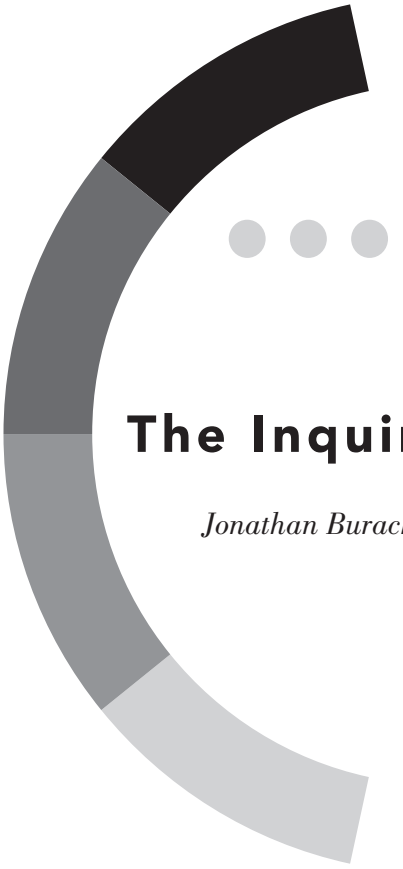
Slavery and the Early Republic



The Inquiry Arc in U.S. History

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Contents

Nullification

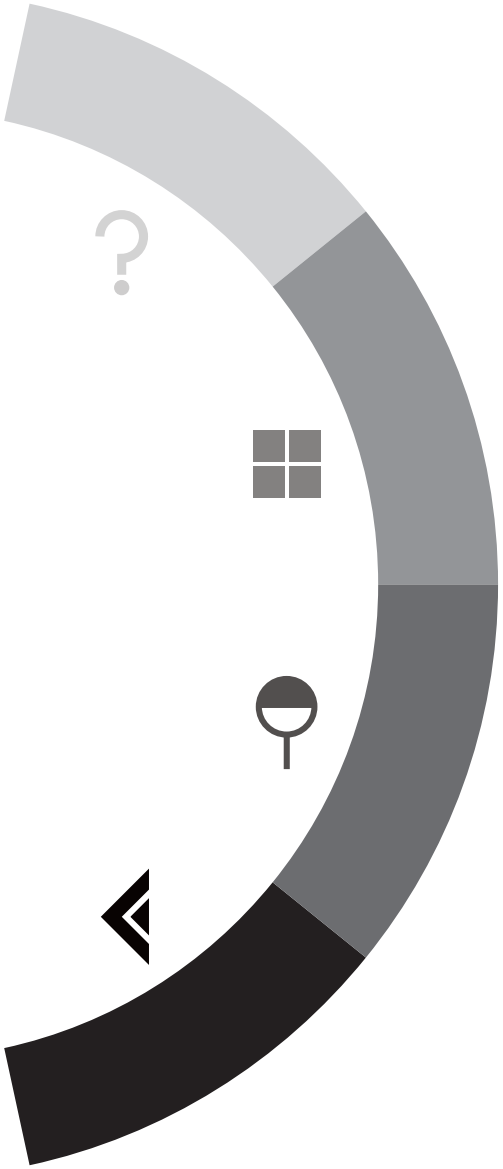
Was It about States' Rights or Slavery?

Lone Star Republic

Why Annex Texas?

C3 Framework

This unit is based primarily on the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. The C3 Framework is an effective tool offering guidance and support for rigorous student learning. The assignments encourage students to be active participants in learning and to explore the parts of history that they find most compelling. Central to the C3 Framework and our use of it is its Inquiry Arc—a set of four interrelated dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies. The lessons in this unit are based on all four dimensions of the C3 Inquiry Arc. While the C3 Framework analyzes each of the four dimensions separately, they are not entirely separable in practice—they each interact in dynamic ways. As a result, the lessons combine some or all of the dimensions in various ways.



Four Dimensions of the Inquiry Arc

1 Developing compelling and supporting questions and planning inquiries

Questions shape social studies inquiries, giving them broader meaning and motivating students to master content and engage actively in the learning process.

