

**Civil War Unit Lesson Plans**  
**Grades 10-11**  
**(about five 60-90 minute sessions, depending on depth and use of activities)**

**Lesson #1**  
**The Sectional Crisis**  
**The Impact of Dred Scott and His Family**

**Overview:** This lesson would be included in a section of instruction about the causes of the Civil War. This lesson and the next (on John Brown) are more specific lessons about these people and their impact on the advent of the Civil War. They need to be part of a whole class discussion/lesson of the larger atmosphere in the U.S. at the time, including the cultural and economic differences that had developed in the country.

**Essential Learning:** Students can identify Dred Scott and analyze the impact of him and his family as a cause of the increased sectionalism in the United States prior to the Civil War. (WY Social Studies Standard 11.4.1)

**Digital Tools and Documents:**

**Lesson:**

1. Show the students an image of Dred Scott (woodcut of him, but without his family) (like this one: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/library/special/exhibitions/dred-scott.html>) Ask the students what they know about Dred Scott, elicit answers without much discussion. Then show them the complete woodcuts of Dred Scott's family.  
<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/9599?q=node/18060> and  
<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/african-american-history/interactives/dred-scott-decision-and-its-bitter-legacy>
2. Have students work in pairs to go through the Gilder-Lehrman slideshow on the topic.  
<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/african-american-history/interactives/dred-scott-decision-and-its-bitter-legacy>  
Require students to take notes on the major people associated with the case and construct three open-ended questions they have in regard to the case and the events or issues surrounding it.
3. Have each pair meet with another pair to discuss the questions they have. Allow them to consider these and discuss possible answers. Have them select their best, most provocative question to share with the group.
4. Time permitting, allow each group to summarize their discussion and pose their best question for discussion.

**Assessment:**

Students will then compare two opposing newspaper editorials from the time about reactions to the John Brown case. They will answer the questions on the next sheet. The articles may be found here:

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/27128> “The Chief Justice Insane!”

<http://blackhistory.harpweek.com/2Slavery/193DredScottCase.htm>

The following has a list of editorials of the Republican and Democratic sides, which the students may choose from:

<http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py?menu=dsmenu&location=%3E%20Dred%20Scott%20Decision>

## Comparing Reactions to Dred Scott

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Title of 1<sup>st</sup> Article (Northern/Anti-Slavery article)

2. Name of the Newspaper

3. Main Points

4. Title of 2<sup>nd</sup> Article (Southern, Pro-Slavery)

5. Name of the Newspaper

6. Main Points

**Lesson #2**  
**The Sectional Crisis**  
**The Impact of John Brown**

**Overview:** This lesson would be included in a section of instruction about the causes of the Civil War. This lesson and the former (on Dred Scott) are more specific lessons about these people and their impact on the advent of the Civil War. They need to be part of a whole class discussion/lesson of the larger atmosphere in the U.S. at the time, including the cultural and economic differences that had developed in the country.

**Essential Learning:** Students can identify John Brown and analyze the impact of him as a cause of the increased sectionalism in the United States prior to the Civil War. (WY Social Studies Standard 11.4.1)

**Resources:**

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/5216>

“Freedom’s Martyr” article from *New York Times*

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/opinion/02reynolds.html?\\_r=3](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/opinion/02reynolds.html?_r=3)

**Lesson:**

1. Show students the image of John Brown here:

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/12061>

Then show students this image, which is in the Kansas State Capitol Building:

<http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-state-capitol-online-tour-tragic-prelude/16595>

Ask them what they know about John Brown and why study two such opposing images?  
Discuss what the portrayal in the painting has to say about the historical perception of his persona.

2. Print and cut out the first three segments and then the segments on the Harper’s Ferry raid from the following site: <http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/5216>

Divide the students in groups of threes or fours and hand them each a slip. Have them summarize as a group what the historian says about the legacy of Brown and his actions. Have each group share with the class and discuss.

