

The Election of 1860

By Ron Miller - Jewett Academy

I. Lesson Summary

Summary

The Election of 1860 demonstrated the divisions within the United States just before the Civil War. The election was unusual because four strong candidates competed for the presidency. Political parties of the day were in flux. The dominant party, the Democratic Party, had split into two sectional factions, with each promoting its own candidate. The Republican Party was relatively new; 1860 was only the second time the party had a candidate in the presidential race. The Constitutional Union Party was also new; 1860 was the first and only time the party ran a candidate for president. The results of the 1860 election pushed the nation into war.

Objectives

S.S.A.1.2 Students will use information to draw conclusions from maps, charts and graphs.
Students will analyze the information from the maps, charts, and graphs to determine the 1860 election results and the impact of the election results on the Civil War

U.S. History Event or Era

Pre-Civil War (the Election of 1860)

Grade Level

This lesson is appropriate for a middle school social studies classroom (8th grade).

Materials

Handout #1: "Electoral Vote Map and Graph – 1860"

Handout #2: "Popular Vote Graph and Data – 1860"

Worksheet #1: "Candidates and Parties"

Worksheet #2: "Analysis of Election Data"

Lesson Time

180 minutes

II. Lesson Procedures

Procedures

- 1.) To start the lesson, have the students define the following words using the glossary in the classroom text or a dictionary:
 - A. Sectionalism
 - B. Electoral vote
 - C. Popular vote.
- 2.) Computer Lab: Students will work in groups of two and use internet search programs to find information about the candidates and political parties involved in the election of 1860. Have students use the internet to complete Worksheet #1, "Candidates and Parties," using the results of the internet search.
- 3.) Have students work in small heterogenous groups of 3-4 students. Instruct students to use the data from the map, graphs, and charts to analyze the 1860 election and complete Worksheet #2.

III. Activities

Election of 1860

Name _____

Worksheet #1 - Candidates and Parties

The election of 1860 demonstrated the divisions within the United States. The political parties of the decades before 1860 no longer dealt with the issues of 1860. The Whig Party had fallen into disorder and was not a viable political force. The party did not run a candidate for president in 1860. The dominate party of the era was unable to come to a consensus and splintered into two factions. A new party came into politics in the 1850s and was running its second candidate for president in 1860. The divisive nature of the issues in 1860 led to the formation of a fourth party, specifically organized to try and keep the union together. The results of the election for president pushed the nation closer to war.

Use the internet and your text to locate information to complete the following chart about the election of 1860

| | Political Party | Political Experience | Position on Slavery | Region of Support |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Abraham Lincoln | | | | |
| Stephen A. Douglas | | | | |
| John C. Breckinridge | | | | |
| John Bell | | | | |

Worksheet #2 - Analysis of Election Data

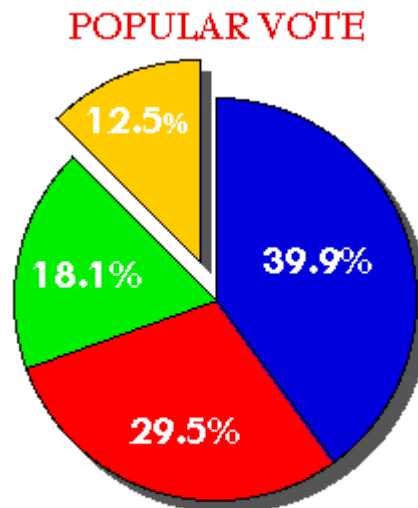
Examine the political data provided by the maps and graphs and answer the following questions.

