

# The South's Secessionitis



Politics and Slavery, part 5

## ACTIVITY KEY

**Rewrite** = rewrite the sentence to make correct

**Complete** = write the correct answer that completes the idea

**Cloze** = underline the correct word in the reading

**Text** = define the word or revise a text feature

**Interact** = interact with media/text

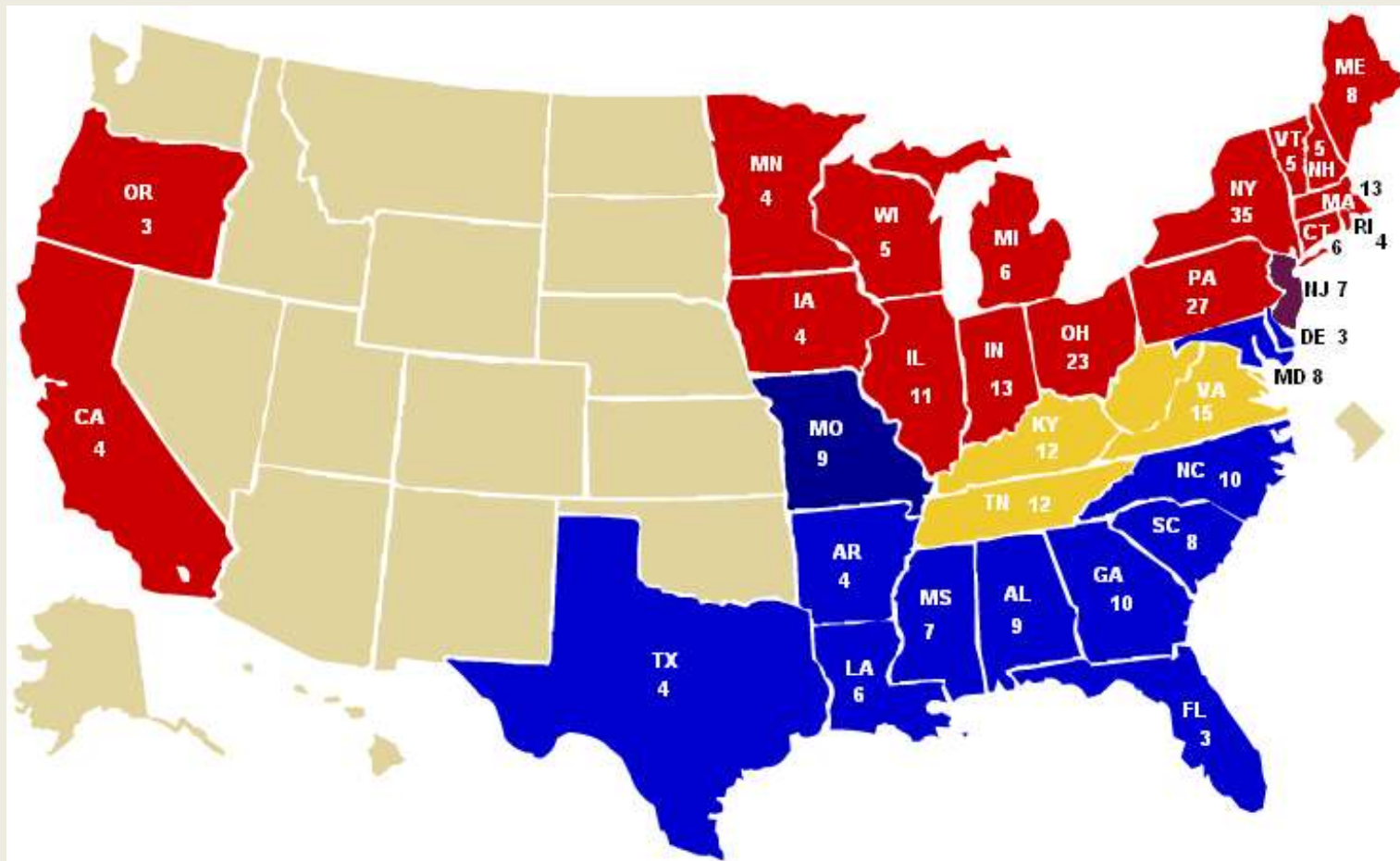
**Opinion** = give your own opinion



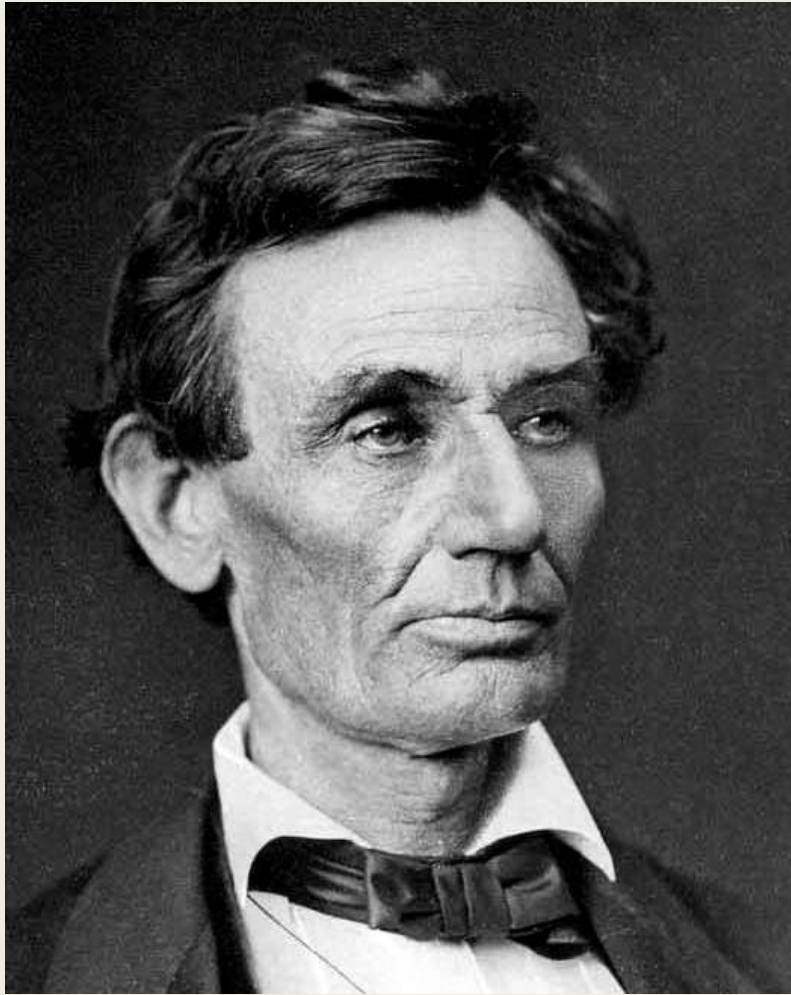
= complete the interactive notebook and/or test

Abraham Lincoln won the election of 1860. **He dominated New England but also won big states like Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania.** He won every Northern state as well as California and Oregon. Even though Stephen Douglas got a lot of votes, he only won one state: Missouri, the original compromise state. The Constitutional Union party won Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. These states knew that a war would happen mostly in their backyard, so they wanted to do anything to avoid a war. These states are known as the **border states**. The Southern states voted for Breckenridge. He dominated the South. **For the first time ever, when you look at an electoral map of the United States, something becomes clear!**

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**Predict** What do you notice about the USA in this map? (Hint: how is it divided?)



The United States was now divided into sections: North and South were divided. Abraham Lincoln didn't win any state in the South. Actually, he got beat really badly in the South. He was very unpopular. The election is held on November 6, 1860.

**Abraham Lincoln has to wait until February to start his job as president. So, he has to wait three months left before he has any power.**



Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election of 1860, but he had to wait to be inaugurated. He won the election in November of 1860. But he doesn't become president until March of 1861. So, there are several month after he wins that he has to wait. Then, he is inaugurated. The inauguration is when you actually get the job of president. **So, there was some time for the Southern states to decide what to do.**

Lincoln didn't get any power until March, so the Southern leaders had the whole winter to come up with a plan. Why would the Southern leaders even do anything? He's the president... he won fair and square. **They had one strong option: they could secede. The word secede means to voluntarily quit or leave a political organization.** In other words, they could "leave" the United States.

## Complete

1. After the election of 1860, the USA was divided into \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. You can see this from the electoral map.
2. Lincoln was elected in the month of \_\_\_\_\_ of 1860.
3. Lincoln was inaugurated in the month of \_\_\_\_\_ of 1861.