2 Applying disciplinary concepts and tools

These are the concepts and central ideas needed to address the compelling and supporting questions student pose. The C3 Framework stresses four subject fields: history, civics, economics, and geography. Each of our units addresses all of these disciplines.

3 Evaluating sources and using evidence

The purpose of using primary and secondary sources as evidence is to support claims and counterclaims. By assessing the validity and usefulness of sources, including those that conflict with one another, students are able to construct evidence-based explanations and arguments.

4 Communicating conclusions and taking informed action

While this may take the form of individual essays and other writing assignments, these units stress other kinds of individual and collaborative forms of communication, including debates, policy analyses, video productions, diary entries, and interviews. Meaningful forms of individual or collaborative civic action are also incorporated into each unit.

How to Use This Book

These units offer you the chance to implement the entire C3 Inquiry Arc in brief, carefully structured lessons on important topics in U.S. history. Each lesson is driven by a central compelling question, and disciplinary supporting questions are provided. Each unit asks students to apply understandings from all of the C3 disciplines—history, civics, economics, and geography—and they include individual and group tasks in an integrated way.

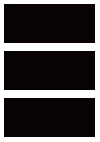
Each unit includes an introductory essay, detailed teaching instructions, a set of primary sources, and the handouts needed to complete the lesson's assignments. Rubrics for student evaluation and sources for further study are also provided. The teaching instructions suggest a time frame for completion of each lesson, but the assessments can easily be adapted to fit into any lesson plan.

Each unit is aligned with several C3 Framework standards and Common Core standards. The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Literacy emphasize the reading of informational texts, making these lessons ideal for integration into English Language Arts instruction.

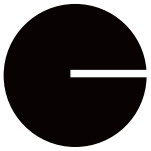
C3 Disciplines

History

Civics



Economics



Geography

Introduction

In 1787, fifty-five men met in Philadelphia to create a new framework of government, the Constitution of the United States. They agreed the constitution had to give the national government more power, but they agreed about little else. The final framework, therefore, required a great many compromises. One glaring issue above all divided the delegates—slavery. Many Convention delegates held strong antislavery views. Nevertheless, most Southerners were not about to enter a union that threatened their slave property. The Northern states faced a stark choice: stand strongly against slavery and see several Southern states leave the union or compromise over slavery and hold the union together (keeping a hope of ending slavery later). The Convention chose compromise. Were its compromises worth it? In this lesson, students will work with short passages from ten primary sources in an effort to answer this question. While these sources alone won't completely answer these questions, they can help. Moreover, they can form the core content for a set of tasks that will help students better understand this turning point in the nation's history.

Objectives

Students will work individually and in small groups to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about slavery and the Constitution. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

C3 Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of views represented in the sources.
- **D2.HIS.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time
- **D2.HIS.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- **D2.HIS.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- **D2.HIS.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- **D2.CIV.8.6-8.** Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- **D2.ECO.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- **D2.GEO.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- **D2.GEO.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

Compelling Question

Were the ethical compromises worth it?

Preparation

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.

Asking Questions about Slavery and the Constitutional Convention

This part of the task stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework

Day One

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay in class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class, and remind students to refer back to the handout as they read the primary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines identified in Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework—history, civics, geography, or economics. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the lesson's overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Give each student a copy of all the primary sources for this unit. Each group may share a primary source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete the Day One section of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three primary sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.

Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence

This part of the task stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework

Day Two

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group's compelling question. After reading the remaining seven primary sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

