

Sectionalism Prior to the Civil War

This sample task contains a set of primary and authentic sources about how the differences between the North and South deepened the feelings of sectionalism leading up to the Civil War.

Alignment

The questions in this task align to the following social studies grade-level expectations.

- 7.3.5 Explain reasons for the expansion of slavery in the South after 1800 and describe the life of enslaved African Americans, and their responses to slavery
- 7.4.1 Identify and describe the role of the election of Abraham Lincoln and other key events, ideas, and people, which led to the Civil War
- 7.6.4 Explain how differences in land use influenced cultural characteristics among regions in the United States from 1763-1877

Contents

This sample task contains the following sections:

- [Primary and Authentic Sources](#)
- [Assessment Items](#)
- [Extended-Response Task](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
- [Scoring Notes](#)
- [Printable Student Version](#)

Task Directions

- Teachers may choose to use or modify this sample as part of an instructional lesson or as a formative or summative assessment.
- Teachers should provide students access to the printable student version of the task items, which excludes GLE alignment, answer keys, and scoring information.
- Students should then read or review the sources and answer the questions.
- For additional specifications about the task, please see the [Assessment Guidance](#) for grade 7.

Primary and Authentic Sources

Read and study Sources 1 through 4 about the sectionalism prior to the Civil War. As you read, you may take notes in the space next to the sources or on page 4 in this answer document. Then use the sources to answer questions 1 through 5.

Source 1: [Compare Two Worlds: North vs South 1861](#)

Source 2: [The Civil War](#) (click on all menu items)

Source 3: [Union and Confederate Resources](#)

Source 4: [The Gathering Storm: Images of America on the Eve of the Civil War](#)

Item 1: Multiple Choice

According to Source 2, which of these was product **not** produced in Louisiana?

- A. cotton
- B. tobacco
- C. rice
- D. sugar cane

Item 2: Multiple Select

Which of these characteristics were factors that contributed to the Southern economy? Select the **two** correct answers.

- A. demand for cotton
- B. financial institutions
- C. large immigrant population
- D. geographical features
- E. extensive system of ports

Item 3: Multiple Choice

Which of these was an advantage of the South going into the Civil War?

- A. had army and navy at the beginning of the war
- B. had support of European powers going into the war
- C. had strong banks at the beginning of the war
- D. had functional government in place at the beginning of the war

Item 4: Multiple Choice

How did economic differences between the North and the South lead to conflict?

- A. The South's shipping ports took business away from the North.
- B. The North's development of industries polluted the environment.
- C. The North's relationships with foreign nations angered the South.
- D. The South's reliance on agriculture led to their dependence on slave labor.

Item 5: Extended Response

Write a well-organized response on the lines provided on pages 5 and 6 in this answer document.

Compare and contrast the North and South at the outbreak of the Civil War. How did the differences create advantages and disadvantages for each in the Civil War?

As you write, follow the directions below.

- Address all parts of the prompt.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Use evidence from the sources to support your response.
- Follow the steps on the Checklist as you write your response.

Use page 4 in this answer document for notes and planning. Write your **final response** on pages 5 and 6 in this answer document.

Remember: The prewriting activities on page 4 will not be scored. Only your response on pages 5 and 6 will be scored.

Scoring Rubric

The response should be scored **holistically** on its adherence to two dimensions: Content and Claims. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that **best** describes the response.

Dimension: Content	
Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects thorough knowledge of the differences between the North and South leading up to the Civil War and the advantages and disadvantages of each by incorporating ample, focused factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains accurate understandings with no errors significant enough to detract from the overall content of the response; • Fully addresses all parts of the prompt.
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects general knowledge of the differences between the North and South leading up to the Civil War and the advantages and disadvantages of each by incorporating adequate factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains mostly accurate understandings with minimal errors that do not substantially detract from the overall content of the response; • Addresses all parts of the prompt.
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects limited knowledge of the differences between the North and South leading up to the Civil War and the advantages and disadvantages of each by incorporating some factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains some accurate understandings with a few errors that detract from the overall content of the response; • Addresses part of the prompt.
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects minimal knowledge of the differences between the North and South leading up to the Civil War and the advantages and disadvantages of each by incorporating little or no factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains few accurate understandings with several errors that detract from the overall content of the response; • Minimally addresses part of the prompt.
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

Dimension: Claims	
Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a valid claim that effectively expresses a solid understanding of the topic; • Thoroughly supports the claim with well-chosen evidence from the sources; • Provides a logically organized, cohesive, and in-depth explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a relevant claim that expresses a general understanding of the topic; • Supports the claim with sufficient evidence from the sources; • Provides an organized explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an inadequate claim which expresses a limited understanding of the topic. • Includes insufficient support for the claim but does use some evidence from the sources; • Provides a weak explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not develop a claim but provides evidence that relates to the topic; OR develops a substantially flawed claim with little or no evidence from the sources; • Provides a vague, unclear, or illogical explanation of the connections among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