## Rewrite

1. Abraham Lincoln was popular in the South.
2. Southern leaders had several days to decide what to do about Lincoln.
3. Secede means to join a country voluntarily.

## Vocab

We learned the word “annex” when we talked about Texas. The United States annexed Texas. So, Texas joined the USA voluntarily.

What does it mean if Texas **secedes** from the USA?

The Southern political leaders hated Lincoln. They began to organize **secessionist conventions** during that winter. **When you secede from a country, you leave the country and make a new one.** So, **secessionists** suggested that the South to quit the United States and make their own countries. These **secessionist conventions were political meetings** where they talked about what to do. **The secessionists wanted to leave the United States. The unionists wanted to stay in the United States.** These months were called the *Secessionist Winter*. All these conventions happened in December, January, and February after Lincoln was elected.

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### **Vocab**

1. Meetings where they talk about **seceding** are called \_\_\_\_\_.
2. People who wanted to **secede** were called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. People who wanted to stay part of the USA were called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Winter after Lincoln was elected is called The \_\_\_\_\_.





Opinion Why do you think the South would want to secede?

Before Lincoln even started the job of president, **secessionist conventions** happened all over the states with slavery. The secessionist leaders felt they had a right to secede. **They believed that the social contract gave them the right to quit or secede from the United States.** They believed the Constitution protected their right to secede.

Think of it this way: The USA is like a club or a gym. When you joint a gym, you sign a contract. You agree to follow the rules. But if you don't like the gym anymore, they can't expect you to pay membership fees forever. Every contract has a way to get out of it. The secessionist leaders didn't trust the rules of the gym anymore... They wanted out before it was too late!

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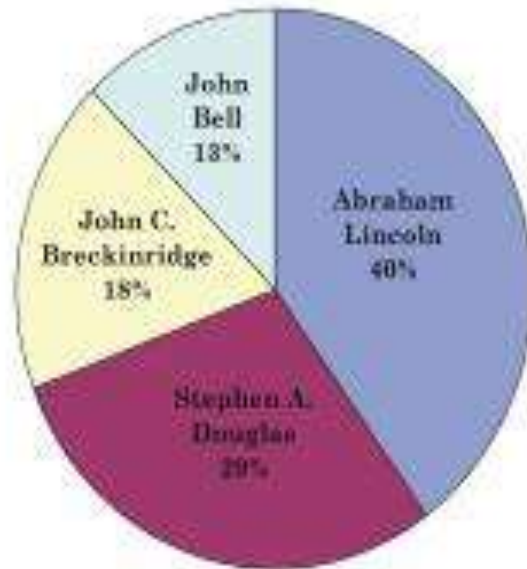
### Complete

1. Secessionists believed the \_\_\_\_\_ gave them the right to secede.
2. The secessionists wanted to end the \_\_\_\_\_. (Hint: it's not the "gym contract.")

Why did so many Southern leaders want to **secede**? After all, the United States was doing really well. The economy was strong. There were no wars. It was a democracy. They lived pretty good lives!

There are many reasons they wanted to secede. **The first reason is they felt angry about the election and didn't trust Lincoln.** In the United States, we don't use the total number of votes to determine the winner. This is called the **popular vote**. We don't use the popular vote for the president. We use the **electoral system**. When a candidate wins a state, he wins **electoral votes**. The Northern population got so big, that **you could now become president without winning any slave state**. Lincoln only won Northern states. He won less than 40 percent of the total popular vote. But he still won the election. It's not cheating! But it made the South feel like they didn't really have any future!

Interact



1. A “majority” is more than 50 percent. Did any candidate win the majority of popular vote?
2. Lincoln and Douglas are both from the North. Together they won almost 70 percent of the vote. What does that tell you about the North’s population?

**The secessionists hated Lincoln and didn't trust the Republicans.** Lincoln wasn't an abolitionist, but many Republicans were abolitionists. Lincoln had also said some things that the South never forgot, like: "A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand"... and...

--We can't be all slave or all free. We need to make a choice.

Lincoln really didn't want **immediate abolition**. We've studied his personal writings and it's clear that he didn't like slavery... but he believed the Southerners had a right to life, liberty, and property. So, they could have their slavery.

However, Southerners DID NOT BELIEVE THIS! They believed he was a **secret abolitionist**.