3. Now have students work independently or in pairs to analyze different views of him based on the following documents, using the sheet provided. If students need a review of the incident at Harper’s Ferry, it can be found here:

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/9603>

**Southern Perspective Possibilities:**

New Orleans (LA) Picayune, "The Harper's Ferry Outbreak," October 22, 1859

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/598>

Richmond (VA) Dispatch, "Northern Impertinences with Regard to the Late Affair at Harpers Ferry," October 24, 1859

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/585>

**Northern Perspective Possibilities:**

Chicago (IL) Press and Tribune, "Dissolution of the Union," October 25, 1859

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/11804> (This one has some nuances and sarcasm and may be tough)

Address by Sella Martin, an African American pastor and abolitionist in Boston

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/lostmuseum/lm/143/>

**Kansas Perspective: (What made him mad?)**

"Old John Brown," Lawrence (KS) Herald of Freedom, October 29, 1859 (Page 1)

"Old John Brown," Lawrence (KS) Herald of Freedom, October 29, 1859 (Page 2)

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/23321>

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/23322>

**Assessment:**

Have students look at a modern interpretation of John Brown in an editorial in the *New York Times* on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brown's execution here:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/opinion/02reynolds.html?\\_r=4](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/02/opinion/02reynolds.html?_r=4)

Based on what they have studied about Brown and the documents, is David S. Reynolds (the editorialist) correct or incorrect in his argument? Have students write a short essay (5 paragraph style) to support their argument.

**Comparing Perspectives**  
**Was John Brown a Raving Lunatic or a Brilliant Hero?**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

*With your group, read at least one document from each perspective from shortly after the Raid on Harper's Ferry. Answer the questions.*

**Southern Perspective Possibilities:**

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Address by Sella Martin, an African American pastor and abolitionist in Boston

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/lostmuseum/lm/143/>

**Kansas Perspective: (What made him "mad?")**

"Old John Brown," Lawrence (KS) Herald of Freedom, October 29, 1859 (Page 1)

"Old John Brown," Lawrence (KS) Herald of Freedom, October 29, 1859 (Page 2)

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/23321>

<http://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/23322>

Section	Perspective	Evidence (quote the document)
Southern		

Section	Perspective	Evidence (quote the document)
Northern		
Kansan		

Based on just the documents you read, did one make a better argument than another? Explain.

How is this evidence of Harper's Ferry as a cause of the Civil War?

**Lesson #3**  
**The Sectional Crisis**  
**The South Secedes**

**Overview:** This lesson would be the culmination of a section of instruction about the causes of the Civil War. This lesson looks specifically at historical documents related to the actual secession of Southern states and allows students to form interpretations based on the analyses of the documents.

**Essential Learning:** Students can communicate how the shared cultural experiences of the North and the South influenced their perceptions on the causes for secession. (Related to WY Social Studies Standard 11.2.2)

**Resources:**

**Digital Tools:**

**Lesson:**

1. Show students the following image:  
[http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/Jefferson\\_Davis/South\\_Carolina\\_Secedes.jpg](http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/Jefferson_Davis/South_Carolina_Secedes.jpg)  
Explain that these could be considered the men who really formed the impetus for the onset of the Civil War, that they are South Carolina's Congressional delegation. Question students to see if they know why they could have been responsible and explain South Carolina's role as the first state to secede on Dec. 20, 1861.
2. Ask students reasons they have heard or can guess for why the Civil War began (ie. slavery, state's rights, taxes, etc.). Ask how they think a historian can find evidence for how the war began. As discussion occurs, lead students to how the war actually began (at Fort Sumter) because Lincoln kept troops there off the coast of South Carolina and would not give it up to South Carolina who was part of the new Confederate states. Remind them that Lincoln originally was willing to go to war to keep the union together and that South Carolina was the first to secede, if they have not come to these conclusions.
3. Question the students as to whether studying the states' declarations of the causes for their separations would be worthwhile in finding evidence for what their reasons were for seceding and then the war starting. Tell them that they will be asked to read some of these declarations and report what they believe were the causes for the secessions, in order of importance.
4. Have students use:  
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/learning\\_history/south\\_secede/south\\_secede\\_menu.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/learning_history/south_secede/south_secede_menu.cfm) or print out the declaration for each state. Break students into a small group for each state and complete the activity on the next page.
5. Bring the groups back to whole-class discussion and have them share what they found as well as the evidence they are using to justify their decisions. Discuss with the class as a whole what they think the strongest reason is for secession and the start of the war. Discuss how this has either changed or stayed the same throughout history and why that may be so. Question whether it is the same depending on what region of the U.S. people live in and why that may factor into it.

