

Key Decisions in U.S. History

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Volume 2

1861–1994

Reproducible Teacher Book

Patrick Henry Smith and John Croes

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1861

President Lincoln

How should we respond to the attack on Fort Sumter?

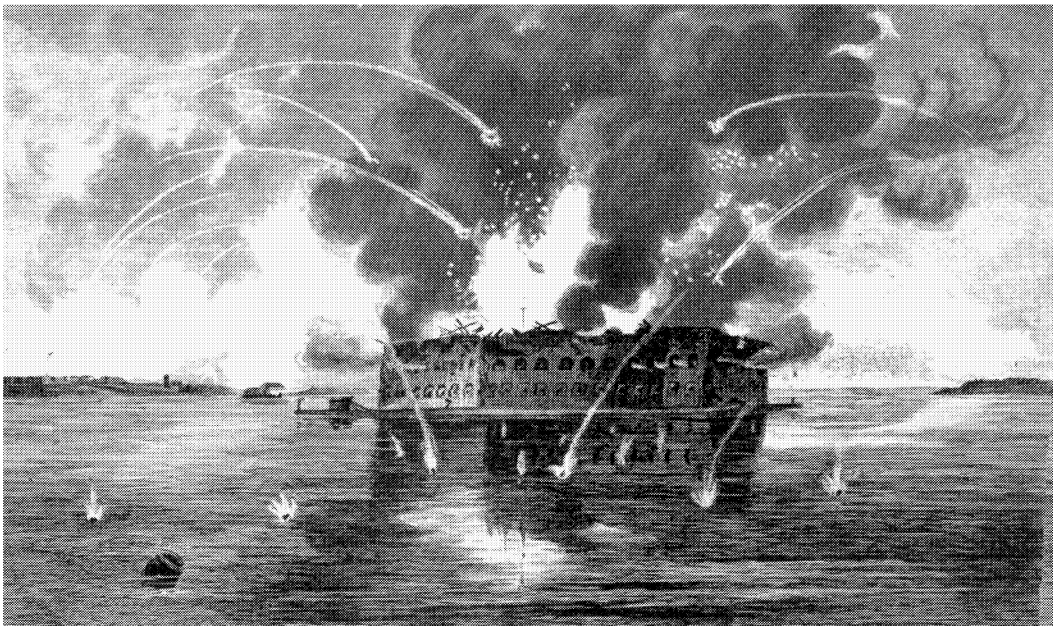
It is April 1861. You are the new president, Abraham Lincoln.

After your inauguration last month, six southern states seceded from the Union. One state, South Carolina, seceded before you became president! These seven states have started a new country, the Confederate States of America. You think this is wrong. The Constitution does not give the states the right to leave the Union.

Now they are trying to take Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. Union soldiers there are surrounded by Confederate cannons. A few days ago, you ordered food and supplies to be sent to our soldiers inside the fort. Then the Confederates began to

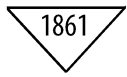
bomb it. First they attack our property and now our troops!

How should the U.S. government respond to this attack? When you became president, you promised to protect the United States. Should the North fight back? We have more factories, more workers, more railroads, more ships, and more money than the South, but we do not have a strong army that is ready to fight now. Many military leaders are from the South. They are leaving the U.S. military and joining the Confederacy. Some of your advisers say we should surrender Fort Sumter to the Confederates. If we fight back, more states might leave the Union. There might be a civil war between the North and the South.



Attack on Fort Sumter





President Lincoln: How should we respond to the attack on Fort Sumter? *(continued)*

Comprehension

1. Who are you in this decision?
2. In paragraph 2, what do you think is wrong?
3. Why did the seven southern states start a new nation?
4. In paragraph 3, what does the word they refer to?
5. In paragraph 3, what does the word it refer to?
6. What is happening at Fort Sumter?
7. Why isn't the northern army ready to fight a war?
8. What is the best way to avoid this war?
9. If there is a war, which side will probably win? Why?

