

How Would You Solve the Union's Problems?

Introduction:

Government is the power to make choices and the authority to carry them out. Politics are the process of identifying a problem, gathering information, considering advantages and disadvantages to several options for solving the problem, determining ways to evaluate your success, and finally choosing and carrying out the right course of action. In the years prior to the Civil War, American politicians were confronted with many problems. The nation's leaders were forced to try and solve these problems in order to keep the Union together.

Directions: Complete each of the sections below in order to solve the nation's problems.

Background Information: Statehood for Missouri (1820)?

In 1820, a great debate arose over the number of free states and slave states in the union. Since the north had a much larger population, there were more northern members in the House of Representatives. Southerners feared that abolitionists might eventually influence Congress to make slavery illegal. They knew however that the Congress was divided into two parts. While they did not have much representation in the House, the Southern states could always rely on the fact that every state received the same amount of senators. Since both the House and the Senate must pass a bill for it to become a law, as long as the Senate remained in the South's favor an anti-slavery law could never be passed.

In 1820, Missouri applied to Congress for statehood. At the time, there were 11 free states and 11 slave states in the union. The people of Missouri wished to enter the union as a slave state. If Missouri entered the union as a slave state, the balance of power in the Senate would be uneven. Northern states objected to the addition of a slave Missouri while the south strongly supported its entry into the Union.

Part I: What do you know about the problem the Union faces?

1. In the form of a short response, describe the problem the Union faced over the Missouri statehood question in 1820.

2. List at least **FIVE** facts or pieces of information you have gathered about the Missouri problem from the reading above.

Part II: How would you solve the Union's problems?

3. List **THREE** possible solutions to the Missouri statehood dilemma below. Describe each of them in the form of a short response.

Solution #1:

Solution #2:

Solution #3:

4. List the “**Pros**” and “**Cons**” of each of your solutions above.

| Solution #1 | | Solution #2 | | Solution #3 | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <u>Pros</u> | <u>Cons</u> | <u>Pros</u> | <u>Cons</u> | <u>Pros</u> | <u>Cons</u> |
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Part III: How did the politicians in 1820 solve the Missouri statehood problem?

After a lengthy and heated debate in Congress, Henry Clay was able to work out a compromise that both the north and the south could agree upon. The Missouri Compromise that Clay came up with included the following: 1. Missouri would enter the union as a slave state 2. Maine, which was part of Massachusetts at the time, would enter the union as a new free state. This would keep the balance in the Senate at 12 free states and 12 slave states. 3. During the debate in Congress, Congressman Tallmadge from New York suggested that slavery be banned in the Louisiana Purchase. Southern states were furious at the suggestion. Clay's solution to this problem was to draw an imaginary line at the 36' 30" latitude line. The compromise stated that all new states north of this line would be free states and that all new states south of the line would be slave states. Both sides agreed to the compromise and the union was preserved.

6. In the form of a short response, describe the compromise created that solved the Missouri statehood issue.

7. In the form of a short response, compare and contrast your solution to the Missouri statehood issue with Henry Clay's compromise.