## Rewrite/Complete

1. Southerners trusted Abraham Lincoln.
2. The secessionists believed Abraham Lincoln was a secret paternalist.
3. Abraham Lincoln made a famous speech called the \_\_\_\_\_ speech.
4. In the House Divided speech, Lincoln said that the USA couldn't endure as...  
(Hint: endure means stay)
5. Lincoln never wanted \_\_\_\_\_, or to end slavery right away, but he did hint that it couldn't last forever.



Lincoln wasn't an abolitionist, but he was a Republican. **The Republicans now controlled the Congress.** Congress can **make** laws. The president's job is to **enforce** the laws. So, if Congress makes a law to end slavery, Lincoln **must** enforce the law. He can ***make*** the South do what Congress demands.

The Constitution has checks and balances. So, if the Republicans voted to **abolish** slavery, the president can make a **veto**. He can say: "Sorry, Congress, but I'm not going to pass this law." The Southern **secessionists** did not trust Abraham Lincoln. Will he make a veto against his own party? Probably not!

## Opinion

Why don't you think Abraham Lincoln will make a *veto* against his own party?

## Complete/Rewrite

1. The Republicans controlled the presidency and the \_\_\_\_\_, which gave them legislative and executive power.
2. The Republican Congress enforces the laws, so they could pass a bill for abolition.
3. The Republican president makes the laws, so he could force the South to welcome abolition.

## Explain

The Republicans control the Congress and the President. Why does this scare the South? (Hint: use make and enforce)

The secessionist leaders **feared** Lincoln and his powers. When they made the Constitution, they wanted Congress to be the center of power. But as time passed, the job of the president got more and more important. The president became more powerful.

Let's go back several decades. When Andrew Jackson was president, there was this thing called the **Nullification Crisis**. Jackson made a tariff, or tax, that would be bad for South Carolina's economy. So, the representatives from South Carolina said:

--We aren't going to enforce this tax. We aren't going to listen.

What did Andrew Jackson do? He sent the army to South Carolina. He **enforced** the tariff. And... he used **force**. Well, the Southern leaders feared that Lincoln could do the same!

## Complete/Rewrite

1. The power of the president is to make the laws.
2. The nullification crisis happened during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.
3. When South Carolina tried to nullify a tariff, Andrew Jackson allowed them to do what they want.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ happened between South Carolina and Andrew Jackson. Now, a bigger crisis will happen between South Carolina and Abraham Lincoln.

The Southerners had legal for secession, too. They believed that slavery should be legal EVERYWHERE in the United States. They had some proof: The Supreme Court had just made a decision in the Dred Scott case. **This Dred Scott case said: “The Federal Government SHOULD NOT be allowed to make rules against slavery because SLAVES are PROPERTY, not CITIZENS!”** So, if the Republicans make slavery illegal anywhere, then they are violating natural rights.

**Secessionist leaders believed they were doing just what Thomas Jefferson and George Washington did when they told England to mind its own business!** The **secessionist** leaders thought they were making another revolution. They believed secession was legal!

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## Complete

1. The Dred Scott case allowed slavery only in the South.
2. The Dred Scott case was a presidential decision, so some Southerners believed slavery should be legal everywhere in the United States.
3. The secessionist leaders believed that leaving the USA was an illegal act.

**Opinion** Secessionist leaders believed they had the right to secede. Why did they say this? What example did they think they followed?



The **secessionists** had economic reasons for hating Lincoln, too. Slaves were expensive. **A good slave cost about as much as a new car cost, nowadays.** The only way to make the price of slaves cheaper was to expand slavery into the West. If slavery is everywhere, then it is a good business and prices would fall. But if slavery is only in the South, then slaves become so expensive that only super rich people could afford them.



What does this picture have to do with slavery?

So, there were many reasons that the **secessionist leaders** had for “quitting” the United States. They organized these **secession conventions** where they tried to get people to vote for seceding. They talked about slave revolts and how dangerous the South will be when the blacks get their freedom. They scared people. Still, the secessionists were only popular in the states where **“cotton was king.”**

**The secessionists were popular in the “Deep South.”** These are states that had smaller white populations and large slave populations. They depended on cotton. These are states like South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi. They have hot climates and good soil, and they had many slaves!



