

Module 5: The Civil War and Reconstruction - 1860 to 1877

Topic 1 Content: Free States, Slave States and Territories Notes

Introduction



Tensions between the North and South were increasing over the issue of slavery. Three important compromises were reached in an attempt to stop civil war. While the compromises may have delayed a civil war, you can see from the dark gray colored area of the maps that the amount of territory open to slavery greatly increased from 1820 until 1854. In this interactivity, learn about the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Click **Start** to begin.

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The Missouri Compromise, 1820

The Missouri Compromise, 1820

When Missouri reached a population of 60,000, a conflict arose between the North and South about slavery.

Northern states wanted Missouri to become a free state. Southern States wanted Missouri to allow slavery.

Free **Slave**

Next

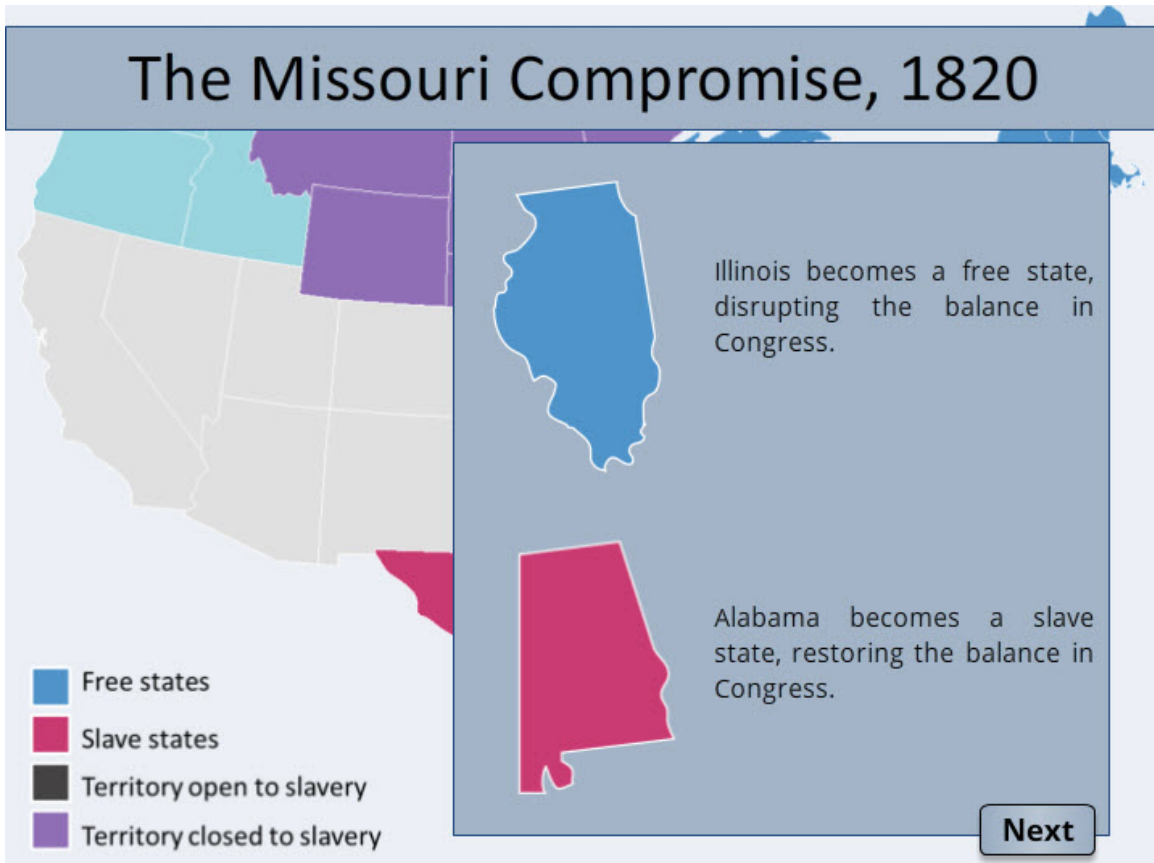
- Free states
- Slave states
- Territory open to slavery
- Territory closed to slavery

In 1819, the Missouri Territory's population had reached 60,000, and was ready to become part of the United States. Congress had to approve all new states to the Union. When Missouri requested admission, a conflict over Missouri becoming a free state or slave state arose. The Northern states wanted Missouri to become a free state, while the Southern states wanted Missouri to become a slave state.

