

SHAPING America

LESSON 19 : “CRISIS AND COMPROMISE”

Lesson Assignments

You are encouraged to be very attentive while viewing the video program. Review the video objectives and be prepared to record possible answers, in abbreviated form as you view the video. The topics and time periods may differ somewhat from the chapters of the textbook your school system is using. Each video program chronicles a wide array of events and personalities during a specific time period of American history prior to 1877. Keep in mind that one of the overarching goals of each lesson is to help you understand how past historical events and actions by historical personalities did not occur in a vacuum, and that they are inextricably interwoven in your society today.

Activities:

Your teacher may assign one or more activities for each lesson. Refer to your course syllabus for details.

OVERVIEW

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo put out the fire between the United States and Mexico, but it ignited a conflagration that would almost consume the nation. The Mexicans had been forced to relinquish an enormous tract of real estate, including Texas, California, and all the territory between them. The acquisition of this territory raised anew the dilemma of what to do about the extension of slavery. Was free labor or slave labor to prevail in the new territories? The precarious balance of slave and free states would be upset if California, with its rapidly growing population, due in part to the gold fever, entered the Union as a free state. The burning issue of slavery was discussed by New York abolitionists, pro-slave forces in Charleston, and other points as far west as St. Louis, Santa Fe, and San Francisco.

The Mexican War had also produced a presidential candidate. The Whigs nominated General Zachary Taylor, the hero of the Battle of Buena Vista. As usual, the Whigs tried to avoid taking a stand on slavery, while Taylor's Democrat opponent, General Lewis Cass (a veteran of the War of 1812), voiced his support for popular sovereignty. A third political party arose that opposed the extension of slavery and nominated former President Van Buren. Taylor won and the issue of slavery was temporarily swept under the rug.



SHAPING America



The more heavily populated North controlled the House of Representatives, but the South and North had equal representation in the Senate. The South felt the balance in the Senate would enable them to protect the institution of slavery. They continued to support the institution of slavery even though it had retarded the growth of industry and limited settlement in the South by European immigrants. A fierce debate arose in Congress over what to do about admitting new states from the Mexican Cession, and the national parties of the Whigs were soon to be replaced by the Republican Party that was determined not to allow the expansion of slavery, and a Democrat Party evolved that became increasingly subservient to the pro-slave element in the party.

A great debate over slavery once again claimed center stage and the triumvirate of Clay, Webster, and Calhoun were the key actors. Henry Clay suggested that there were five key issues that needed to be resolved: the slave trade in the District of Columbia, the admittance of California as a free or slave state, settlement of the boundary line between Texas and the New Mexico Territory, the issue of runaway slaves, and what to do about the expansion of slavery into the territories of New Mexico and Utah. Clay, with the help of Senator Douglas from Illinois, was able to convince a majority of the members of Congress to accept the Compromise of 1850 that decreed the following: California was to enter as a free state, Texas was paid to give up its claims to the disputed territory, slave trade was to be discontinued in the nation's capital, popularity sovereignty would decide the fate of slavery in the Utah and New Mexico Territories, and a Fugitive Slave Law would be passed.

Thus, the 1850 Compromise brought a temporary halt to the march towards war. While it was more of a victory for the North than the South, the infamous Fugitive Slave Law was hated by the North as it now made non-slaveholders partners with the slave catchers who sought the return of fugitive slaves who had sought safety in the North. The ranks of the abolitionists grew and several northern states passed Personal Liberty Laws that ignored a federal law. This action seemed very much like the nullification of a federal law.

The Great Compromiser, Henry Clay, once again helped the nation avoid a civil war, but it was to prove only a postponement. The South grew more bitter with each passing day as Northerners refused to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, and the North grew stronger with each passing year.

SHAPING America

VIDEO OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are designed to assist the viewer in identifying the most significant aspects of the video segment of this lesson. You should take succinct notes while viewing the video.

1. Analyze the state of the nation in 1850.
2. Evaluate the positions taken by the Democrats, the Free Soldiers, and the Whigs in the Election of 1848 and the movement towards sectionalism.
3. Discuss the components of the Compromise of 1850 and assess the significance of the agreement.

