

## Causes of the Civil War: A Primary Sources Analysis Activity

**Primary sources** are first hand accounts of an event or situation in history. These accounts can be verbal (a quote, journal, or other written piece) or they may be visual (an image, sign, video...). The person providing the information in the account actually **lived through** and **experienced** the history. This makes primary sources very important for **understanding** history. Still, you must consider the source, its **relevance for the time period**, the **reliability** of the account, and any **bias** that may be held by the person providing the information.

*"The American people and the Government at Washington may refuse to recognize it for a time but the inexorable logic of events will force it upon them in the end; that the war now being waged in this land is a war for and against slavery."*

Frederick Douglass

1. What does Douglass claim the Civil War will be about in the end?
2. According to Douglass, does the Government claim to be fighting the war toward his goal? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think the U.S. government would not have wanted to claim this as their goal?



1. Who is performing the work in this image?
2. What do the shadow images represent? How may this be a cause of the Civil War?

**FACT: The North and South were very different in economic views. The South was dependent on their plantation lifestyle and income, while the North was more focused on city life, manufacturing, and services.**



*New York City in 1860*

What do you see in this image? List 3 details.

What does it suggest about New York City in 1860?

How do you think this compared to most regions of the South?

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## ORDINANCE OF SECESSION.

DECEMBER 20, 1860.

AN ORDINANCE TO DISSOLVE THE UNION BETWEEN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE OTHER STATES UNITED WITH HER, UNDER THE COMPACT ENTITLED THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

*We, the people of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and it is hereby declared and ordained, that the Ordinance adopted by us in Convention, on the twenty-third day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, whereby the Constitution of the United States of America was ratified; and, also, all Acts and parts of Acts of the General Assembly of this State, ratifying amendments of the said Constitution, are hereby repealed, and that the Union now existing between South Carolina and other States of America is hereby dissolved.*

### Ordinance of Secession (South Carolina)

1. When is this ordinance declared?
2. Who is affected by this ordinance? Be specific.
3. How would this ordinance lead to Civil War?

*"Let me tell you what is coming. After the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of lives you may win Southern independence, but I doubt it. The North is determined to preserve this Union. They are not a fiery, impulsive people as you are, for they live in colder climates. But when they begin to move in a given direction, they move with the steady momentum and perseverance of a mighty avalanche."*

Governor Sam Houston

1. What was Governor Houston's prediction?
2. How does he describe Northerners versus the Southerners?
3. Based on his description and prediction, how do you think the North will act in response to secession of Southern States?

**FACT: The election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency was the final straw for the Southern states. They saw Lincoln as anti-slavery and pro-Federal power and did not wish to be subject to his leadership.**

In many ways, the causes of the Civil War are similar to wars we fight today. What comparisons can be made to our current war on terror? Provide examples to support your response. (Use another page, if needed.)