

The Civil War

Civil War and Reconstruction
(1850–1877)



A divided nation

Crisis of the 1850s

The Civil War

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will know about the following factors leading up to the Civil War:

- Economic sectionalism in the United States
- Slavery in the American South
- Debates over the slavery issue in early 19th-century America.



Looking back timeline



Use this timeline to recap key historical events and contextualize the Civil War. Either press on a date or drag the pointer along the timeline to read about what happened in each year.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The **Industrial Revolution** of the early 19th century changed American industry in several key ways:

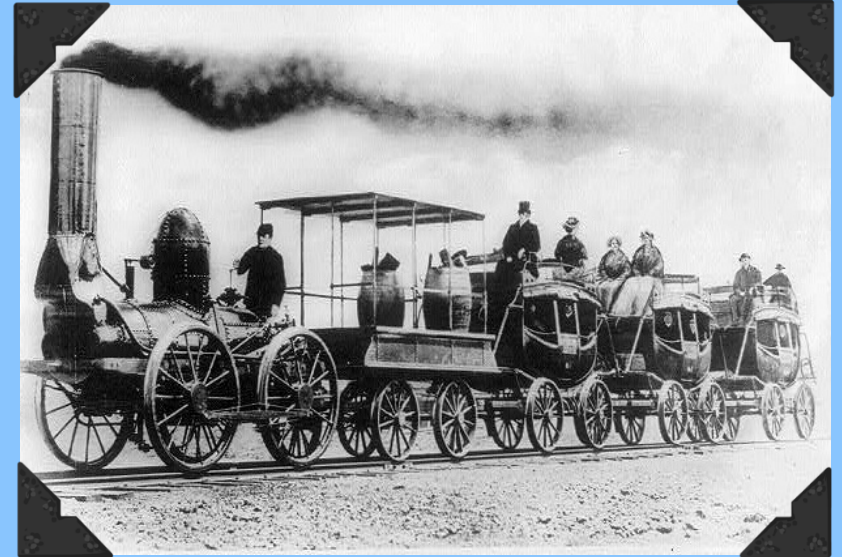
- Innovations such as the development of interchangeable parts allowed for **mass production**.
- As a result, industry began to move from artisan workshops to large factories staffed by unskilled workers.
- New England, which had previously focused on shipping, became the industrial center of the United States.





Another major change was the development of a national transportation system.

By 1860, the U.S. boasted over 30,000 miles of railroad – more than all of Europe combined. These rail lines connected the Northeast with the expanding West, but isolated the South, where riverboats were the primary mode of transportation.



How did this pattern of growth contribute to sectionalism?



Two economies, two Americas

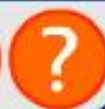


In **antebellum** America, workers in Northern factories, Southern plantations and Western farms generally rose before dawn and worked all day in unhealthy conditions for little or no pay. Yet there were key distinctions between the Northern and Southern workforces.

Can you tell which is which?

Press **start** to begin.

start





The “peculiar institution”



Slavery was a key, and controversial, factor of antebellum Southern life.

Press **start** to learn more.

start





Congress dealt with the issue of slavery by keeping the number of slave states equal to the number of free states. This way, both sides had equal representation in the Senate.



The balance was upset when Missouri applied for statehood in 1819, causing bitter debate over its status as slave or free.

Henry Clay proposed the **Missouri Compromise** of 1820, admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as free. It split the Louisiana Territory at the **36° 30' parallel**. All territory south of that line would be open to slavery; all territory north of the line would be free.



The Wilmot Proviso



As the U.S. grew, the issue of slavery remained problematic.

In 1846, Rep. David Wilmot added an attachment to a bill regarding the end of the Mexican-American War.



The **Wilmot Proviso** stated that “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist” in the territories acquired from Mexico. These included California, Utah and New Mexico.

Southern senators saw this as an attack on their position in the Senate. The issue of slavery was back at the forefront of American politics.