1. List the popular vote and popular vote percentage for each of the following candidates:
Abraham Lincoln (Republican)
Stephen A. Douglas (Northern Democrat)
John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democrat)
John Bell (Constitutional Union Party)
2. List the electoral vote and electoral vote percentage for each of the following candidates:
Abraham Lincoln (Republican)
Stephen A. Douglas (Northern Democrat)
John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democrat)
John Bell (Constitutional Union Party)
3. What was the total electoral vote in 1860?
4. How many electoral votes were needed to win the 1860 election?
5. All four candidates were not on the ballot in every state. Using the data provided, cite evidence to support this information.
6. Rank the candidates in order of electoral vote.
7. Rank the candidates in order of popular vote.
8. Explain why Stephen A. Douglas, who came in second in popular votes, received so few electoral votes.
9. If the Democratic Party ran only one candidate, would that candidate have won the election? Explain your answer.
10. Identify the geographic region that supported each candidate.
11. Explain how the election of 1860 demonstrated the sectional divisions within the United States in 1860.
12. Southerners believed that the results of the election of 1860 demonstrated the political domination of the north. Does the election data support or refute that claim. Explain your answer.

Handout #2: Popular Vote Graph and Data - 1860

<http://www.multied.com/elections/1860Pop.html>

Presidential Election 1860 Popular Vote



| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|---------|------|-----------------|---------|------|-------------------|--------|------|-----------|--------|------|
| Alabama | Abraham Lincoln | | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 13,618 | 15.1 | John Breckinridge | 48,669 | 54.0 | John Bell | 27,835 | 30.9 |
| Arkansas | Abraham Lincoln | - | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 5,357 | 9.9 | John Breckinridge | 28,732 | 53.1 | John Bell | 20,063 | 37.0 |
| California | Abraham Lincoln | 38,733 | 32.3 | Stephen Douglas | 37,999 | 31.7 | John Breckinridge | 33,969 | 28.3 | John Bell | 9,111 | 7.6 |
| Connecticut | Abraham Lincoln | 43,488 | 58.1 | Stephen Douglas | 15,431 | 20.6 | John Breckinridge | 14,372 | 19.2 | John Bell | 1,528 | 2.0 |
| Delaware | Abraham Lincoln | 3,822 | 23.7 | Stephen Douglas | 1,066 | 6.6 | John Breckinridge | 7,339 | 45.5 | John Bell | 3,888 | 24.1 |
| Florida | Abraham Lincoln | - | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 223 | 1.7 | John Breckinridge | 8,277 | 62.2 | John Bell | 4,801 | 36.1 |
| Georgia | Abraham Lincoln | - | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 11,581 | 10.9 | John Breckinridge | 52,176 | 48.9 | John Bell | 42,960 | 40.3 |
| Illinois | Abraham Lincoln | 172,171 | 50.7 | Stephen Douglas | 160,215 | 47.2 | John Breckinridge | 2,331 | 0.7 | John Bell | 4,914 | 1.4 |
| Indiana | Abraham Lincoln | 139,033 | 51.1 | Stephen Douglas | 115,509 | 42.4 | John Breckinridge | 12,295 | 4.5 | John Bell | 5,306 | 1.9 |
| Iowa | Abraham Lincoln | 70,302 | 54.6 | Stephen Douglas | 55,639 | 43.2 | John Breckinridge | 1,035 | 0.8 | John Bell | 1,763 | 1.4 |
| Kentucky | Abraham Lincoln | 1,364 | 0.9 | Stephen Douglas | 25,651 | 17.5 | John Breckinridge | 53,143 | 36.3 | John Bell | 66,058 | 45.2 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------|------|-----------------|---------|------|-------------------|---------|------|-----------|--------|------|
| Louisiana | Abraham Lincoln | - | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 7,625 | 15.1 | John Breckinridge | 22,681 | 44.9 | John Bell | 20,204 | 40.0 |
