



# Road to Civil War



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## **Directions:**

Use the information on the "Road to Civil War" Website to complete the following activity dealing with the causes of the Civil War. The Website can be found at: <http://www.mrgigliotti/Road to Civil War.htm> You can also access the Website through Mr. Gigliotti's Homepage at: <http://www.mrgigliotti.com> There is a link for the activity listed on the "Hot Topics" page.

## **Introduction:**

The Civil War was the darkest period in United States History. During the Civil War America was divided. For four years, the people of the north and south fought one another in the bloodiest conflict this great nation has ever endured. What made the nation fight with itself is a question that many historians often ask. Historians examine major events, important facts, and various pieces of evidence to try and determine the answer to this question: "What caused the Civil War?" During this activity, you will have the opportunity to play the role of a historian and examine some of the same evidence that real historians might use to answer that question.

## **Part I: Recalling Prior Knowledge:**

### **Directions:**

The Civil War is one of the most widely discussed and well known aspects of United States History. At this point in your education, you have probably learned something about the Civil War either in school or on your own. Using that prior knowledge of the Civil War, write a hypothesis explaining what you think caused the conflict in the space below. Your hypothesis should consist of one thought or sentence and should explain what you think caused the war. This portion should be completed at the start of the activity. We will then examine the evidence to see if your hypothesis is correct.

If you are not sure how to write a hypothesis, look at the example below:

*"Based on my prior knowledge of the Civil War, I believe that the war began because the United States was attacked by Martians who brainwashed the people of the south to fight for their cause."*

1. What is your hypothesis? Write your hypothesis below:

## **Part II: Examining and Interpreting the Evidence**

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**Event #2: The North**

1. What size population did the North have before the Civil War? What was responsible for this? What did this kind of population create in the north?
2. What was the economy in the north based on prior to the Civil War?

**Event #3: The South**

1. What cash crop was the southern economy based on before the Civil War? What institution was essential to the production of this highly profitable crop?
2. What types of plantations were found in the south? Did all southerners live on plantations?

**Event #4: Slavery**

1. What was the life of a slave on a southern plantation like prior to the Civil War?
2. What were "Slave Codes" in the southern states?
3. How did Congress handle the hot issue of slavery at time during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, so that it would not divide the union?

**Event #5: Abolitionists**

1. What is the definition of an abolitionist? What do they want?
2. What was the name of William Lloyd Garrison' newspaper?
3. Who was Fredrick Douglas? What do you know about his life?

**Event #6: The American Colonization Society**

1. What was the purpose of the American Colonization Society?
2. What is the name of the nation they established in Africa? How many people went there?

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**Event #8: Wilmot Proviso**

1. What was the great debate after the end of the Mexican War?
2. What did Wilmot suggest? What was Calhoun's reaction to his suggestion?

**Event #9: Sectionalism**

1. What is the definition of "sectionalism"?
2. What were the major differences between the north and south?

**Event #10: Election of 1848**

1. Which three candidates ran for president in 1848 and what parties did each represent?
2. What did the "Free Soil Party" believe in during the election of 1848?
3. Based on the information presented here, do you think Taylor will be a good president? Use specific example to describe your answer.

**Event #11: Compromise of 1850**

1. Why was there a need for another compromise in 1850?
2. During the debate, what position did Calhoun and Webster take?
3. Who came up with the compromise? What were the five parts of the compromise?
4. What happened to President Taylor? Who became president?

**Event #12: Election of 1852**

1. Who ran for president in 1852? What party did each candidate represent?

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**Event #14: Uncle Tom's Cabin**

1. What was Uncle Tom's Cabin? What was the person's name who created it?
2. How did northerners react to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? How did southerners react to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

**Event #15: Kansas and Nebraska Act**

1. Who was Steven Douglas?
2. Why did he want to organize these new territories?
3. What is "Popular Sovereignty"?

**Event #16: Bleeding Kansas**

1. What kinds of people decided to move to Kansas? Why did they move there?
2. How many people were eligible to vote in Kansas? How many votes were cast?

**Event #17: Violence in the Senate**

1. Who was Charles Sumner? What was the name of his inflammatory speech?
2. How did Congressman Brooks approach Sumner after his comments?

**Event #18: Election of 1856**

1. Who ran for president in 1856? What party did each candidate represent?
2. Based on the information presented here, do you think Buchanan will be a good president? Use specific example to describe your answer.

**Event #19: Dred Scott Decision**

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**Event #20: Lincoln Douglas Debates**

1. For what office are Lincoln and Douglas running for in 1856?
2. How did Douglas appear during the debates? How did Lincoln appear during the debates?
3. What does Lincoln's "House Divided" speech mean?
4. What were the results of the debates?

**Event #21: John Brown's Raid**

1. What did John Brown and his men raid? Where was it located?
2. How did some northerners view Brown's actions? How did some southerners view Brown's actions? What did southerners start to form as a result of Brown's raid?
3. What was John Brown's prediction about the nation after his death? What did Lincoln say about Brown's execution?

**Event #22: Election of 1860**

1. Who ran for president in 1860? What political parties did they represent?
2. What happened to the Democratic Party in 1860? Why did this happen?
3. What did southerners think about the election of Abraham Lincoln?

**Event #23: Secession Crisis**

1. What does the word "secession" mean?
2. What was the first state to secede? What other states seceded?

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**Event #25: Fort Sumter**

1. What did the south do with all federal instillations after it seceded?
2. Where is Fort Sumter located? Who was in command of Fort Sumter? Who was in command of the Confederate forces near Fort Sumter?
3. What was a southern view of the attack on Fort Sumter?
4. What were the results of Fort Sumter?

**Part III: Drawing Conclusions:**

**Directions:** Now that you have looked at all of the evidence, write another hypothesis explaining what you think was responsible for the start of the Civil War. Your final hypothesis should contain at least three major reasons for the war.

If you are still not sure how to write a hypothesis, look at the example below:

*\*\*Based on my research of the causes of the Civil War, I believe that the war began because . . . reason #1, reason #2, and reason #3.\*\**

1. What is your final hypothesis? Write your final hypothesis below:

**Part IV: Putting it all together**

**Directions:** Using your hypothesis, complete the outline below. You will then use this outline to write a high quality FIVE paragraph essay that explains what you think caused the Civil War. Be sure to use examples in your essay from the information you discovered during the activity to prove that your hypothesis is correct.

**Prewriting Outline:**

- I. Paragraph #1: Introduction (What will you be discussing?)

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II. Paragraph #2: First Major Cause of the Civil War \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Topic Sentence:
- B. Supporting Detail:
- C. Supporting Detail:
- D. Supporting Detail:
- E. Conclusion:

III. Paragraph #3: Second Major Cause of the Civil War \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Topic Sentence:
- B. Supporting Detail:
- C. Supporting Detail:
- D. Supporting Detail:
- E. Conclusion:

IV. Paragraph #4: Third Major Cause of the Civil War \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Topic Sentence:
- B. Supporting Detail:
- C. Supporting Detail:
- D. Supporting Detail:
- E. Conclusion:

V. Paragraph #5: Conclusion Paragraph (Summing it all up)

- A. Topic Sentence:
- B. Supporting Detail:
- C. Supporting Detail:
- D. Supporting Detail:

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