

Sectionalism

Backwards Planning Curriculum Units

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How To Use This Unit

Backwards planning offers an innovative yet simple approach to meeting curriculum goals; it also provides a way to keep students engaged and focused throughout the learning process. Many teachers approach history instruction in the following manner: they identify a topic required by state and/or national standards, they find materials on that topic, they use those materials with their students, and then they administer some sort of standard test at the end of the unit. Backwards planning, rather than just starting with a required instructional topic, goes a step further by identifying exactly what students need to know by the end of the unit—the so-called “enduring understandings.” The next step involves assessment: devising ways to determine whether students have learned what they need to know. The final step involves planning the teaching/learning process so that students can acquire the knowledge needed.

This product uses backwards planning to combine a PowerPoint presentation, activities that involve authentic assessment, and traditional tests (multiple-choice and essay) into a complete curriculum unit. Although the materials have enough built-in flexibility that you can use them in a number of ways, we suggest the following procedure:

- 1.** Start with the “essential questions” listed on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation (these also appear in the teacher support materials). Briefly go over them with students before getting into the topic material. These questions will help students focus their learning and note taking during the course of the unit. You can also choose to use the essential questions as essay questions at the end of the unit; one way to do this is to let students know at the outset that one of the essential questions will be on the test—they just won’t know which one.
- 2.** Next, discuss the activities students will complete during the unit. This will also help focus their learning and note taking, and it will lead them to view the PowerPoint presentation in a different light, considering it a source of ideas for authentic-assessment projects.
- 3.** Present the PowerPoint to the class. Most slides have an image and bullet points summarizing the slide’s topic. The Notes page for each slide contains a paragraph or two of information that you can use as a presentation script, or just as background information for your own reference. You don’t need to present the entire PowerPoint at once: it’s broken up into several sections, each of which concludes with some discussion questions that echo parts of the essential questions and also help students to get closer to the “enduring understandings.” Spend some time with the class going over and debating these questions—this will not only help students think critically about the material, but it will also allow you to incorporate different modes of instruction during a single class period, offering a better chance to engage students.
- 4.** Have students complete one or more of the authentic-assessment activities. These activities are flexible: most can be completed either individually or in groups, and either as homework or as in-class assignments. Each activity includes a rubric; many also have graphic organizers. You can choose to have students complete the activities after you have shown them the entire PowerPoint presentation, or you can show them one section of the PowerPoint, go over the discussion questions, and then have students complete an activity.

5. End the unit with traditional assessment. The support materials include a 30-question multiple-choice quiz; you can combine this with an essay question (you can use one of the essential questions or come up with one of your own) to create a full-period test.

6. If desired, debrief with students by going over the essential questions with them again and remind them what the enduring understandings are.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others' experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we're also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Sectionalism



The presidential candidates of 1860 tear apart a map of the United States in this period cartoon, symbolizing the forces which threatened to tear the country apart and ultimately led to the Civil War

Although the ratification of the Constitution theoretically brought the former colonies into a “more perfect union,” severe regional tensions threatened to tear the nation apart during the first half of the 19th century. As an illustration of sectionalism—an intense loyalty to the interests of a specific region, rather than to the nation as a whole—this clash of interests between Northern and Southern states led eventually to the Civil War, by far the bloodiest in U.S. history.

Legislators managed over decades to cobble together a system of compromises that would alleviate tensions between North and South, two regions of the country that had diverged since colonial times. The North had a strong industrial base, tended to support a strong central government and internal improvements paid for by tariffs, and had less and less use for the “peculiar institution” of slavery to the point of abandoning it altogether. The South, on the other hand, had an agriculturally based economy and a much smaller population than the North, which resulted in a reliance on slave labor; tariffs only shrank the markets for Southern crops, and internal improvements didn’t matter much to its economy. The South also stood by the doctrine of “states’ rights” that placed state authority above that of the federal government in cases where the two came into conflict.

As the U.S. gained more territory, the great debate over the expansion of slavery into these new areas arose and became perhaps the defining issue of the 19th century. The North, with its larger population, controlled the House of Representatives. However, with each state allowed two senators, the South fought fiercely for a balance between free and slave states in order to advance its interests and preserve its traditional way of life. Political parties on both sides of the issue coalesced and disintegrated with new developments. The contention erupted into violence at times—in states, in the territories, and even on the Senate floor. As Americans took sides, the mounting tension literally split the nation in two when the Southern states came to see secession as their only remaining option.

Essential Questions

- How did sectionalism help shape the development of the United States Constitution?
- What compromises did Congress pass in order to lessen sectional conflicts in the early 19th century?
- What roles did John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster play in early 19th-century sectional disputes?
- Why couldn't politicians formulate a long-term solution to sectional issues?
- How did the issue of sectionalism affect the development of political parties and political theory in the 19th century?
- Why did North and South each have such strong misconceptions about the beliefs of the other?
- Why did the election of 1860 signal the end of any possible reconciliation between North and South?