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The Missouri Compromise, 1820



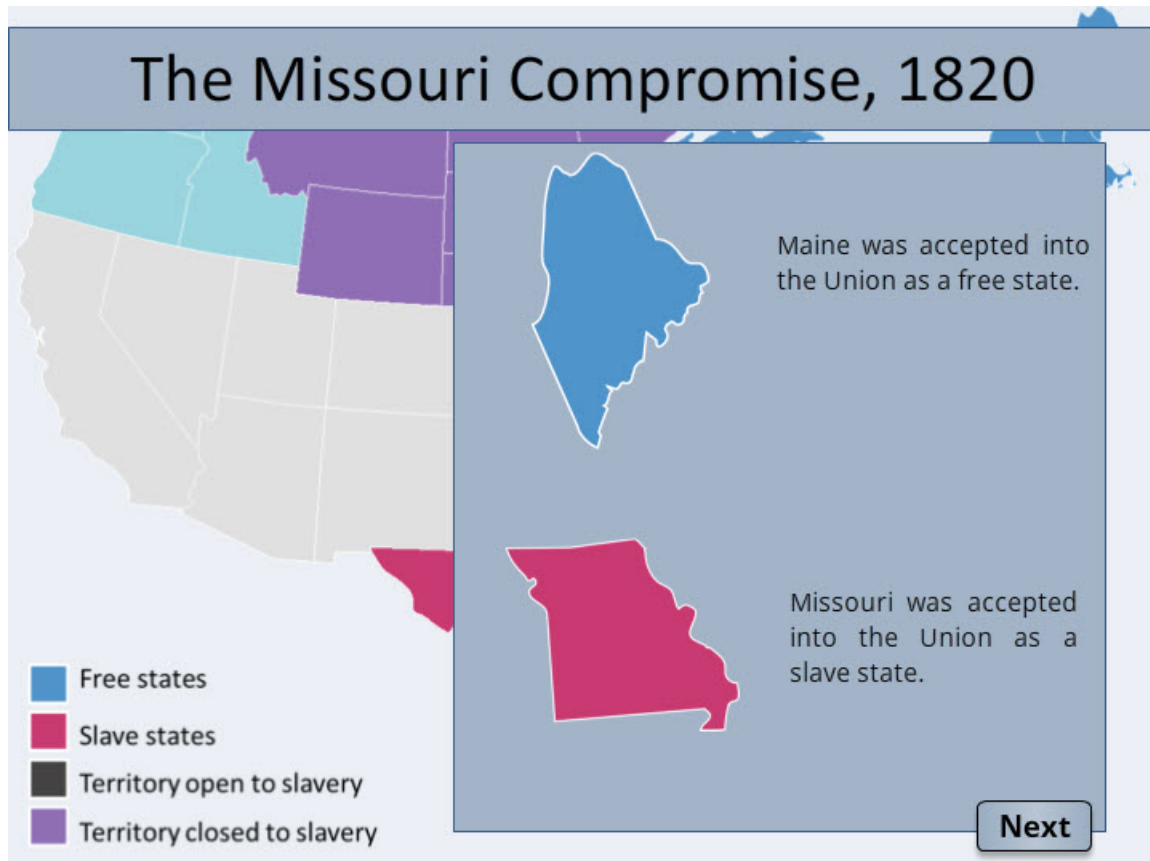
Until the year 1818, the United States was composed of ten free states and ten slave states. Then, Illinois was accepted into the Union as a free state. The power that was once balanced in Congress was now shifted to representatives of free states, who were now in the majority.

When Missouri requested admission into the Union, most Southerners expected it would become a slave state, restoring the balance between slave states and free states. New York Congressman James Tallmadge unexpectedly amended Missouri's bill for statehood, requiring Missouri to eventually free its slaves. The House of Representatives passed the bill. Delegates of Southern states, fearing another disturbance of power in Congress, blocked the bill from passing in the Senate. While the debate over Missouri raged onward, Alabama became the eleventh slave state.

