

UNIT 7 UNITED STATES HISTORY LESSON 1

Summary

- In this lesson, students will read pages 60–82 in Chapters 3 and 4 in their Readers. They will identify and analyze social, political, and economic causes of the Civil War.

Social Studies Background

As America took shape, social, political, and economic tensions threatened to tear it apart.

Socially, the Second Great Awakening swept across the country. Christian reformers became prominent figures in a new movement against slavery.

Politically, the power to vote was extended to all white men in 1807. Women, Africans, and Native Americans were still excluded, but broadening the voting base was a dramatic change. And some candidates, like Andrew Jackson, used their reputations to gain political popularity and get elected to office.

Economically, cotton became king. The cotton gin had made it more profitable than ever to grow cotton. People bought more land and more slaves to make more money.

While all this was happening, the country continued to expand westward. And the great question became which, if any, of the new territories would allow slavery.

Congress passed the Missouri Compromise in 1820 to deal with this issue after the Louisiana Purchase. Following the Mexican-American War, they passed The Compromise of 1850 to address the issue in other new territories. Yet the debate over slavery still engulfed the nation when Abraham Lincoln won the 1860 presidential election. Six weeks after he was elected, South Carolina became the first state to withdraw from the Union.

ENGAGE

Encourage students to flip through the article and turn and talk with a partner to discuss what they see. Invite students to ask questions or share what they already know about life in America before the Civil War.

EXPLORE

Instruct students to examine the map and read the caption on page 61 of their Readers. **Ask:** *What does this map show?* (America's growing transportation system) Brainstorm ideas about how this progress could have been a factor that led to the Civil War.

EXPLAIN

Point out to students that America underwent great changes in the early 1800s. But many of the old ideas still persisted. **Ask:** *Many people, including Thomas Jefferson, thought slavery would die out naturally. What kept it going?* (the cotton gin) *Why?* (It made growing cotton very profitable. As people bought more land and slaves, the economy of the whole country came to depend on slave labor.) Have students turn and talk as they discuss how the social and economic ramifications of slavery led to political conflicts as the country continued to expand. Challenge them to explain what the Missouri Compromise of 1820 was and why it didn't solve the problem. Then have them identify the purpose of the Compromise of 1850 and reasons it failed, too. Have students discuss why the outcome of the election of 1860 made Civil War inevitable.

ELABORATE

Invite students to read the National Geographic article "Civil War at 150: How a Bloodless Battle Started it All," (<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2011/04/110411-civil-war-150th-anniversary-fort-sumter-battle/>) to learn how the Battle of Fort Sumter led to the United States' deadliest war.

EVALUATE

Have students complete the **Content Assessment** for this lesson. Encourage them to share and compare their results in small groups.

Name _____

Date _____

CONTENT ASSESSMENT: Causes of the Civil War

Identify key social, political, and economic causes of the Civil War

Social		Political		Economic	

Why did the great debate over slavery finally engulf the nation after the 1860 presidential election?