**Interact** The word “white gold” probably refers to..

**Complete**

1. Secessionists were popular in the \_\_\_\_\_ states like Mississippi.
2. Deep South states depended on slaves to produce \_\_\_\_\_. This was the entire economy.



**Interact** Label the states of the Deep South. (FL, MS, GA, AL, SC, FL, TX)

Ask your teacher for help if you don't know the abbreviations.

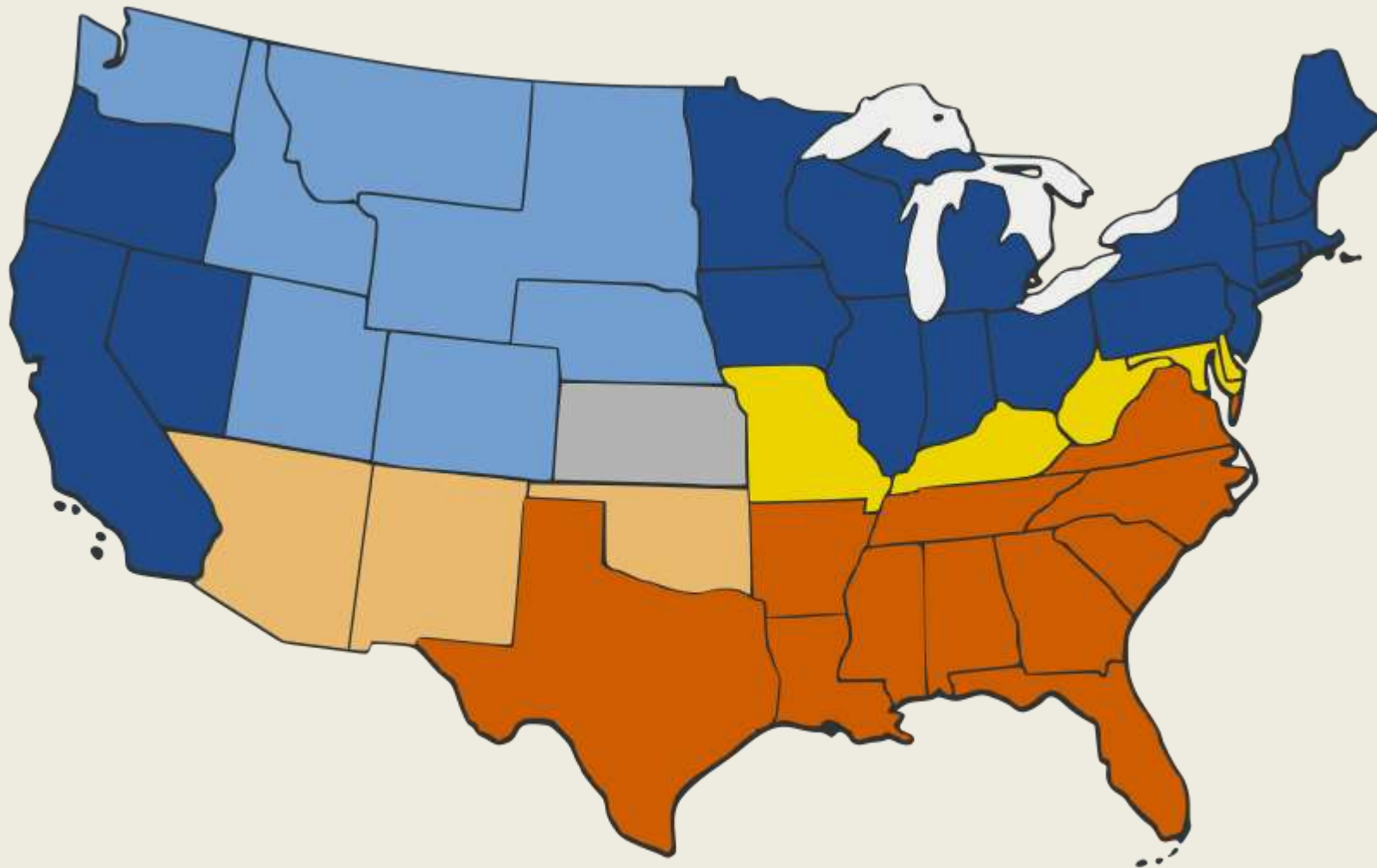


**Interact** Shade ///// the Deep South

The secessionists weren't so popular in **border states** like Virginia. These states wanted to stay in the Union. Remember: when we say union, we mean the United States. Virginia wanted to stay in the Union. Virginia is super important. It has a big population whites and blacks. It is the home of more US presidents than any other state. It is right next to Washington, DC. If there is a war, it will happen in Virginia! Virginia doesn't want things to get real... yet.

