

Northwest History Consortium

LEGALITY OF SOUTHERN SECESSION

Yvette Majerus
12th Grade

National Standard

Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877) / Standard 1

Standard 1: The causes of the Civil War

BACKGROUND

Students will possess knowledge of the Social Contract Theory, Declaration of Independence, American Revolution, Fifth Amendment, Fugitive Slave Act (1850), Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857), and the House Divided Speech (June 16, 1858).

Students will also have knowledge of events and key figures (Lincoln, Breckinridge, Ball, Douglas) leading up to the election of 1860.

PROBLEM

The South secedes from the Union.

SCENARIO

It is November 6, 1860 and Lincoln has been elected president without receiving one electoral college vote from the South. South Carolina secedes from the Union on December 20, 1860 to be followed by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. Lincoln's inauguration (March 4, 1861) has yet to occur. After the attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861 four other southern states secede from the Union: Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina. The Union is split apart on the question of southern legality to secede from the Union.

TASKS

You are to take the role of a Southerner or Northerner and debate the legality of secession.

- The class will be divided up into two groups: Southerners and Northerners.
- Students will complete a pre-test indicating knowledge that they possess.
- Students will determine questions that they need to answer.
- Students will locate information to answer their questions.
- Students will debate the legality of secession while applying the expectations as stated in the attached rubric.

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RESOURCES

Book

Dew, Charles B. *Apostles of Disunion*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001.

Documents

- *Declaration of Independence*
- *Constitution of the United States of America*
- *House Divided Speech*
- *Dred Scott v. Sanford*
- *White v. Texas*

Internet

- Students will possess the knowledge and skills to locate reputable on-line resources.

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ASSESSMENT

Class Debate: LEGALITY OF SECESSION RUBRIC

Teacher Name: _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Respect for Other Team	All statements, body language, and responses were respectful and were in appropriate language.	Statements and responses were respectful and used appropriate language, but once or twice body language was not.	Most statements and responses were respectful and in appropriate language, but there was one sarcastic remark.	Statements, responses and/or body language were consistently not respectful.
Information	All information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.	Most information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.	Most information presented in the debate was clear and accurate, but was not usually thorough.	Information had several inaccuracies OR was usually not clear.
Rebuttal	All counter-arguments were accurate, relevant and strong.	Most counter-arguments were accurate, relevant, and strong.	Most counter-arguments were accurate and relevant, but several were weak.	Counter-arguments were not accurate and/or relevant
Use of Facts/Statistics	Every major point was well supported with several relevant facts, statistics and/or examples.	Every major point was adequately supported with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples.	Every major point was supported with facts, statistics and/or examples, but the relevance of some was questionable.	Every point was not supported.
Presentation Style	Team consistently used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice and a level of enthusiasm in a way that kept the attention of the audience.	Team usually used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice and a level of enthusiasm in a way that kept the attention of the audience.	Team sometimes used gestures, eye contact, tone of voice and a level of enthusiasm in a way that kept the attention of the audience.	One or more members of the team had a presentation style that did not keep the attention of the audience.
Organization	All arguments were clearly tied to an idea (premise) and organized in a tight, logical fashion.	Most arguments were clearly tied to an idea (premise) and organized in a tight, logical fashion.	All arguments were clearly tied to an idea (premise) but the organization was sometimes not clear or logical.	Arguments were not clearly tied to an idea (premise).
Understanding of Topic	The team clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.	The team clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information with ease.	The team seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.	The team did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.

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REFERENCES/CITATIONS

- ALTEC. "Rubistar: Create Rubrics for you Project-Based Learning Activities." [4Teachers.org](http://4teachers.org). 2009. Lawrence, KS. Advanced Learning Technologies Consortia (ALTEC) at the University of Kansas. 7 June 2010 <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=CustomizeTemplate&bank_rubric_id=4§ion_id=1&>. Adapted by Yvette Majerus for the Northwest History Consortium with permission.
- "History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States." [UCLA National Center for History in the Schools](http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5-12.html). 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 21 May 2009 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5-12.html>>.
- Majerus, Yvette. "Legality of Southern Secession." [NWESD Organization](http://www.nwesd.org). 2008. Anacortes, WA. 7 June 2010 <http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/5.1_SouthernSecession.Legality.Majerus.12.pdf>.