

Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about Sectionalism in the years before the Civil War. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical American history class.

★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- *A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of American History*

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- *Based on primary or secondary sources*

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone.

- *Brief tasks promoting historical literacy*

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the students' mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- *Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments*

A BASIC and an ADVANCED version of each assessment are provided. The BASIC Assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The ADVANCED Assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the BASIC version.

- *Easy to use both as learning and assessment tools*

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess student historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- *Evaluating student responses*

Brief but specific suggestions are provided defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly, they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

Sectionalism Assessment 1

Basic Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8

★ Key Ideas and Details

1. (6–8) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

★ Using this Assessment

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Sectionalism: Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should note that the free-state people sent to “friends” in Boston for Sharps rifles and used them to arm a military company known as the “Stubbs.” By implication, these friends in Boston were helping because they sided with the free-state faction’s opposition to slavery. As for the other side, the document only implies that they are violent, speaking of “border ruffians” and claiming the rifles from Boston were “needed for self-defense.” Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should cite Document 2’s details about the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the way that act reopened the slavery issue, leading to a rush by both pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces to win control in Kansas. Document 2 also confirms and adds to Document 1’s description of who was supplying guns to anti-slavery forces, who the “border ruffians” were and where they came from, as well as how the political process had failed and degenerated into violence.

Sectionalism: Assessment 1

Directions: This exercise asks you to read a primary source document and a secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Document 1: A Primary Source

As soon as the result for the March election was finally determined, the free-state leaders sent to their friends in the east for arms. George W. Deitzler was sent to Boston to lay the matter before the friends of free Kansas. Only two persons knew of the object of his mission. New arms were needed for self-defense. Amos A. Lawrence and others, before whom Mr. Deitzler presented the case, at once saw the seriousness of the situation. Within an hour after his arrival in Boston, he had an order for one hundred Sharps rifles, and in forty-eight hours the rifles were on their way to Lawrence. They were shipped in boxes marked "books." As the border ruffians had no use for books, they came through without being disturbed. A military company known for many years afterwards as the "Stubbs" was organized, and was armed with these rifles. Other boxes of "books" rapidly followed these, and other companies in Lawrence and in the country were armed with them. The fame of these guns went far and wide, and produced a very salutatory effect. They who recognized only brute force came to have a great respect for the Sharps rifles. A howitzer was procured in New York through the aid of Horace Greeley, and shipped to Lawrence.

Source Information: The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 opened the Kansas territory to slavery if settlers there decided they wanted it. Pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces flooded into the territory to try to sway it to adopt a state constitution to their liking. Over the next several years, contested elections were held and violence spread. In 1857, Congregational minister Richard Cordley came to Kansas. This document is excerpted from his account, *A History of Lawrence, Kansas: From the First Settlement to the Close of the Rebellion* (Lawrence, Kansas: E. F. Caldwell, 1895), page 37. It can be accessed online at <http://books.google.com/books?id=Css-AAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

Document 2: A Secondary Source

In 1854, Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas tore open the slavery question with his Kansas-Nebraska Act. Douglas wanted a transcontinental railroad to go west from Chicago. For this to happen, a territorial government would have to be organized in the Louisiana Purchase lands. To get Southern support for this, however, Douglas had to agree to replace the ban on slavery in those lands with something called “popular sovereignty.” This meant allowing settlers in a territory to decide for themselves whether or not to have slavery.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act divided the Louisiana Purchase territory into two territories, Kansas and Nebraska. Nebraska was unlikely ever to have slaves. But Kansas was next to the slave state of Missouri. It quickly became a battleground. The New England Emigrant Aid Society sent hundreds of settlers to Kansas to keep slavery out. Abolitionist minister Henry Ward Beecher supplied many with Sharps rifles, which came to be known as “Beecher’s Bibles.” Meanwhile, thousands of armed Southerners from Missouri and elsewhere also poured into the state to vote for the proslavery side in several elections that would take place there over the next few years. Some elections were boycotted by anti-slavery forces, others by proslavery forces. Democratic presidents made matters worse by favoring proslavery forces even though free-staters were in the majority. As the political process stalled in Kansas, violence erupted. Thousands of “border ruffians” from Missouri crossed over to cause trouble. Abolitionists and other anti-slavery settlers also arrived, many ready to fight.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source about the sectional conflict in Kansas in the 1850s. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. As a secondary source, this document is not evidence from the time of these troubles in Kansas. The document is an excerpt adapted from the “Introductory Essay” for *Bleeding Kansas: A Failure of Compromise*.

