**CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR**

The North and South consistently took opposing positions on various issues during the years leading up to the Civil War. The industrial North and agricultural South disagreed over slavery, the tariff, internal improvements, cheap Western land, the banking system, and states’ rights. The agricultural West, where political power was in the hands of small farmers rather than plantation owners, usually sided with the North. Northerners and Westerners were against slavery. Both sections traded extensively with each other. The North sent manufactured goods to the West, and Western farmers shipped good and other products to the North.

The issue which created the most controversy between the North and South was slavery, especially the extension of slavery into the newly acquired territories. Congress tried to ease tensions by enacting the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850. But during the 1850s, relations between the rival sections rapidly deteriorated. This happened for many reasons:

1. Abolitionists continued to demand an immediate end to slavery.
2. Many northerners refused to obey the Fugitive Slave Law, which required them to return runaway slaves. Meanwhile, the Underground Railroad became more active than ever.
3. Harriet Beecher Stowe, an abolitionist angered by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The book used sympathetic characters to portray the evils of slavery. When cruel overseer Simon Legree beat old slave Uncle Tom and caused his death, it stirred the emotions of hundreds of thousands of readers in the North. The story created such an uproar that years later, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln referred to Mrs. Stowe as “the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war.”
4. The Kansas-Nebraska Act established two new territories – Kansas and Nebraska – from lands previously closed to slavery by the Missouri Compromise. People in these territories could now decide for themselves if they wanted slavery. Both proslavery and antislavery settlers soon poured into Kansas. Violence broke out between the rival groups. There were so many people killed that the territory came to be known as “Bleeding Kansas.”
5. The Republican Party was organized to oppose the further spread of slavery into the territories.
6. A slave named Dred Scott, who had been taken into free territory by his master, requested that he be declared a free man. But the Supreme Court ruled that slavers were property, and could be taken into any territory. This decision delighted the South and angered the North.
7. John Brown, an abolitionist who had fought against slave-owners in Kansas, attacked the government arsenal at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia. He and his followers planned to arm the slaves, and lead them into rebellion. But Brown was captured by federal troops, convicted of treason, and hanged. Southerners viewed John Brown’s raid as part of a plan by abolitionists and Northern Republicans to destroy the Southern way of life.
8. During the 1850s, three new states joined the Union. All were free states. This meant there were 18 free states with 36 senators in Congress, and 15 slave states with only 30 senators. The North, with its larger population, also controlled the House of Representatives.
9. Throughout the 1850s, both the North and South demanded that Congress pass laws supporting its own sectional interests.
10. Southern leaders threatened to secede from the Union if a Republican was elected President in 1860.

**Negotiating a Settlement of North-South Differences.**

Pretend that it is 1860. Abraham Lincoln, a republican from the North, had been elected President. Northerners now control both the executive and legislative branches of the federal government. The Republican Party opposes the extension of slavery into the territories. Seven Southern states have just withdrawn from the Union and formed their own country. South Carolina was the first to secede, followed by Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana. Their new nation is called the Confederate states of America. A constitution has been written, and Jefferson Davis has been elected President.

Read the Northern viewpoint and the Southern viewpoint on this issue. Then, decide on a possible solution to the problem. Remember, you are attempting to come up with a compromise to satisfy both sides.

**Southern Viewpoint**

1. “Tariff law helps the North and hurts the South. The North is helped because most of the manufacturing in the United States is done there. The South is hurt because the tax on imports raises the price of cheaper foreign products, which we want to buy.”

**Northern Viewpoint**

1. “The united states should continue using

a tariff to protect foreign American

manufacturers from cheaper foreign

products, especially manufactured goods

imported from England.”

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**Southern Viewpoint**

1. “Stories of cruelty have been greatly exaggerated. Uncle Tom’s Cabin, a book read by so many of you Northerners, is an unfair description of slavery. The abolitionists are likewise guilty of exaggerating the treatment of slaves.”

“And speaking of unfairness, many of you in the North have broken the Fugitive Slave Law and worked as conductors on the Underground Railroad. Several Northern states have passed laws which encourage people not to cooperate in returning runaway slaves.”

**Northern Viewpoint**

1. “Slavery is wrong. One man should not be

permitted to own another. The Declaration

of Independence makes this clear by saying

that ‘all men are created equal.’ But 4 million

slaves in the South have no such equality.”

“We in the North have heard many stories

about the cruel way you Southerners treat

your slaves. This not only brings disgrace to

you, but also hurts the reputation of the United

States in the eyes of the world.”

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**Southern Viewpoint**

1. “Congress is made up mostly of Northerners. The Senate has 36 members from free states and only 30 members from slave states. Also, Northerners make up over 60% of the House of Representatives. What all of this means is that Southerners cannot stop Congress from passing laws which go against the best interests of the South.”

**Northern Viewpoint**

1. “All states must obey laws passed by Congress,

regardless of which section of the country has

the most senators and representatives in

Congress.”

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**Southern Viewpoint**

1. “We are in favor of states’ rights. The United States government must let states make some of their own decisions, such as whether to allow slavery or have a tariff. When this does not happen, a state has the right to nullify laws, or even secede from the Union.”

**Northern Viewpoint**

1. “We are against states’ rights. States do not

have the right to nullify laws, or secede from

the United States.”

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**Southern Viewpoint**

1. “The Republican Party, of which President Lincoln is a member, has said that it is against allowing slavery in any territory of the United States. We need new lands for raising cotton, because the cotton we now grow is wearing out the soil. Therefore, slavery must be permitted in the territories. The leaders of the Republican Party, who have so far refused to accept Dred Scott decision, had better accept the Supreme Court’s ruling. The court has said a master can take his property, including slaves, anywhere he wants.”

**Northern Viewpoint**

1. “President Lincoln has said that he has no

Plans to do away with slavery in the states

which now allow it.”

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