

Brunswick School Department  
Social Studies  
Grade 8 Road to the Civil War

**Unit Overview**

This is the beginning of three interconnected units: The Road to the Civil War, The Civil War, and Reconstruction. In this first unit, students will study how the cultural, political and economic differences between the North and south (industrial society vs agrarian society) led to conflict and many attempts at compromise. Specific historical events will be reviewed such as John Brown's Raid, The Missouri Compromise, publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Kansas -Nebraska Act. Also covered will be larger questions such as the role of the federal government in state rights and state government.

**Essential Understandings**

During the years before the Civil War, the nation tried but failed to deal with growing sectional differences.

**Priority Standards and Performance Indicators**

(as based on the Maine Learning Results)

**P.S. SS -1 Conduct and present original research that utilizes primary and secondary sources in order to analyze, interpret and explain historical (and/or) contemporary social studies topics.**

- a. Locate relevant information that includes multiple perspectives from varied sources.
- c. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- d. Use information ethically and legally.

**PS.SS- 2 Draw on concepts from civics and government to understand political systems, power, authority, governance, civic ideals and practices, and the role of citizens.**

- a. Describe the structures and processes of the United States government and how they are framed by the United States Constitution and other primary resources.

**P.S. SS-4 Utilize concepts and processes from geography to understand issues involving people, places, and environments in the United States and the world.**

- d. Describe the dynamic relationship between geographic features and various cultures, including the cultures of Maine Native Americans, various historical groups in the United States, and other cultures in the world.

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**P.S.SS-5 Draw on concepts and processes from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.**

- a. Explain that history is the study of the written record of the past, based on available evidence from a variety of sources.
- b. Trace and explain the history of democratic ideals and constitutional principles and their importance in the history of the United States and the world.
- c. Identify and analyze major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of Maine, the United States and various regions of the world.

**Examples of Formative / Summative Assessments**

- Write a five paragraph essay:
  - Was the South justified in seceding from the Union?
  - Describe the different reactions in the North and South to John Brown's raid.
  - Summarize the events that led to the outbreak of the Civil War.
  - Support the thesis: "Political, economic, and cultural issues created bitter divisions between the North and the South.
  - Explain why conflict arose of the issue of slavery in the territories after the Mexican American War.
- Assorted quizzes based on primary and secondary sources (eg "Two Points of View on Slavery" and "Slavery around the World")

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**Sample Texts and Materials/Resources**

- Publications:
  - American: A History of Our Nation - Prentice Hall
  - Cobblestone Magazine, January 2002, Vol. 23
    - “A Balancing Act, The Missouri Compromise”
    - “Bleeding Kansas”
    - “The Rise and Fall of Political Parties”
    - “An Escaped Slave is Still a Slave, The Fugitive Slave Laws”
  - Magazine of History, January 2004
  - “Our Peculiar Institution” - M. J. Hesse
  - “Slavery must be abolished” - Janet Morris
- Video:
  - “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”
  - “America, The Story of Us”
  - Schlessinger: “Causes of the Civil War”
- Causes of the Civil War, by Susan Buckley (PRIME Social Studies)  
Liberty for All?, by Joy Hakim