Source: Burack, Jonathan. “Introductory Essay.” In *Bleeding Kansas: A Failure of Compromise*. Debating the Documents. Culver City, CA: MindSparks, 2005.

Assessment Questions

1. What details in Document 1 make it clear that both sides in Kansas were using violence and that this violence was fueled by a nationwide sectional dispute?

2. What details in Document 2 help to explain more fully why violence broke out in Kansas and what the conflict was about? Cite at least two details that do this and explain your choices.

Sectionalism Assessment 7

Advanced Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–12

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 7. (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

★ *Using this Assessment*

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Sectionalism: Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should note Hammond's stress on the South's size and rich resources; also on what he expects to be its growing economic ties with the northern portion of the Mississippi Valley, the section then known as the U.S. Northwest. Document 2 might support Hammond in that it shows some rail lines linking the South and Northwest. However, the rail lines connect the Northwest with the Northeast much more completely than they do with the South. The South is more cut off from both regions. Document 3 dramatically illustrates the importance of the South's ports and overseas cotton export trade. However, the source information makes clear that this illustration is from 1865, at a point when the Union had defeated the South and was in control of the port of Savannah. Acceptable answers to the second assessment question may vary. Answers involve a good deal of conjecture. They should be assessed by how thoughtfully they account for the relative strengths of the South's economy and the productivity of its slave system.

Sectionalism: Assessment 7

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer two questions focused on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 7: (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Document 1: A Written Primary Source

I think it not improper that I should attempt to bring the North and South face to face, and see what resources each of us might have as separate organizations.

If we never acquire another foot of territory for the South, look at her. Eight hundred and fifty thousand square miles. As large as Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia and Spain. Is not that territory enough to make an empire that shall rule the world? With the finest soil, the most delightful climate, whose staple productions none of those great countries can grow, we have three thousand miles of continental sea-shore line so indented with bays and crowded with islands that, when their shore lines are added, we have twelve thousand miles. Through the heart of our country runs the great Mississippi, the father of waters, into whose bosom are poured thirty-six thousand miles of tributary rivers. And beyond we have the desert prairie wastes to protect us in our rear. Can you hem in such a territory as that? You talk of putting up a wall of fire around eight hundred and fifty thousand square miles so situated! How absurd.

But in this territory lies the great valley of the Mississippi, now the real, and soon to be the acknowledged seat of the empire of the world. The sway of that valley will be as great as ever the Nile knew in the earlier ages of mankind. We own the most of it. The most valuable part of it belongs to us now. And although those who have settled above us are now opposed to us, another generation will tell a different tale. They are ours by all the laws of nature. Slave-labor will go over every foot of this great valley where it will be found profitable to use it. And some of those who may not use it are soon to be united with us by such ties as will make us one and inseparable. The iron horse will soon be clattering over the sunny plains of the South to bear the products of its upper tributaries of the valley to our Atlantic ports, as it now does through the ice-bound North. And there is the great Mississippi, a bond of union made by Nature herself. She will maintain it forever.

Source Information: As the battle over slavery grew in America, Southerners became bolder in asserting their section's independence and its economic and political strength. An example is this famous speech by Senator James Henry Hammond, a Democrat from South Carolina. The speech is titled "Cotton is King," and Hammond gave it on March 4, 1858. This excerpt is adapted from the version reprinted in *Selections from the Letters and Speeches of the Hon. James H. Hammond, of South Carolina* (New York: John F. Trow & Co., 1866), pages 311–322. Accessed online at <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/cotton-is-king/>.