Decision

- *How should we respond to the attack on Fort Sumter? Choose one or more of the following options:*
 - (a) Fight back now.
 - (b) Order the U.S. military to prepare for war. We will fight back when our military forces are ready.
 - (c) Don't fight back. Let the Confederates have Fort Sumter.
 - (d) Don't fight back. Order the soldiers in the fort to wait as long as they can.
 - (e) Do nothing.
 - (f) Other: _____
- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*



1865

Northern States

They killed Lincoln! How should we punish the South?

It is April 15, 1865. You are an American in a northern state. Someone has just assassinated President Lincoln! Government soldiers have hunted down the murderer, John Wilkes Booth. He was part of a group of assassins. They also tried to kill Secretary of State William Seward, but he will probably live. Booth and his group hated Lincoln and the Union.

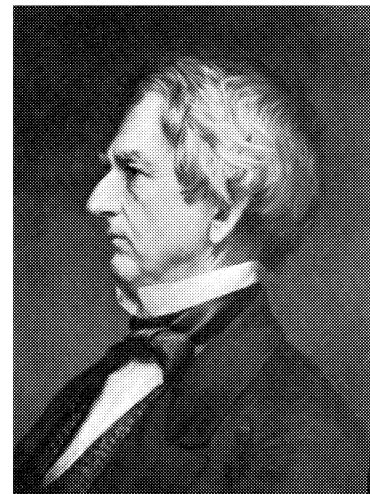


John Wilkes Booth

We Northerners are sad about the president's death. We were angry at the South for starting the war and killing so many of our soldiers, but now we are furious! Lincoln wanted to make peace with the South. He wanted to unite the states again quickly. Now Lincoln is dead. It is time to punish the South for what they have done to our country and to our president.

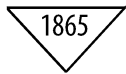


Abraham Lincoln



William Seward





Northern States: They killed Lincoln! How should we punish the South? *(continued)*

Comprehension

1. Who are you in this decision?
2. Who tried to kill Seward?
3. Why are the northern states angry?
4. What part of the country do you think Booth is from?
5. What happened to William Seward?
6. What did Lincoln want to do after the war?
7. If he were alive, would Lincoln want to punish the South?

Decision

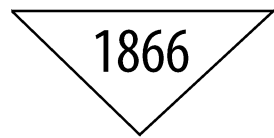
- *How should we punish the South? Choose one or more of the following options:*

- (a) Raise federal taxes in the South.
- (b) Make the southern states pay for the damages caused in the war.
- (c) Make Southerners work for us as slaves.
- (d) Abolish slavery.
- (e) Keep our soldiers in the South.
- (f) Make new laws that hurt the South. What should these laws say?

-
- (g) Don't let whites in the South vote.
 - (h) Give blacks the right to vote.
 - (i) The U.S. Congress should choose the new southern leaders.
 - (j) Take southern property.
 - (k) Give John Wilkes Booth and the other assassins a fair trial.
 - (l) Do not punish the South.
 - (m) Other: _____

- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*





Republican Senator

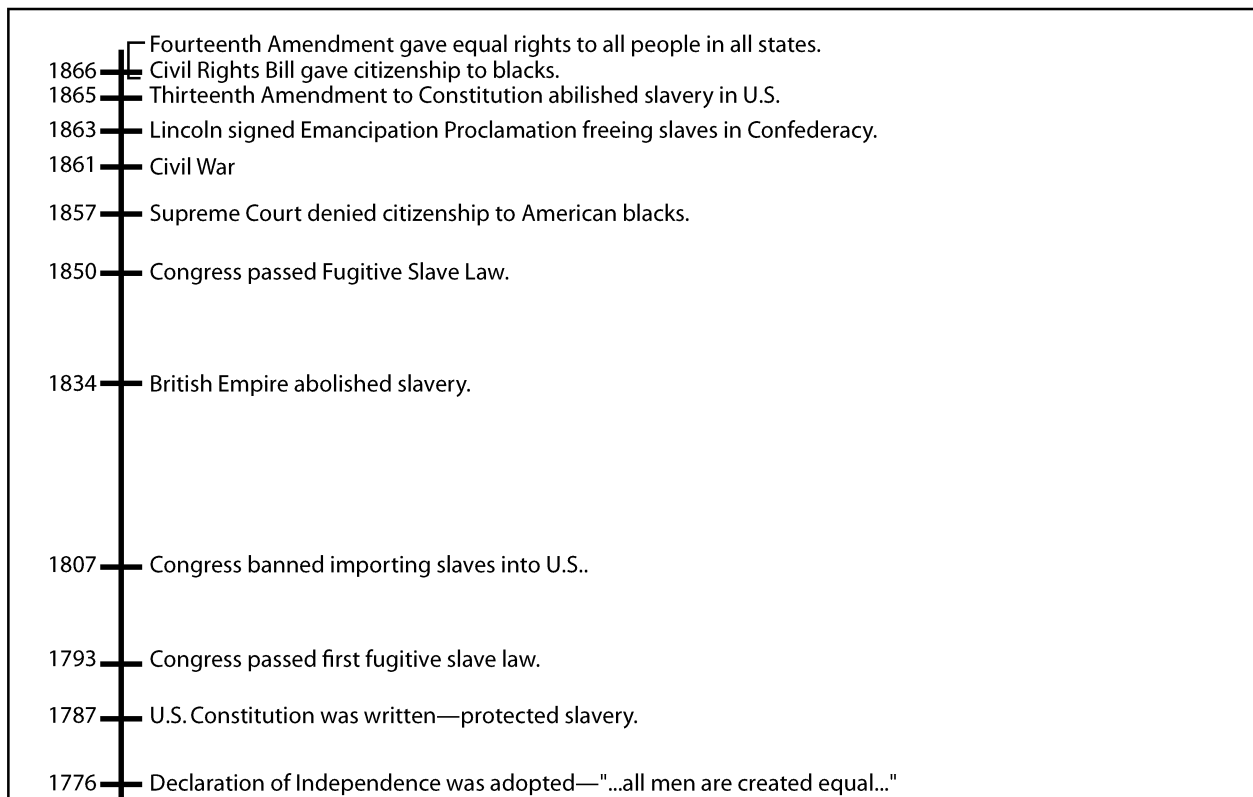
How can we make southern states obey the Constitution?

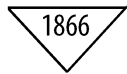


It is 1866. You are a Republican senator from Massachusetts. Congress has just ratified two new amendments. The Thirteenth Amendment says that slavery is illegal in the United States. The Fourteenth Amendment makes whites and blacks equal. It gave citizenship to blacks and says the states have to treat them as citizens. But the southern states are passing new laws called "Black Codes" that discriminate against blacks. Under the Black Codes, blacks cannot vote, and they cannot

speaking in public. These laws also restrict when and how blacks can work.

The Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery in the Confederate states three years ago, and now the Constitution says that slavery is illegal. But southern states are making a new kind of slavery for blacks. How can we guarantee their rights in the South? How can we make the Southern states obey the Constitution?





Republican Senator: How can we make southern states obey the Constitution? *(continued)*

Comprehension

1. Who are you in this decision?
2. What do the new amendments say?
3. What are the Black Codes? What do they say?
4. Why are the southern states passing the Black Codes?
5. What do you want the southern states to do?

Decision

- *How can we make the Southern states obey the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments? Choose as many options as you think are needed.*
 - (a) Let the southern states decide if they will obey or not.
 - (b) Amend the Constitution again to make the Black Codes illegal.
 - (c) Attack the states that don't obey the Constitution.
 - (d) Throw states with Black Codes out of the Union.
 - (e) Make everyone who fought against the Union during the war promise to obey the Constitution.
 - (f) Send federal soldiers to force these states to obey the Constitution.
 - (g) Other: _____
- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*



1868

Lakota

Should we sign the Fort Laramie Treaty?