| Maine | Abraham Lincoln | 62,811 | 62.2 | Stephen Douglas | 29,693 | 29.4 | John Breckinridge | 6,368 | 6.3 | John Bell | 2,046 | 2.0 |
| Maryland | Abraham Lincoln | 2,294 | 2.5 | Stephen Douglas | 5,966 | 6.4 | John Breckinridge | 42,482 | 45.9 | John Bell | 41,760 | 45.1 |
| Massachusetts | Abraham Lincoln | 106,684 | 62.8 | Stephen Douglas | 34,370 | 20.2 | John Breckinridge | 6,163 | 3.6 | John Bell | 22,331 | 13.1 |
| Michigan | Abraham Lincoln | 88,481 | 57.2 | Stephen Douglas | 65,057 | 42.0 | John Breckinridge | 805 | 0.5 | John Bell | 415 | 0.3 |
| Minnesota | Abraham Lincoln | 22,069 | 63.4 | Stephen Douglas | 11,920 | 34.2 | John Breckinridge | 748 | 2.1 | John Bell | 50 | 0.1 |
| Mississippi | Abraham Lincoln | - | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 3,282 | 4.7 | John Breckinridge | 40,768 | 59.0 | John Bell | 25,045 | 36.2 |
| Missouri | Abraham Lincoln | 17,028 | 10.3 | Stephen Douglas | 58,801 | 35.5 | John Breckinridge | 31,362 | 18.9 | John Bell | 58,372 | 35.3 |
| New Hampshire | Abraham Lincoln | 37,519 | 56.9 | Stephen Douglas | 25,887 | 39.3 | John Breckinridge | 2,125 | 3.2 | John Bell | 412 | 0.6 |
| New Jersey | Abraham Lincoln | 58,346 | 48.1 | Stephen Douglas | 62,869 | 51.9 | John Breckinridge | - | 0 | John Bell | - | |
| New York | Abraham Lincoln | 362,646 | 53.7 | Stephen Douglas | 312,510 | 46.3 | John Breckinridge | - | 0 | John Bell | - | |
| North Carolina | Abraham Lincoln | - | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 2,737 | 2.8 | John Breckinridge | 48,846 | 50.5 | John Bell | 45,129 | 46.7 |
| Ohio | Abraham Lincoln | 231,709 | 52.3 | Stephen Douglas | 187,421 | 42.3 | John Breckinridge | 11,406 | 2.6 | John Bell | 12,194 | 2.8 |
| Oregon | Abraham Lincoln | 5,329 | 36.1 | Stephen Douglas | 4,136 | 28.0 | John Breckinridge | 5,075 | 34.4 | John Bell | 218 | 1.5 |
| Pennsylvania | Abraham Lincoln | 268,030 | 56.3 | Stephen Douglas | 16,765 | 3.5 | John Breckinridge | 178,871 | 37.5 | John Bell | 12,776 | 2.7 |
| Rhode Island | Abraham Lincoln | 12,244 | 61.4 | Stephen Douglas | 7,707 | 38.6 | John Breckinridge | - | 0 | John Bell | - | |
| Tennessee | Abraham Lincoln | - | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 11,281 | 7.7 | John Breckinridge | 65,097 | 44.6 | John Bell | 69,728 | 47.7 |
| Texas | Abraham Lincoln | - | 0 | Stephen Douglas | 18 | 0 | John Breckinridge | 47,454 | 75.5 | John Bell | 15,383 | 24.5 |
| Vermont | Abraham Lincoln | 33,808 | 75.7 | Stephen Douglas | 8,649 | 19.4 | John Breckinridge | 218 | 0.5 | John Bell | 1,969 | 4.4 |
| Virginia | Abraham Lincoln | 1,887 | 1.1 | Stephen Douglas | 16,198 | 9.7 | John Breckinridge | 74,325 | 44.5 | John Bell | 74,481 | 44.6 |
| Wisconsin | Abraham Lincoln | 86,110 | 56.6 | Stephen Douglas | 65,021 | 42.7 | John Breckinridge | 887 | 0.6 | John Bell | 161 | 0.1 |

Election of 1860

Worksheet #1 - Candidates and Parties

Answer Sheet

The election of 1860 demonstrated the divisions within the United States. The political parties of the decades before 1860 no longer dealt with the issues of 1860. The Whig Party had fallen into disorder and was not a viable political force. The party did not run a candidate for president in 1860. The dominate party of the era was unable to come to a consensus and splintered into two factions. A new party came into politics in the 1850s and was running its second candidate for president in 1860. The divisive nature of the issues in 1860 led to the formation of a fourth party, specifically organized to try keep the union together. The results of the election for president pushed the nation closer to war.

