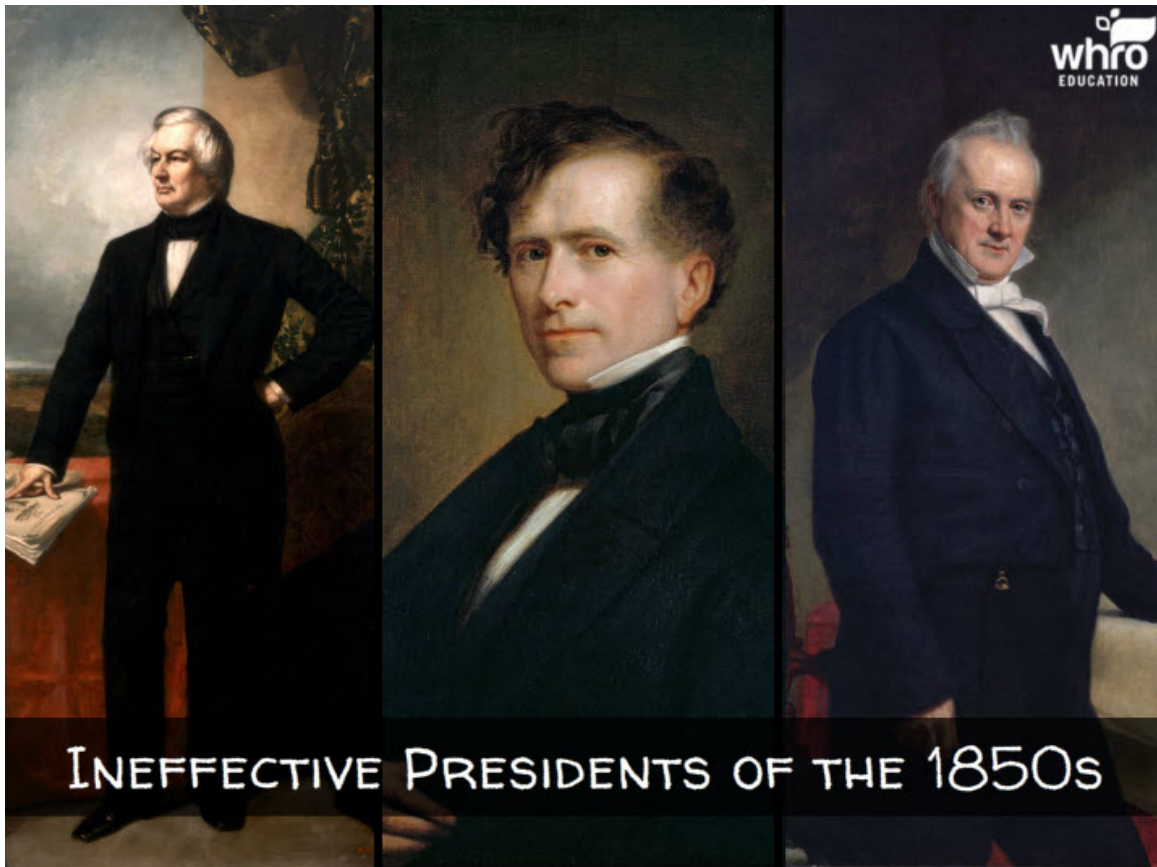


## Module 5: The Civil War and Reconstruction - 1860 to 1877

### Topic 2 Content: Ineffective Presidents of the 1850s Notes

#### Introduction



Ineffective presidents of the 1850s

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

### Topic 2 Content: Ineffective Presidents of the 1850s Notes

#### Instructions



Select Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, or James Buchanan to explore the three ineffective presidents of the 1850s and how their lack of leadership became a cause of the Civil War.