WEB ACTIVITIES

These activities are assigned at the discretion of your teacher. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in this lesson.

Activity 1: Compromise of 1850 Document

- a. Access and review the following web sites:
The American Civil War Homepage:
<http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/warweb.html>
American Treasures of the Library of Congress. Compromise of 1850:
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm043.html>
Africans in America. The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act:
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2951.html>
National Archives and Records Administration Document Analysis Worksheets:
<http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/analysis.html>
- b. Write an analysis of the Compromise of 1850 document using the National Archives Written Document Analysis Worksheet as a basis for your analysis.



SHAPING America



Activity 2: The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act

- a. Access and review the following web sites:
The American Civil War Homepage:
<http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/warweb.html>
American Treasures of the Library of Congress. Compromise of 1850:
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm043.html>
Africans in America. The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2951.html>
National Archives and Records Administration Document Analysis Worksheets: <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/analysis.html>
The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850:
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/fugitive.html>
- b. Write an analysis of The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 document using the National Archives Written Document Analysis Worksheet as a basis for your analysis.

Activity 3:

- a. Access and review the following web sites:
Africans in America. The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2951.html>
National Archives and Records Administration Document Analysis Worksheets: <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/analysis.html>
The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850:
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/fugitive.html>
Africans in America. Anthony Burns Captured:
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2915.html>
- b. Write an analysis of one of the following and use the National Archives Photograph Analysis Worksheet as a guide for your analysis:
Poster titled: A Man Kidnapped (Anthony Burns).
View from a window in Boston of Anthony Burns' arrest.
Both visuals are located at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2915.html>

SHAPING America

Activity 4: Compromise of 1850 Map

- a. Access and review the following web sites:
The American Civil War Homepage:
<http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/warweb.html>
American Treasures of the Library of Congress. Compromise of 1850:
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm043.html>
Africans in America. The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act:
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2951.html>
National Archives and Records Administration Document Analysis Worksheets:
<http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/analysis.html>
America: A Narrative History: Compromise of 1850 Map
<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/ushist/timeline/comp1850.htm>
- b. Infer the geographic implications of the Compromise of 1850 by analyzing the Compromise of 1850 map. Use the National Archives Map Analysis Worksheet to assist you in making your inferences.



PRACTICE TEST

After watching the video and reviewing the objectives, you should be able to complete the following Practice Test. Access the Answer Key to score your answers after you have completed the Practice Test.

Multiple Choice:

Select the single best answer. It will be indicated if more than one answer is required.

1. According to the principle of “popular sovereignty,” the question of slavery in the Territories would be determined by:
 - A. The vote of the people in any given territory.
 - B. A national referendum.
 - C. Congressional legislation.
 - D. A Supreme Court decision.
2. In the 1848 presidential election, the Democratic and Whig parties:
 - A. Lost to the Free Soil Party candidate.
 - B. Addressed the issue of slavery.
 - C. Remained silent on the issue of slavery.
 - D. Abandoned the tactic of nominating military leaders.

SHAPING America



3. In the Compromise of 1850, Congress determined that slavery in the New Mexico and Utah territories was:
 - A. To be banned.
 - B. Protected by federal law.
 - C. To be decided by popular sovereignty.
 - D. To be ignored until either territory applied for admission to statehood.
4. The most alarming aspect of the Compromise of 1850 to Northerners was the decision concerning:
 - A. Slavery in the District of Columbia.
 - B. Slavery in the New Mexico and Utah territories.
 - C. The new Fugitive Slave Law.
 - D. Settlement of the Texas-New Mexico boundary dispute.
5. The Fugitive Slave Law included all of the following provisions except:
 - A. The requirement that fugitive slaves be returned from Canada.
 - B. Denial of a jury trial to runaway slaves.
 - C. Denial of fleeing slaves' right to testify on their own behalf.
 - D. The penalty of imprisonment for Northerners who helped slaves to escape.

Essay question:

1. Identify the provisions of the Compromise and analyze the effects of the compromise.

Answers to the Practice Test:

The correct answer is indicated first, followed by the objective (s) that correlate with the test question.

1. A: 3
2. C: 2
3. C: 3
4. C: 3
5. A: 3