Document 2: A Visual Primary Source

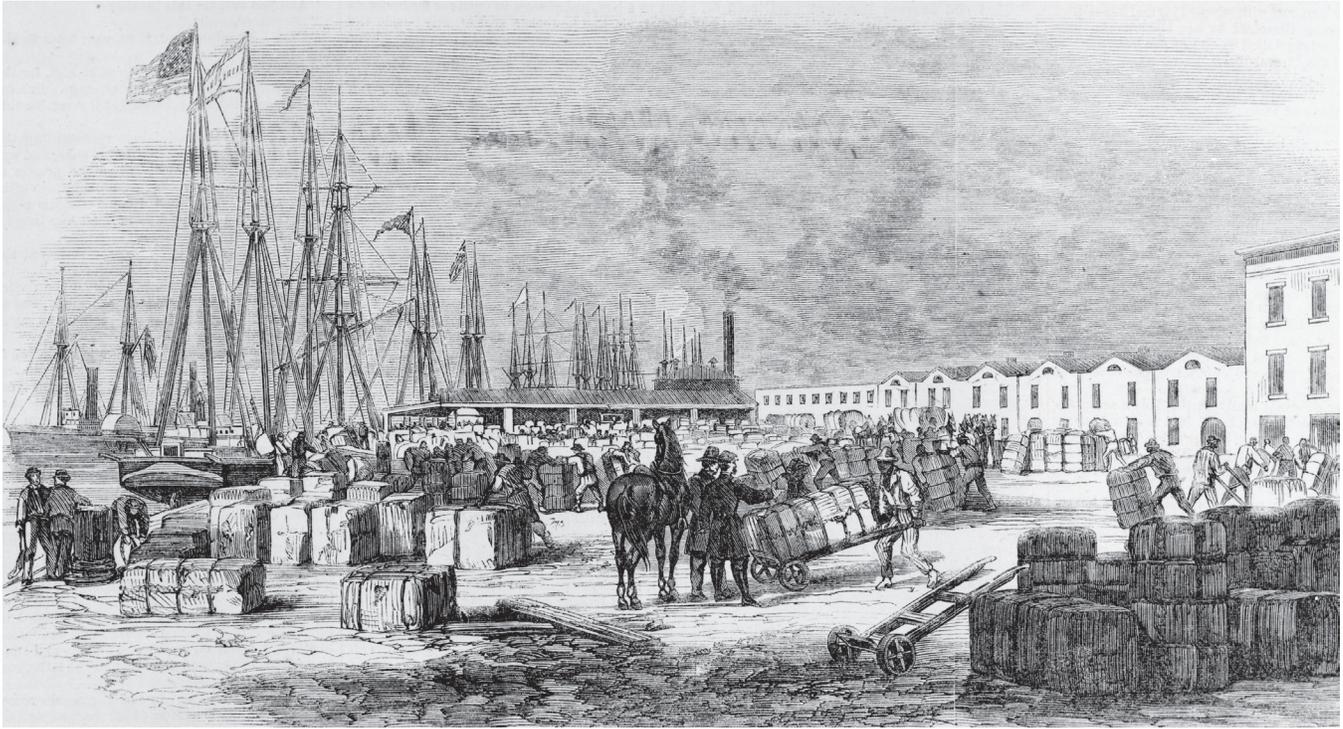


RAILROADS, 1850 AND 1860

Source Information: This map shows the rapid growth of railroads in the United States. Notice closely where the roads are and which sections they link together the most. This map is adapted from a similar one in the *Mini-Atlas of Late Antebellum American Social Traits*, which can be accessed online at <http://facweb.furman.edu/~bensonlloyd/civwar/mini-atlas.htm>.

Student Handout

Document 3: A Visual Primary Source



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction Number: LC-USZ62-116353.

Source Information: This illustration shows cotton bales on a wharf, with ships in background at the harbor at Savannah, Georgia. The illustration appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Feb. 25, 1865, page 357. At that point in time, U.S. officials were planning to ship this cotton to New York.

Assessment Questions

1. In what ways do Documents 2 and 3 support Hammond's claims, and in what ways do they undercut the claims he makes?

2. Had the South been allowed to secede peacefully, do you think Hammond's vision of its future would have been realized? Why or why not?