that grew cotton and tobacco. Southern leaders wanted slavery to continue and spread into new western territories. Many people in the North opposed its spread, creating a deep conflict between the regions.
- ② The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 increased southern fears. Lincoln opposed allowing slavery in new territories, although he did not call for ending it in states where it already existed. South Carolina left the Union soon after the election, and other southern states followed. Their leaders believed that remaining in the Union could threaten slavery and their power.
- ③ Other issues added to the crisis, but they were secondary to slavery. Some southern leaders argued for states' rights, often when defending laws that supported slavery. The South's farm economy depended heavily on enslaved labor. Disputes over political power and anger at abolitionists increased tension. When southern states seceded, the conflict over slavery was the central cause behind their decision.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What did many southern leaders want to happen to slavery in the western territories?

2 Why did Abraham Lincoln's election increase fears among southern leaders?

3 Name two secondary factors that added to the crisis before secession.

4 According to the passage, what was the central cause behind southern secession?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence explanation of why southern states seceded. In the first sentence, name the central cause. In the next two sentences, name two different secondary factors and explain how each added to tension.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence that identifies slavery as the central cause of secession. Circle three phrases that name secondary factors, so you can separate the main cause from factors that increased tension. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did many southern leaders want to happen to slavery in the western territories?	They wanted slavery to continue and spread into the new western territories.
2	Why did Abraham Lincoln's election increase fears among southern leaders?	Lincoln opposed allowing slavery in new territories, so southern leaders feared slavery and their power could be threatened.
3	Name two secondary factors that added to the crisis before secession.	Answers may include arguments about states' rights, dependence on enslaved labor in the farm economy, disputes over political power, or anger at abolitionists.
4	According to the passage, what was the central cause behind southern secession?	The conflict over slavery was the central cause behind southern secession.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The institution of slavery was the central cause of southern secession because southern leaders wanted it to continue and spread. The southern economy's dependence on enslaved labor increased leaders' fear of losing slavery. Arguments about states' rights added tension because leaders used them to defend laws supporting slavery.

Accept wording that clearly identifies slavery as the central cause, not simply one factor among several. For secondary factors, accept any two factors stated in the passage and a reasonable explanation of how they increased tension.