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

### Topic 2 Content: Ineffective Presidents of the 1850s Notes

#### Millard Fillmore

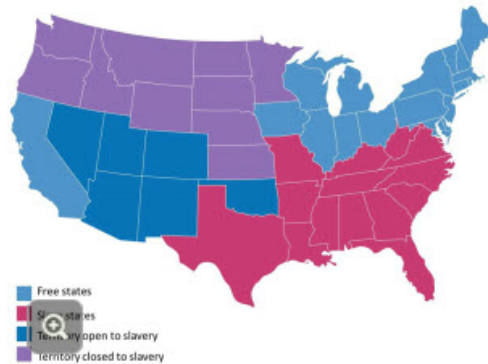


## MILLARD FILLMORE

- 13<sup>th</sup> president of the United States

# 13<sup>TH</sup>

- Supported the Compromise of 1850



*Map of the Compromise of 1850*

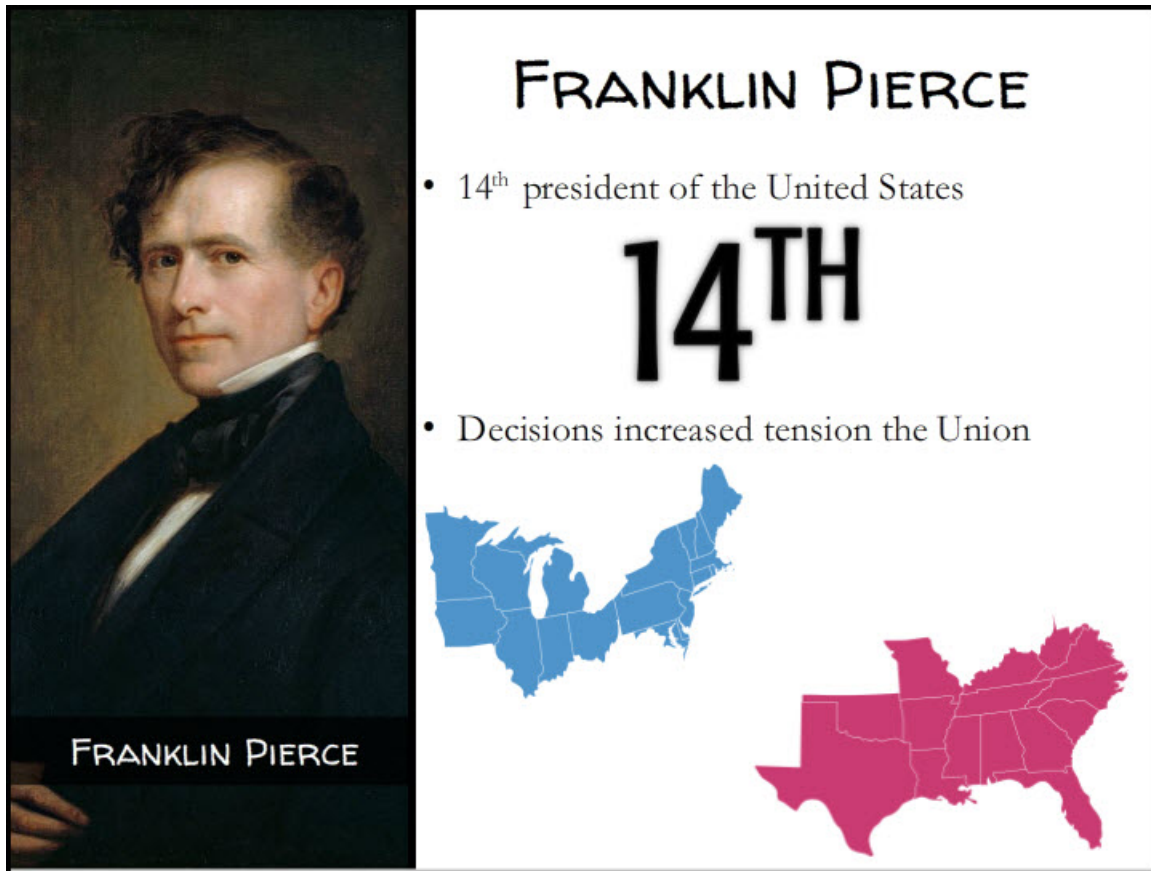
When President Zachary Taylor died unexpectedly, his Vice President, Millard Fillmore, assumed his role, and became the thirteenth president of the United States. Fillmore was a supporter of Stephen Douglas and the Compromise of 1850. One aspect of the Compromise that angered many Southerners was California's entrance into the Union as a free state. The majority of California lies below the Missouri Compromise line, making slavery permissible in this area. Allowing the state to enter the Union as a free state seemed to disregard the Missouri Compromise.