**Predict** Is Virginia in the Deep South? Do they want secession yet? Why not?





**Interact** Shade /// the border states. (Hint: think Virginia/ think border)

Secession happens. It happens kind of like when one kid gets the flu, then another kid gets sick, then the entire class is sick. It spreads fast. The Northerners even made a name for it: **Secessionitis**. Get it? Like Bronchitis or Tendonitis. They compared **secession** to a disease. We can see where this is going!

The first state to **secede** was South Carolina. South Carolina left the United States. It seceded. Then came the other states from the Deep South: Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas.

These states all **seceded**. Secessionitis was contagious! **They joined together and called themselves the Confederate States of America.**

## Complete

1. The first state to **secede** from the United States is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Secession spread fast across the \_\_\_\_\_, which is the area with all of the slaves and cotton.
3. The Northerners joked that the South had caught \_\_\_\_\_, like a disease.
4. The other states that seceded after South Carolina are:
5. The seceded states joined together and called themselves \_\_\_\_\_.

**Predict** What important state didn't secede? (Hint: it's a border state)

Seven states in the Deep South seceded from the United States. So, what does that actually mean? **What do you do when you secede?** Well, you need a new name, a new Constitution, and new leaders. There is a saying: “Out with the old, in with the new!”

South Carolina and six other states from the “Deep South” seceded. They quit the USA and joined together. In February, they came up with a new name: **The Confederate States of America.** It sounded a lot like the United States of America, so nothing too crazy! In March, they made a new Constitution. It was just like the US Constitution. It is the **Constitution of the Confederate States of America.** They **appointed a president named Jefferson Davis.** He was appointed because they didn’t have time for an election. When you appoint someone, you give them a government job without an election.

### Complete/Rewrite

1. The secessionist states called themselves \_\_\_\_\_.
2. They made a new \_\_\_\_\_, which was similar to the US Constitution. It actually banned the importation of slaves.
3. They didn't have time to elect a president, so they \_\_\_\_\_ Jefferson Davis as the new president.

**Predict** Do you think Lincoln will take this “new country” seriously at first?  
What do you have to do to make someone take you seriously?

But let's be honest! If you really want to, you can declare your classroom a new country. You can make a Constitution and say bad things about your teacher and the United States of America. You can make your homies president and vice-president. Who cares? If you don't break any laws, nobody is going to say anything to you! The Confederacy, which is what we call the new country, started breaking laws! And... what's the easiest law to break?

The Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy, started to break laws. How did they do it? They confiscated stuff. They confiscated property from the United States government. **Confiscate** is a word your teacher uses when he or she takes your phone, when you're texting in class. It is a legal way of saying: "I'm stealing this, but I have a right to steal it."

**Vocab** What do you think the South will **confiscate** first?



**The Confederate States confiscate every piece of federal property they could find.** If it belonged to the United States before, now it didn't. They took over post offices, government offices, and even arsenals. They took down the American flags and put up their own flags. **They took the weapons from the US Army and confiscated them for their own armies.**

The **Confederate States** began confiscating federal property *before* Lincoln took office. There was another guy who was still president. He is usually seen as one of the worst presidents ever: James Buchanan. He didn't do anything! He was a Democrat. He didn't like Lincoln. Buchanan was like:

--Lincoln can figure this out when he gets inaugurated. I'm done!

## Complete/Rewrite

1. The new country in the South was called the \_\_\_\_\_ for short.
2. The Confederacy respected federal property like post offices and arsenals.
3. The Confederacy only began confiscating things after Lincoln was president.

**Opinion** What federal property would you confiscate first? Why?

**Predict** What do you think Lincoln is going to do about this confiscation?

South Carolina was the first state to secede. They were the first to confiscate every federal post office, telegraph office, railroad office, and arsenal in their state. **They liked to pick a fight.** There was a big fort in South Carolina that the US Army still controlled. **The fort was called Ft. Sumter.** The leaders of South Carolina warned Lincoln that he better give up that fort before he becomes president, or they will attack.