**Assessment:**



This is the group assessment activity that follows. Students are using the evidence in the Declaration of the Causes of Secession for the various states to form conclusions as to the strongest causes.

## Why Did the Confederate States Secede?

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your assigned state \_\_\_\_\_

*Read through the declaration for your state. Complete the table below. You may or may not necessarily use all of the rows provided.*

Reason for seceding	Evidence (quote and paraphrase the source)


Based on what you have read, come to a decision with your group about what cause for secession appears to be the strongest and explain your reasoning. Prepare to share with the whole class.

**Lesson #4**  
**The Civil War Begins**  
**Discovering Why They Fought**

**Overview:** This lesson looks specifically at historical documents related to the motivations of soldiers and officers from both sides of the conflict and allows students to form interpretations based on their analyses.

**Essential Learning:** Students can compare and contrast the motivations for fighting the Civil War with motivations for soldiers enlisting and fighting in more modern conflicts.  
(Related to WY Social Studies Standard 11.4.2)

**Lesson:**

1. Have students work in pairs to read the following letters from the links provided. Have them list reasons they find for why soldiers fought or continued fighting.

**Southern Motivation Possibilities:**

John B. Baldwin to George M. Cochran, May 12, 1861

<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/A6147>

William Smith Hanger Baylor to Mrs. Baylor, April 22, 1862

<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/A0585>

D. C. Snyder to Rachel Snyder, January 12, 1865

<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/A1404>

D. C. Snyder to Rachel Snyder, January 21, 1865

<http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/A1408>

**Northern Motivation Possibilities:**

Charles Thomas Ackley letters to his wife, February 25, 1864

<http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/u/?cwd,20426>

Daniel Francis Kemp to Sister [Maggie], March 16, 1863

<http://foxweb.marist.edu/users/jwez/dfk/83/18630316DFK.html>

Daniel Francis Kemp to Parents and Maggie, September 7, 1863

<http://foxweb.marist.edu/users/jwez/dfk/83/18630907DFK.html>

Daniel Francis Kemp to Parents, November 15, 1863

Daniel F. Kemp's Civil War Reminiscences

<http://foxweb.marist.edu/users/jwez/dfk/19/rem.html>

2. Assign the students to complete the analysis of this broadside for understanding also the motivations for having African American soldiers serve in the military. It can be found at the Gilder Lehrman site here:

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/african-americans-and-emancipation/resources/%E2%80%9Cmen-color-arms-arms%E2%80%9D>

3. Have students then compare these motivations for fighting in conflict today. See the following resources:

- *WHY THEY FIGHT: COMBAT MOTIVATION IN THE IRAQ WAR* By Leonard Wong, Thomas A. Kolditz, Raymond A. Millen and Terrence M. Potter (reading the forward and the summary would give the basics if short on time)  
<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub179.pdf>
- From the military career viewpoint:  
[http://www.usmilitaryeducation.com/military\\_education/Top-10-Reasons-to-Join-Military.aspx](http://www.usmilitaryeducation.com/military_education/Top-10-Reasons-to-Join-Military.aspx)
- “The Making of an American Soldier: Why Young People Join the Military”  
[http://www.alternet.org/story/52233/the\\_making\\_of\\_an\\_american\\_soldier%3A\\_why\\_young\\_people\\_join\\_the\\_military](http://www.alternet.org/story/52233/the_making_of_an_american_soldier%3A_why_young_people_join_the_military)
- Other resources as needed

**Assessment:**

Have students create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast motivations for fighting in the Civil War and today.