Sectionalism and the Constitution

- Northern delegates: count slaves for taxation, but not representation
- Southern delegates: count slaves for representation, not taxation
- Resulted in “three-fifths compromise”
- Congress agreed not to interfere with slave trade until 1808



The Articles of Confederation instituted after the Revolutionary War had a number of shortcomings that left the government it created weak and ineffective. In 1787, delegates from the states met in Philadelphia to revise the document. However, it soon became apparent that the confederacy functioned so badly that the country required a whole new system.

The new federal system of government devised by the Constitutional Convention included a two-house legislature. While the Senate provided each state with equal representation, the House called for representation based on population. Delegates from Northern states, which tended to have larger populations, sought to count the number of Southern slaves for purposes of taxation, but not representation. Southern delegates, whose states relied heavily on slave labor to fuel their agricultural economy, wanted to count slaves for representation in the House, but not taxation.

To break the deadlock, the delegates reached a compromise. Three-fifths of the number of slaves would be counted for both representation and taxation. In addition, to satisfy the Southern contingent, the delegates agreed to add a clause to the Constitution forbidding Congress from abolishing the slave trade until 1808. The “three-fifths compromise” proved to be but the first in a long line of slavery-related agreements in the years prior to the Civil War.

Slavery and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787



The Northwest Ordinance

- Ordinance created five new states from Northwest Territory
- Slavery and involuntary servitude prohibited
- Did not affect slaves already in Northwest
- Some still brought slaves to territories
- Pressure to continue slavery in Northwest

The Revolutionary War had not only given the United States independence, it also provided the new nation with a significant amount of territory ceded by the British west of the 13 states. Debates raged in the new Congress as to the future of the Northwest Territory. Many of the 13 states had laid claim to the territory by simply extending their boundaries westward. Others expected that the territories would form a new confederation of states separate from the 13 original states under the Articles of Confederation. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 answered this question by creating three to five new states out of the territory, to be added to the original 13.

The ordinance also tackled the issue of slavery. Article 6 specifically stated that “neither Slavery nor involuntary Servitude [is permitted] in the said territory otherwise than in the punishment of crimes.” However, the ordinance did allow for the return of runaway slaves from the original 13 states captured in the Northwest Territory. Its prohibition of slavery notwithstanding significant debate about the its scope continued. Many settlers had introduced slaves into the territories prior to 1787, and the Northwest Ordinance did not require them to free their slaves. Also, some settlers continued to import slaves after the passage of the ordinance. Indiana and Illinois, two states created as a result of the Northwest Ordinance, continued to push for the introduction of slavery after 1787. Indiana’s legislature officially petitioned Congress to allow slavery, and passed a law allowing for indentured servitude in 1802. Proslavery elements in Illinois continued to lobby to allow slavery in that state as late as 1823.

North and South: Differences

The North:

- Primarily industrial
- Mostly urban and small farms
- Supported tariffs and internal improvements
- For strong central government
- Relied on free labor
- Wanted to limit spread of slavery in West

The South:

- Primarily agricultural
- Mostly small farms and plantations
- Generally opposed tariffs and internal improvements
- For “states’ rights”
- Relied on slavery due to smaller population
- Supported extending slavery in West

As the nation developed, significant differences between the North and South became apparent. The North became predominantly industrialized, primarily because of the climate, but also because of a relatively limited amount of farmland. The South remained dependent on agriculture. As towns and cities grew in the North, the South became an area of small farms or larger plantations.

In addition, the North saw tariffs as essential for protecting domestic industry from foreign competition. Most Northerners also saw great value in providing “internal improvements” (roads, turnpikes, and canals) in order to get raw materials to factories for processing, and to get finished goods to market. As the South’s economic reliance on industry diminished, internal improvements seemed more of an economic imposition on the region. Most Southerners also saw protective tariffs as unfairly raising the price of goods they needed to import, as well as possibly causing England to buy less Southern cotton.

Politically, the North tended to support a strong central government with broad powers. The South supported “states’ rights,” in which state authority trumped the federal government’s, and, if necessary, a state could “nullify” federal law.

Northern industrialization created less demand for slave labor, and more demand for skilled, free workers. The South had a smaller population than the North and therefore relied heavily on slave labor to farm the plantation system. Concerned that free states would vote in Congress to limit or abolish slavery, Southerners supported the extension of slavery into western territories acquired by the United States. Northerners, seeing an opportunity to expand economically as well as geographically, opposed slavery in new territories in order to provide further employment opportunities for free labor.