Lincoln is inaugurated in March. He orders the army to stay in Ft. Sumter. The Confederate armies attack! They fire cannons at the fort. **The South attacks the North. But they do it in the South.**

It's kinda funny to think about how this first battle of the Civil War happens in South Carolina over this fort on an island. But it's easier than marching through Virginia and attacking Washington, DC. It works, too. It provokes Lincoln.

## Complete

1. \_\_\_\_\_ provokes Lincoln by attacking Fort Sumter.
2. Fort Sumter is located on an island in the state of \_\_\_\_\_, so it's right in their backyard.
3. Fort Sumter is controlled by the \_\_\_\_\_ army, so the Confederates order them to leave.
4. Lincoln orders the army to stay in Ft. Sumter. The \_\_\_\_\_ army, or the army of the Southern states, fires their cannons.
5. The US army \_\_\_\_\_ or gives up at Ft. Sumter.

## Opinion

Why does South Carolina want to provoke Lincoln?

The Confederate States march into Ft. Sumter. They take prisoners. They raise their flag. The war has started! South Carolina wanted to **provoke** Lincoln. They really wanted to **provoke** the border states like Virginia. They wanted to provoke Lincoln into fighting. They wanted to provoke Virginia into joining them. Many Virginian leaders hated Lincoln, but they wanted to give him a chance. They wanted to see if he would back down and let the South “flex its rights.” In other words, would Lincoln treat South Carolina with respect? Would he listen? Well, he didn’t. Even though the South attacked first, Lincoln was willing to fight. So, this was enough for Virginia.

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### Summarize

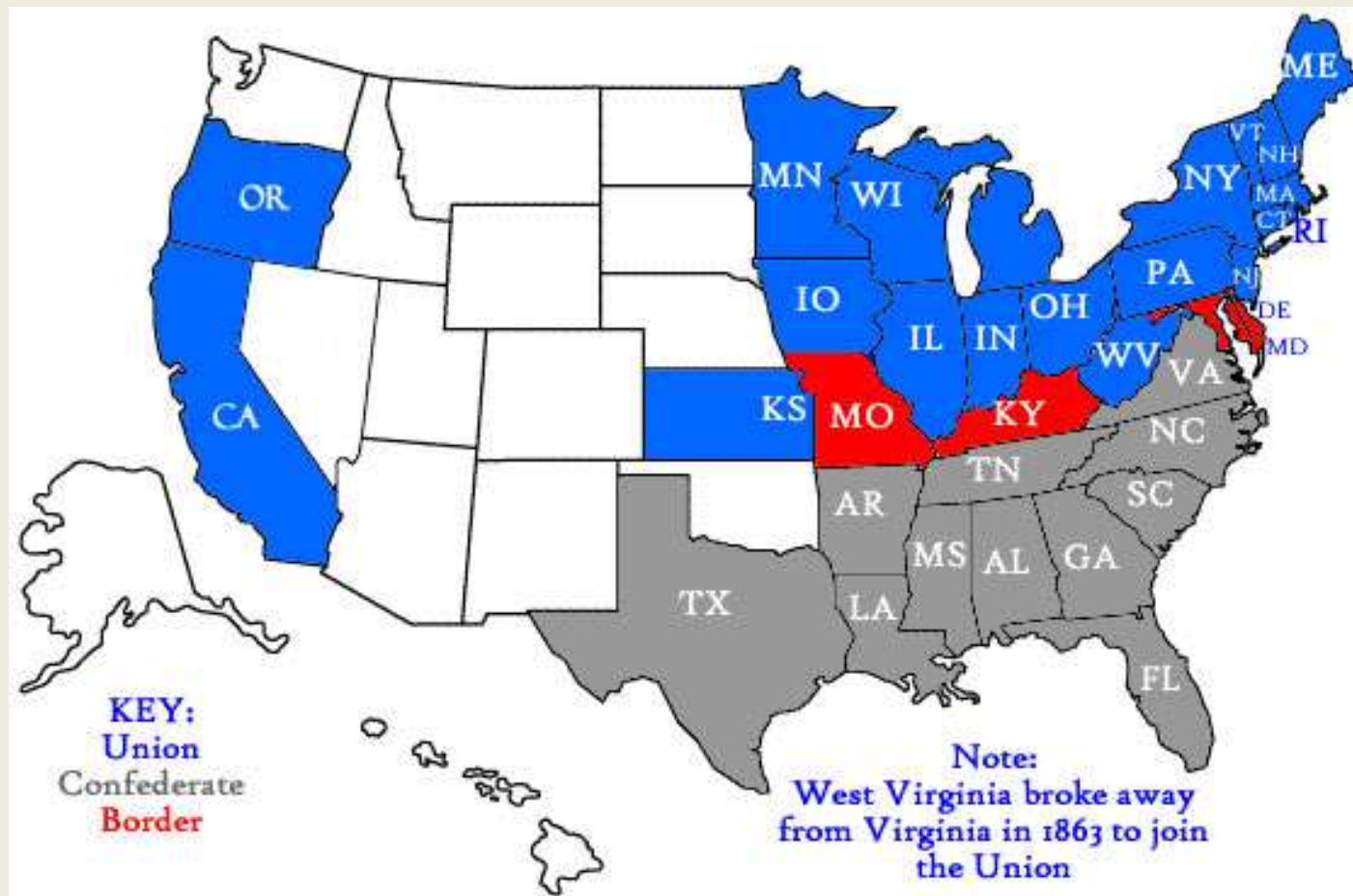
1. How did South Carolina provoke Lincoln?
2. How did South Carolina provoke Virginia?
3. What do you think Virginia will do?