**Lesson #5**  
**The Civil War & Emancipation**  
**Lincoln and Emancipation**

**Overview:** This lesson requires students to look specifically at the different writings of Abraham Lincoln on slavery. An earlier lesson on the contrasts of slave and free labor would benefit students here, as well as understanding the cultural perceptions of slavery and also the previous legislation enacted on slavery, both in the U.S. Constitution and by the various states.

**Essential Learning:** Students can understand the motivations of Abraham Lincoln regarding emancipating slaves and the legal issues Lincoln dealt with in making the decision. Students interpret how society has viewed his decision, based on shared cultural experiences.  
(Related to WY Social Studies Standard 11.2.2, 11.4.1, and 11.4.4)

**Lesson:**

1. Show students the following eight minute video from the History Channel about Lincoln and emancipation:  
[http://americanhistory.si.edu/lincoln/emancipation\\_proclamation.aspx](http://americanhistory.si.edu/lincoln/emancipation_proclamation.aspx)
2. Have students do a think/pair/share conversation about the following questions:
  - a. Why is slavery such an important topic to discuss in studying American history?
  - b. What was something in the Constitution that protected the institution of slavery?
  - c. What was Lincoln conflicted over regarding ending slavery?
  - d. What did he do and why?
3. Have students read the following documents in order from the following site:  
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?subcategory=4>

Protest in Illinois Legislature on Slavery

Fragments on Slavery

Speech on the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise (first 5 paragraphs)

Letter to Joshua F. Speed (2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph and 2<sup>nd</sup> to last paragraph)

Fragment on Slavery

Abraham Lincoln

August 1, 1858

Fragment: On Slavery

Abraham Lincoln

October 1, 1858? (last two sentences)

Letter to Alexander H. Stephens

Proclamation Revoking General Hunter's Emancipation Order

Appeal to Border State Representatives to Favor Compensated Emancipation

Letter to Horace Greeley

Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation

4. Have students complete the assessment below.
5. End the lesson with a discussion about Lincoln as an emancipator discussing their perceptions as compared with historian Lerone Bennett's by showing this clip:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpe4XSw085s>  
Discuss with class how cultural perspective influences the interpretations of a person in history.

**Assessment:**

Students create a flyer/poster using quotes from at least three of the documents above to explain Lincoln's views on slavery.

## Flyer/Poster rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Required Elements</b>	Includes a summary of the moral and legal elements Lincoln adhered to regarding slavery, using four or more quotes and citing the document correctly.	Includes a summary of the moral and legal elements Lincoln adhered to regarding slavery, using at least three quotes and citing the document correctly.	Only two quotes are listed, or legal and moral issues are not both addressed. Citations may not be correct but are there.	Lincoln is quoted once or never. Moral and legal issues not addressed or cited.
<b>Labels</b>	All items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels	Almost all items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels	Many items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels.	No important items were labeled.
<b>Graphics - Relevance</b>	All graphics are related to the topic and make it easier to understand. All borrowed graphics have a source citation.	All graphics are related to the topic and most make it easier to understand. Some borrowed graphics have a source citation.	All graphics relate to the topic. One or two borrowed graphics have a source citation.	Graphics do not relate to the topic OR several borrowed graphics do not have a source citation.
<b>Attractiveness</b>	The poster/flyer is exceptionally attractive in terms of design, layout, and neatness.	The poster/flyer is attractive in terms of design, layout and neatness.	The poster/flyer is acceptably attractive though it may be a bit messy.	The poster/flyer is distractingly messy or very poorly designed. It is not attractive.
<b>Grammar</b>	There are no grammatical/mechanical mistakes on the poster.	There are 1-2 grammatical/mechanical mistakes on the poster.	There are 3-4 grammatical/mechanical mistakes on the poster.	There are more than 4 grammatical/mechanical mistakes on the poster.