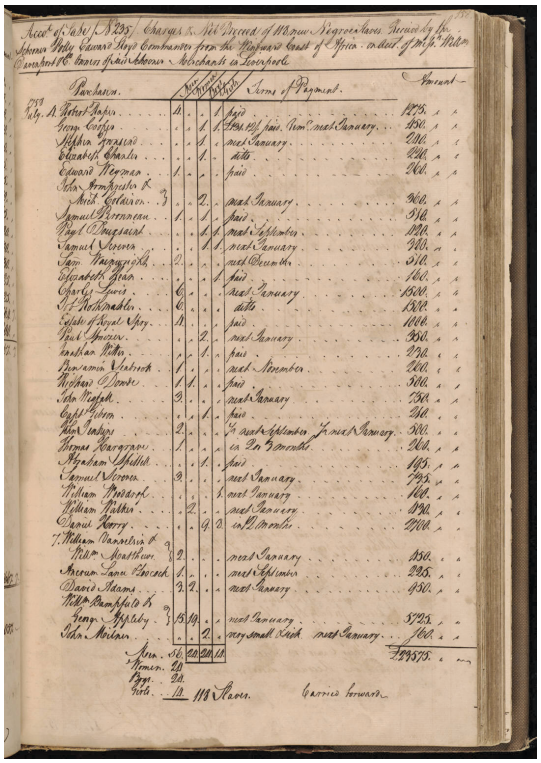
Introductory Essay

Slavery and the Constitutional Convention

Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States

In 1776, thirteen British colonies in North America declared themselves independent and fought a war to break free of Great Britain. In 1781, they formed a new government, the Articles of Confederation. However, this governmental system was not flawless. The thirteen former colonies, now states, were fiercely independent, and they bickered and complained among themselves about many things. They especially complained about how weak the Articles were. The Articles gave very little power to the general government. In 1787, many of the most powerful men in the United States decided that something drastic had to be done.

In that year, fifty-five of those men met in Philadelphia. They debated, discussed, and created a new set of rules for the United States of America. They agreed that the country needed a new framework of government, and they agreed it had to give the national government more power—then they agreed about little else. The final framework they created, therefore, required a great many compromises. It satisfied no one entirely, but it produced something that has lasted since—the U.S. Constitution.



Sale ledger of 118 slaves in Charleston, South Carolina

Unfortunately, one glaring issue above all divided the delegates at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia—slavery. Slavery was the great flaw in the new republic. It presented the Framers with their greatest challenge, to create a constitution that supported the great "self-evident truth" of the Declaration of Independence—that all men are created equal.

The problem was that slavery was legal in many states. Most of the United States' seven hundred thousand or so slaves were in the South, but some states in the North had freed their slaves. Others would soon follow. Many Convention delegates held strong antislavery views. Even in the South, many saw slavery as an unavoidable evil. Some expected it to fade away on its own. Instead, slavery soon began to spread rapidly as cotton production began to soar in the early 1800s. As it did, more Southerners defended slavery as a positive. At the time of the Constitutional Convention, however, many held out hope that its days were numbered.

Nevertheless, the Southern states, for the most part, were not about to enter a union that threatened their slave property. The Northern states were faced with a stark choice: stand strongly against slavery and see several Southern states leave the union, perhaps to form their own slave confederacy, or compromise over slavery and hold the union together (with the hope of ending slavery later). The Convention chose compromise.

What, then, were those compromises, and were they worth it?

In this lesson, three main compromises will be our focus. The most important was the well-known "three-fifths compromise." It dealt with the issue of how to determine a state's population for the purpose of representation and direct taxation. The South wanted its slaves to count as full persons for the sake of representation. It did not want them counted at all in deciding how much tax a state owed. Counting the slaves fully for the sake of representation would give each slave state more members in Congress. Not counting slaves in determining a state's taxes would lower the amount each slave state paid. Many Northern delegates opposed the South's proposal. They especially feared giving the South more members in the House of Representatives. They said slaves should not be counted at all for that purpose—especially because they had no rights as citizens. The two sides compromised—the slaves were counted as three persons for every five persons, for both purposes.

Another big compromise had to do with the slave trade. Many delegates wanted it banned immediately. Most Southern delegates wanted no limits on it at all. The delegates compromised. They decided that Congress had to wait to ban the slave trade until 1808. This did allow horrible activity to continue, but it also ensured a soon-to-be end to a practice that had existed for centuries. In fact, Congress did ban the slave trade on the very first day it could in 1808.

The third compromise had to do with aiding in the capture of escaped slaves. Providing for this pleased the slaveholders; however, the language of this rule is quite odd. No use of the word *slave* ever appears in it (nor does that word appear elsewhere in the Constitution). Moreover, the "persons held to service" are not said to be held by any federal law—only by the laws of the state seeking a runaway.