Virginians now vote to **secede** from the United States. **Virginia leaves the Union.** After this Ft. Sumter battle, some more states join the Confederacy: Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and South Carolina. Virginia, of course, is the most important state, and we will talk about Virginia in the next episode. But let's go back to Lincoln.

### Complete

1. After the Ft. Sumter battle, \_\_\_\_\_ secedes from the Union.
2. The other border states that secede are:

**Predict** Why do you think Virginia important to the Confederacy? (Hint: look back a few pages. I hinted at it.)



**Interact** Shade /// the Confederacy after the Ft. Sumter battle.

Lincoln is inaugurated in March. He finally gets to sleep in the White House and he has to deal with all of this:

- a new “country” in the South called the Confederacy

- a new “president” in the South named Jefferson Davis

- federal property and weapons... confiscated by the “rebels”

- his army just surrendered to another army... of Americans

Lincoln didn't want to recognize the Confederacy. He called them illegal. He called the **secession an illegal act**. He wanted to treat the war like an **insurgency**. We use this word now when we talk about the Taliban in Afghanistan or Al Qaeda in Iraq. We say: “We are fighting the Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan. These guys are rebels who don't have the support of the people.” Lincoln wanted to think that the Confederacy was a rebel movement that would end pretty easily.



## Complete

1. Lincoln believed that **secession** was \_\_\_\_\_ or against the law.
2. Lincoln didn't want to recognize or acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_, or the "new country" in the South.
3. Lincoln wanted to treat the Confederacy like an \_\_\_\_\_ or small rebellion.

## Vocab

1. Lincoln wanted to treat the Confederacy like an \_\_\_\_\_; he didn't want to treat them like a real country.

**Opinion** Why does Lincoln want to treat the Confederacy like an insurgency?

Lincoln didn't want war. During his inauguration speech, he urged the South to come back:

--Come back, we are brothers, He said

But Lincoln was willing to make war. He needed a reason. His reason was to "preserve the Union." In other words, he believed that the South couldn't **secede**. It didn't have a right to leave the Union. Secession was illegal. So, what do you when people commit illegal acts? You use to force to set them straight. **Lincoln's goal was to keep the Union together and end the rebellion.** Lincoln believed that the Union cannot be dissolved.

This was the beginning of the Civil War. The Civil War is the biggest war in American history in many ways. We will explore them in the next BFUs. But Lincoln's goal of **keeping the Union together won't be enough**. He will have to conquer the South. **And if he needs to conquer the South, he will have to give them the knockout punch: He will have to abolish slavery.**

## Complete

1. Lincoln believed that the \_\_\_\_\_ could not be dissolved. It couldn't be broken apart.
2. Lincoln believed that \_\_\_\_\_ was illegal. They had no right to leave the USA.
3. Lincoln wanted to treat the South like an \_\_\_\_\_ or rebellion.

## Opinion

Why do you think Lincoln will have to abolish slavery?