In order to appease the South, President Fillmore signed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 into law. Under this law, fugitives were denied the right to a trial by jury and could not testify on their own behalf. In addition, anyone found guilty of assisting a slave in running away could be fined \$1000 and/or spend six months in jail. While this law pleased many Southerners, Northerners were angered by its harshness. By signing the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 into law, President Fillmore escalated the sectional tensions in the country.

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

### Topic 2 Content: Ineffective Presidents of the 1850s Notes

#### Franklin Pierce



FRANKLIN PIERCE

- 14<sup>th</sup> president of the United States
- Decisions increased tension the Union

14<sup>TH</sup>

FRANKLIN PIERCE

Franklin Pierce, a Democrat, became the fourteenth president of the United States in 1853. His term began during the sectional tensions caused by the Compromise of 1850. Pierce's actions as president would further disrupt the Union.

In 1854, Pierce passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which repealed the Missouri Compromise and opened up the question of slavery in the West. By allowing popular sovereignty in western territories, the Act caused Northerners and Southerners to race to Kansas to fight for control, and violence erupted throughout the area. The Kansas-Nebraska Act elevated the tensions between the North and South.

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

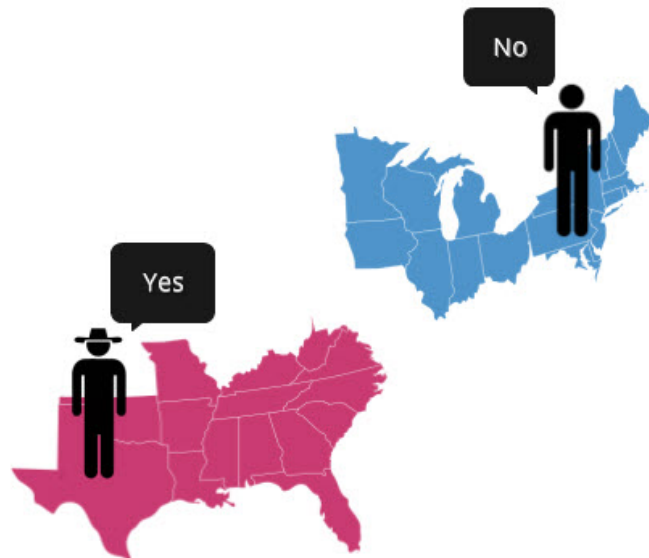
### Topic 2 Content: Ineffective Presidents of the 1850s Notes

#### James Buchanan



## JAMES BUCHANAN

- Insisted that the issue of slavery should be decided by the votes of each state and territory



James Buchanan of Pennsylvania won the election of 1857 and became the fifteenth president of the United States. Although he was a Northerner, he had the support of many Southerners. During his campaign, he insisted that the issue of slavery should be decided by the voters of each state and territory. During his term, however, Buchanan's actions regarding the Kansas Territory seemed to contradict his stance on the issue.

As a result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, voters in Kansas had the right to decide the issue of slavery. When the government established at Lecompton, Kansas drafted a constitution that protected the practice of slavery in Kansas and applied for Kansas' admission into the Union as a slave state, Kansas voters, the majority of whom were opposed to slavery, rejected it. President Buchanan expressed his support of the Lecompton Constitution and asked Congress to admit Kansas as a slave state, even though Kansas voters had voted against it. He felt that because the state only contained approximately 200 slaves, the anti-slavery voters were exaggerating the issue. Buchanan's actions angered many Northerners, namely Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois.

Douglas, along with many other Northerners, felt that President Buchanan was violating the popular sovereignty established in Kansas by not respecting the vote of the people. Douglas convinced Congress to allow the people of Kansas to vote on the constitution again. It was again rejected. Kansas would later draft a revised constitution and enter the Union as a free state. While the result pleased many Northerners, Southerners were angered by the outcome. The sectional tensions in the Union continued to rise.