Was this compromise over language too unimportant to be worth compromising ethics? Were the other compromises worth such an ethical concession? In a way, only time would tell. To answer that question, it will help to look to later views—especially the views of those who fought against slavery later in U.S. history. In this lesson, you will examine a small sample of primary sources on this question of slavery in early U.S. history. These will provide evidence to help you answer the lesson's key questions. Interpreting the sources is not easy. Keep in mind that they are from a variety of points of view about the conflict. Together, they should help you better understand the conflicting views of various parties on the pros and cons of compromise.

Image Sources: Architect of the Capitol, *Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States.* By Howard Chandler Christy, 1940, United States Capitol.
Sale Ledger. By unknown artist, circa 1754–1755, courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

How to Analyze a Primary Source

For this lesson, you will be studying several primary source documents. This handout offers suggestions for how best to read and analyze historical primary sources. Studying such sources is challenging. They were created in a different time and place. Their language and use of certain key terms often differ from ours. They assume things we might not accept. They arise out of historical circumstances and settings that differ greatly from our own times. To use such sources as evidence, you need to apply some special critical thinking skills and habits. Here are some guidelines to help you do this.

- ***Question the source***

  Since no primary source was written with you and your interests in mind, you need to be clear about what you are looking for when you examine a source. You need to stay in charge of the investigation. Act like a detective, and ask questions. Above all, keep your own most important compelling questions in mind as you read and think about a source.

- ***Consider the source's origins***

  This is often simply called "sourcing." It means asking who created the source, when and where the source was created, and why. If you know the source's purpose, you will be more likely to see how it is shaped by its creator's point of view. Among other things, sourcing can also help you decide how reliable or typical a source might be.

- ***Contextualize the source***

  "Context" here means the broader historical setting for the source. Sources are always a part of a larger historical context. You need to consider how this context helps clarify the meaning of the source. You also need to decide which context is most important. Sources might be understood best in connection with a local context or a recent event. Alternatively, they might be understood better within a national or international context, or as part of a long-term trend in society at large. Your guiding questions should help you decide which context is most important.

- ***Corroborate the source***

  This means you must think about your source in relation to other sources. Does the source agree with or support those other sources, or does it seem to be at odds with the other sources? Might there be additional sources, which have not been provided to you, that could support or conflict with your source?

- ***Above all, read the source carefully***

  Look at language closely. Pay attention to images, emotional language, metaphors, and other literary devices. Think about what is implied, not merely what is stated or claimed in so many words. Think about what is left out as well as what is included. Make inferences based on your close reading. This will help you get more out of your source than even the source's creator might have seen in it.

The following sections of the Constitution of 1787 are those most relevant to the issue of slavery. The entire transcript of the Constitution is available from the National Archives website.

Original Document

Article. I

Section. 2.

. . . Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. . . .

Section. 9.

The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person. . . .

Article. IV

Section. 2.

. . . No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

Original Document Source: National Archives, "The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription," last updated October 5, 2016, https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript.

James Madison on State Division

At the Constitutional Convention, Virginia's James Madison kept a record of much of the discussions that took place day by day. On June 30, 1787, Madison recorded his own views on the key factor was that divided some states from other states. He refers to himself in the third person here, as "he."

Original Document

But he [Madison] contended that the States were divided into different interests not by their difference of size, but by other circumstances; the most material of which resulted partly from climate, but principally from the effects of their having or not having slaves. These two causes concurred in forming the great division of interests in the U. States. It did not lie between the large & small States: It lay between the Northern & Southern, and if any defensive power were necessary, it ought to be mutually given to these two interests.

Adapted Version

But he [Madison] says it is not size differences that explain the biggest issues dividing the states. Other factors are more important. Some have to do with varying differences, such as climate. The most important differences are due to the fact that some have slaves and others do not. These two causes, climate and slaves, together help form the great division of interests in the United States. These factors do not divide the large from the small states: They divide the northern from the southern states, and if any side is necessary to check the other, it ought to be the two sides divided by these different interests.

Original Document Source: James Madison, *The Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 Which Framed the Constitution of the United States of America*, edited by Gaillard Hund and James Brown Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 1920), 194–195. Available from The Avalon Project, a website of Yale University's Lillian Goldman Law Library.