Use the internet and your text to locate information to complete the following chart about the election of 1860

| | Political Party | Political Experience | Position on Slavery | Region of Support |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Abraham Lincoln | Republican | US Congress (one term) | Opposed expansion of slavery | North and Pacific Coast |
| Stephen A. Douglas | Northern Democrat | US Senate | Popular sovereignty | Border states, Midwest |
| John C. Breckinridge | Southern Democrat | Vice President, US Senate, Sec. of War | Supported the expansion of slavery | South |
| John Bell | Constitutional Union Party | US Senate | Supported the Constitution | Upper South |

Election of 1860

Worksheet 2 - Analysis of Election Data

Answer Key

Examine the political data provided by the maps and graphs and answer the following questions.

- List the popular vote and popular vote percentage for each of the following candidates:

| | | |
|--|-----------|-----|
| Abraham Lincoln (Republican) | 1,866,542 | 40% |
| Stephen A. Douglas (Northern Democrat) | 1,375,157 | 29% |
| John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democrat) | 847,953 | 18% |
| John Bell (Constitutional Union Party) | 590,631 | 13% |
- List the electoral vote and electoral vote percentage for each of the following candidates:

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| Abraham Lincoln (Republican) | 180 | 59% |
| Stephen A. Douglas (Northern Democrat) | 12 | 4% |
| John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democrat) | 72 | 24% |
| John Bell (Constitutional Union Party) | 39 | 13% |
- What was the total electoral vote in 1860?
303 total electoral votes
- How many electoral votes were needed to win the 1860 election?
152 electoral votes needed to win
- All four candidates were not on the ballot in every state. Using the data provided, cite evidence to support this information.
Lincoln received no popular votes in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and most southern states; Breckinridge and Bell received no popular votes in New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and other northern states. This leads to the conclusion that they were not on the ballot in those states.
- Rank the candidates in order of electoral vote.
Lincoln, Breckinridge, Bell, Douglas
- Rank the candidates in order of popular vote.
Lincoln, Douglas, Breckinridge, Bell
- Explain why Stephen A. Douglas, who came in second in popular votes, received so few electoral votes.
Douglas carried only one state, Missouri with 9 electoral votes. New Jersey split its electoral vote, awarding Douglas 3 electoral votes
- If the Democratic Party ran only one candidate, would that candidate have won the election? Explain your answer.
Even if the Democratic Party had not split into two factions, it would not have won the election. Breckinridge and Douglas combined only received 84 electoral votes, not enough to win.
- Identify the geographic region that supported each candidate.
Breckinridge won the Deep South, Bell won the upper south, Lincoln won the north and Pacific Coast, and Douglas won only the state of Missouri.
- Explain how the election of 1860 demonstrated the sectional divisions within the United States in 1860.
The results of the election demonstrated a divided nation. Breckinridge carried all of the states in the Deep South and Lincoln carried all of the states in the north.

12. Southerners believed that the results of the election of 1860 demonstrated the political domination of the north. Does the election data support or refute that claim. Explain your answer.
- The election of Lincoln demonstrated the political power of the north. The growth of population in the north gave it enough electoral votes to control the election. The Deep South controlled only 61 electoral votes and the Upper South controlled 47 electoral votes. The South only had 108 electoral votes and by 1860, 152 electoral votes was needed to win an election.

IV. Assessment

FCAT style essay:

Write a five-paragraph essay explaining how the election of 1860 demonstrated the divisions within the United States and how the results of the election pushed the nation closer to civil war.

V. Resources

Map - Election of 1860

http://www.teachersparadise.com/ency/en/media/f/f9/electoralcollege1860_large.png

Graph - Electoral Vote 1860

http://www.multied.com/PageMill_Images/image31.gif

Election Data - Popular Vote for the Presidential Election of 1860

<http://www.multied.com/elections/1860Pop.html>