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The Missouri Compromise, 1820



The argument over Missouri had both Northerners and Southerners accusing each other of attempting to extend their beliefs into new territories. The arguments were so intense that both sides mentioned the end of the Union and civil war. Congress resolved the issue through a series of agreements called the Missouri Compromise. In the compromise, Maine was accepted into the Union as a free state and Missouri was accepted as a slave state. A dividing line was set at 36 degrees 30 minutes north latitude. South of the line slavery was legal, north of the line slavery was illegal. Missouri was an exception to the rule. Missouri, which resides above the line, became a slave state.

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The Compromise of 1850

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California was ready to become a state.

Texas laid claim to the eastern portion of the New Mexico Territory. It was assumed that New Mexico would become a slave state.

Northerners demanded that slavery be abolished in the District of Columbia.

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In December 1849, California was ready to become a state. During this time, the issue of slavery was still a very controversial topic in Congress. Texas had laid claim to the eastern half of the New Mexico Territory. Since Texas was a slave state, it was assumed that the New Mexico Territory would also allow slavery. However, this issue had not been discussed by Congress. While the debates over the New Mexico territory went on, Northerners demanded that slavery be abolished in the District of Columbia. Both these issues of slavery caused the Southerners to threaten to secede from the Union. Take a moment to view the map to learn how the Compromise of 1850 changed the number of states allowing slavery.

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The Compromise of 1850

The Compromise of 1850

California would become a free state.

The Utah and New Mexico Territories would be granted popular sovereignty to decide on the issue of slavery.

The Federal Government would pay Texas ten million dollars for New Mexico.

The sale of slaves was made illegal in the District of Columbia.

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Legend:

- Free states
- Slave states
- Territory open to slavery
- Territory closed to slavery

In January 1850, Kentucky Senator Henry Clay presented the Senate with a set of compromises, hoping to end the disputes over the growing number of slavery related issues. Under the Compromise of 1850, California would enter the Union as a free state. The residents of the Utah and New Mexico Territories would be given popular sovereignty, allowing them the right to vote for or against slavery in their respective territories.

An additional term to the Compromise of 1850 was that the federal government would pay Texas ten million dollars to acquire its claim to New Mexico. The Fugitive Slave Act was also part of the Compromise. This act required residents of free states to assist with the capture and return of escaped slaves.

The Compromise of 1850 was rejected by the Senate. Now battling tuberculosis, Senator Clay was unable to continue his efforts in helping the government reach a compromise. Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas took up the fight, implementing a new strategy. Instead of presenting the compromises as one large package, he introduced them one at a time. By taking this approach, he was able to facilitate the passage of the Compromise of 1850.

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The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854

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The Nebraska Territory would be divided into two states. The two states would be granted popular sovereignty to decide on the issue of slavery. Allowing popular sovereignty caused for the Missouri Compromise to be repealed.

Free states
Slave states
Territory open to slavery
Territory closed to slavery

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Senator Douglas continued pushing for the organization of the western lands. In January 1854, he introduced a bill to Congress to divide the area west of Missouri and Iowa into two territories: Nebraska in the north and Kansas in the south. He proposed that the voters of Nebraska and Kansas be given popular sovereignty, in order to decide the issue of slavery in the newly formed territories.

While most southern congressmen were in favor of the bill, many congressmen of northern states worried that its passage would lead to the expansion of slavery in the western territories. If the bill passed, the line established by the Missouri Compromise would no longer decide the issue of slavery in newly formed territories. After months of debate between opposing sides, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in May 1854.

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The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854

Both anti-slavery and pro-slavery settlers raced to Kansas. These settlers had a goal of setting up legislature and making Kansas favor their stance on slavery.

Violence between the two groups took place in several locations, earning Kansas the nickname, "Bleeding Kansas."

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Once the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed, both the North and South rushed to get control of Kansas. The territory became filled with groups of anti-slavery and pro-slavery settlers, who were unable to live together peacefully. By 1855, these groups had established separate towns and legislatures, and violence began erupting throughout the territory. The town of Lawrence and the settlement of Pottawatomie Creek were extremely impacted by violence. Numerous violent incidents continued to occur throughout the territory, which some began referring to as "Bleeding Kansas."