Scoring Notes for Claims Rubric

A response that develops a **valid** claim expresses a **solid** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **ample and well-chosen** evidence from the sources. The explanation is logical, organized, and cohesive, as demonstrated by connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. A **valid** claim shows a deep understanding of the complexity of social studies themes that is supported by convincing evidence. The analysis may include the ability to discuss cause-and-effect relationships; analyze the importance of and connection between source documents; classify patterns of continuity and change; evaluate differing perspectives; provide in-depth interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **relevant** claim expresses a **general** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **sufficient** evidence from the sources. The explanation is organized and includes connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place but fails to reach the valid level. A **relevant** claim shows an accurate understanding of social studies themes but is less complex and includes more generalized evidence. The explanation may identify cause-and-effect relationships; describe patterns of continuity or change; recognize perspectives on a single topic or theme; identify the importance of or connection between source documents; provide general interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that includes an **inadequate** claim expresses a **limited** understanding of the social studies topic and uses insufficient evidence from the sources to develop the claim. The explanation includes weak connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. An **inadequate** claim shows some understanding of social studies themes but is limited in its analysis and evidence. The explanation may include insufficient understanding of cause and effect relationships; little recognition of patterns of continuity or change; limited knowledge of perspectives on a single topic or theme; misconceptions regarding the importance of or connections between source documents; limited interpretation of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **substantially flawed** claim expresses **little** understanding of the social studies topic. The explanation, if present, may include vague or illogical connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. It fails to reach the inadequate level for a variety of reasons. For example, the response may provide some evidence that relates to the topic, but is ineffective in supporting a claim, if one is made.

Characteristics of a Strong Response

A strong response is logically organized into several paragraphs. Any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or capitalization do not interfere with the ability of the reader to understand the ideas presented.

A strong response may develop one or more lines of reasoning to support the claim. Here are some examples.

- The North and South had geographical differences. The geography of each region shaped land use in each region. The North was not suited for agriculture because of poor soil and a cooler climate. In this region, cities grew and industry advanced. Most of the population lived and worked in the cities. In the South, the climate, longer growing season, and fertile lands were well-suited for the growing of cash crops. Most people in the south lived in rural areas and were involved in agriculture. As the demand for cash crops grew, the plantation system took hold resulting in the south's dependence on slave labor. As the Civil War began, geography also created advantages and disadvantages for the regions. The South had the geographic advantage in the Civil War in that they knew the land. As the North brought the war to the South, the southerners were better acquainted with the land and the climate. In addition, they fought to defend their land and homes.

- The differences in land use in the North and South contributed to the development of two very different economies. The North took advantage of rivers and ports to expand industry and shipping. Their economic differences created advantages and disadvantages for each region leading into the Civil War. The North had advantages in their use of factories. They were able to produce their own military supplies whereas the South was reliant on imported goods. They also had established financial institutions and currency that supported the war. The South, however, had support of other nations who were reliant on the South for their supply of cotton.
- The differences between the North and South created interdependence between the regions. Northern factories made farming tools, Southern farms and plantations bought and used the tools to grow their crops, Northern factories used Southern-grown materials such as cotton in their factories, and people in the South purchase textiles produced in the North. Once southern states seceded and formed the Confederacy, the differences between the regions no longer benefitted one another. Despite the motivations for secession, the recent formation of the Confederacy created disadvantages for the South. As they entered into war, they didn't have a functioning government in place. The U.S. government was better established providing structures such as income via taxes to support the war efforts. The South also lacked a regular, trained army or navy.

A strong response shows understanding of the topic by analyzing the required sources and including well-chosen evidence from the sources, such as:

- Geographical features influenced the economic focus of each region. The Southern climate and fertile lands were well-suited for agriculture. The Northern rivers and ports encouraged the development of industry. (Source 1 and Source 2)
- The geographic and economic differences between the North and South influenced the resources available to each region across multiple categories. The recent formation of the Confederacy created additional disadvantages for the South going into the war as they didn't have a functioning government in place nor a regular, trained military. (Source 3)
- Differences in land use led to different economies in the two regions. A warmer climate, longer growing season, and fertile soil fostered an agricultural economy in the South. A denser population, less available land, and less ideal farming conditions contributed to the development of an industrial economy in the North. (Source 4)

A strong response also includes important information beyond what is presented in the sources, such as:

- Describing the role of technology in the development of regional economies. Despite a lack of fertile soil for agriculture, the North did have some geographical benefits. They had waterways that made ports accessible and provided water power to factories. Technology directly impacted industrialization. Inventions such as the spinning jenny and power loom made cloth making more efficient, and interchangeable parts encouraged the expansion of the factory system. Although the primary component was agriculture, technology also played a role in the development of the southern economy. The invention of the cotton gin spread the growing of cotton over larger areas. The expansion of the growth of cotton fostered the plantation system and created a reliance on slave labor.
- Describing the issue of slavery leading up to the Civil War. As the Southern economy developed and the plantation system emerged, so did the South's dependence on the institution of slavery. Abolitionists were opposed to slavery and pushed for the practice to be ended. As new territories entered the United States, the issue of whether or not slavery would be allowed became prominent. As they entered the Civil War, many southerners believed in their cause as they believed they were fighting to defend their homes and their way of life.

**Printable
Student Version**

***Note: Some sources are available only in digital format. A link is provided and will require the use of a computer to view the source.**

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