It is November 1868. You belong to the Lakota nation—a large and powerful group of Native Americans who live on the northern Great Plains. You are now at Fort Laramie. The U.S. government has asked you to go there to make a peace treaty.

Many people agree with the great war chief Red Cloud. He says that the whites have broken all the treaties in the past. The whites keep trying to steal your hunting grounds. The whites say they only want to build a road for white people to use to go through your land. Red Cloud says the truth is that the white people come looking for gold. When they find it, they do not obey the treaty. The treaty says they will only pass through your land. But the white people don't pass through your land—they stop and build towns. More white people come looking for gold, and they stay. Now they are even building a railroad across the plains. This frightens the animals that you hunt. You try to stop the railroad, but the government sends soldiers. They build

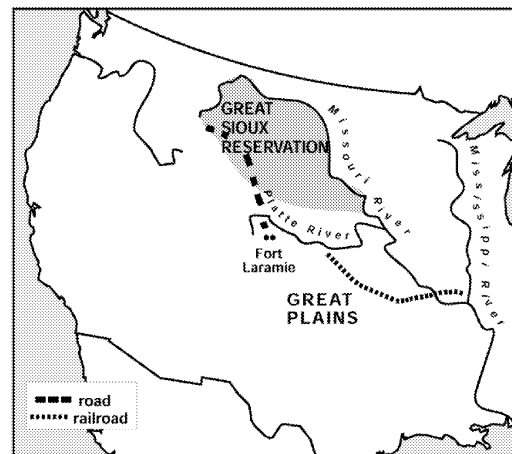
forts and fight against your people. The soldiers attack your villages and kill your women, children, and old people. Red Cloud says he cannot trust white men's treaties.

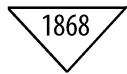
Now they want you to sign another treaty. The treaty will give you complete control of a very big piece of land, the Great Sioux Reservation, west of the Missouri River. The treaty says no whites can cross the land without your permission. No whites can live on that land without your permission. No whites will ever bother your people on that land. The U.S. government will send gifts of clothes and supplies. It will send teachers, a doctor, a farmer, a carpenter, a blacksmith, and an engineer to teach and help your people.

In return, the whites want your people to stop fighting against the railroad they are now building. They want you to promise to let them build roads off the reservation. Also, they want you to promise never to attack any white people or their property.



Red Cloud





Lakota: Should we sign the Fort Laramie Treaty? *(continued)*

Comprehension

1. Who are you in this situation?
2. Why are you at Fort Laramie?
3. Why doesn't Red Cloud think the Lakota should sign the treaty?
4. What frightens the animals that you hunt?
5. Why don't the Lakota want the whites to build a railroad across the Great Plains?
6. What do the whites want you to agree to in this treaty?
7. What do the whites promise to give you in this treaty?
8. Who will control the Great Sioux Reservation if you sign the new treaty?
9. What do the whites want to do after you sign the treaty?
10. Do you have to sign the treaty?
11. What will happen if you don't sign the treaty?
12. What will happen if you sign the treaty?
13. What are reasons to sign the treaty?
14. What are reasons not to sign the treaty?

Decision

- *Should we sign the Fort Laramie treaty? Choose one or more of the following options:*
 - (a) Sign the treaty. Maybe you can believe the whites this time. If they keep their promises, it will be good for your people.
 - (b) Sign the treaty. If they break the treaty, you can make war on them again.
 - (c) Do not sign this treaty. It is not a good treaty. You want the treaty to say _____
 - (d) Never sign white men's treaties. They break the treaties and steal from you.
 - (e) Attack the soldiers now. If you kill enough of them, maybe they will stop coming to your land.
 - (f) Other: _____
- *Why did you decide that way? Plan how you will explain your decision to your classmates. Write out your reasoning completely.*

