

# Northwest History Consortium

## West Virginia: To Be or Not to Be

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10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

### National Standard

#### **Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877) / Standards 1 and 2**

*Standard 1A: The student understands how the North and South differed and how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.*

*Standard 2A: The student understands how the resources of the Union and Confederacy affected the course of the war.*

### **BACKGROUND**

This PBL looks at the reasons for secession and the causes of the Civil War.

The students are being asked to investigate the case of the formation of West Virginia in 1863. This PBL could also be expanded or modified to look at the Constitutionality of the formation of West Virginia (and possibly some of Lincoln's other actions during the war) or a comparison of the literature and propaganda around the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, especially in the South.

The goal of this PBL is for students to investigate the reasons for or against seceding from the Union by looking at the case of the formation of the State of West Virginia in 1863.

### **SCENARIO**

It is June 11, 1861, and you have all been selected as delegates to the Second Wheeling Convention. You represent farmers who are struggling to eke out a living in the Appalachian hills near Charleston, Virginia. Although their focus is the well-being of their family, they are also beginning to be concerned about the news that they hear about the rest of their country. With Lincoln's election, the firing on Fort Sumter, and the secession of South Carolina and the other southern states, including Virginia, they begin to pay more attention to what is going on around them.

You personally do not have slaves and neither do many of the farmers you represent. And those who have slaves are only able to support one or two. Although Virginia allows for slavery, and much of the state functions because of slavery, the farms in your areas are not large enough and the soil not rich enough to merit slaves.

You sympathize with reasons presented in the Ordinance of Secession and the feelings of many Virginians in regard to their treatment by Washington; however, you are unsure if secession is the correct step to take at this time. As you meet with your fellow delegates from the western portion of Virginia, many of you recall the struggle that General Lee had just a few months ago and begin to understand his crisis of identity and the decision that he was forced to make.

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#### TASK

As delegates, you have been asked to determine whether or not to form an independent State of West Virginia, separate from Virginia and to remain in the Union. The time has come for you to declare where you stand.

In order to do this, you, as a group of delegates, need to draft a single letter or broadside to your communities stating your decision at the Convention with at least six viable, detailed reasons (backed by specific evidence) as to why you made that decision. These reasons should also show why your community should support your position.

#### RESOURCES

##### NOT LIMITED TO BUT CAN INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

##### Internet

"A State of Convenience: The Creation of West Virginia." 2010. West Virginia Division of Culture and History: West Virginia Archives and History. Charleston, WV. 14 July 2009 <<http://www.wvculture.org/History/statehood/statehood.html>>.

"Constitution of the Confederate States of America (1861)." University of Groningen. 1994-2010. Groningen, NL. 16 July 2009 <<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1851-1875/constitution/css.htm>>.

Henry, Patrick. "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death." 23 Mar. 1775. The University of Oklahoma (College of Law). ©2009. Norman, OK. 14 July 2009 <<http://www.law.ou.edu/ushistory/henry.shtml>>.

Lincoln, Abraham. "Emancipation Proclamation; January 1, 1863." Yale University (Lillian Goldman Law Library). ©2008. New Haven, CT. 14 July 2009 <[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/emancipa.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/emancipa.asp)>.

Lincoln, Abraham. "Gettysburg Address." Nov. 1863. University of Groningen. 1994-2010. Groningen, NL. 14 July 2009 <<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/al16/speeches/gettys.htm>>.

Lincoln, Abraham. "Special Session Message, July 4, 1861" from *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, vol. 7*, ed. James D. Richardson (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897). Internet Modern History Sourcebook. © Paul Halsall, July 1998. Bronx, NY. 14 July 2009 <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1861lincoln-special.html>>.

"Ordinances of Secession" 1861 from *Official Records, Ser. IV*, (Washington). Constitution Society. ©1994 – 2010. Austin, TX. 14 July 2009 <[http://www.constitution.org/csa/ordinances\\_secession.htm](http://www.constitution.org/csa/ordinances_secession.htm)>.

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Sifakis, Stewart. "Who Was Who in the Civil War: Robert Edward Lee (1807 -1870)." 11 Nov. 2006. Shotgun's Home of the American Civil War.1997 – 2010.. Herndon, VA. 14 July 2009 <<http://www.civilwarhome.com/leebio.htm>>.

"The Virginia Declaration of Rights" 15 May 1775 from *The Federal and State Constitutions: Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America, vol. VII*, ed. F. N. Thorpe (Washington, 1909). Constitution Society. ©1994 – 2010. Austin, TX. 14 July 2009 <[http://www.constitution.org/bcp/virg\\_dor.htm#001](http://www.constitution.org/bcp/virg_dor.htm#001)>.

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### ASSESSMENT

Your letter or broadside will be evaluated based on the following rubric:

### Letter/Broadside Rubric

Category	2	4	6	8
<b>Central Question or Problem</b>	Identifies a relevant issue or sub-problem in the scenario	States a central question or problem in the scenario	States a clear and accurate central question or problem with reasons for its importance	Gives other possible questions or problems and tells why this is the central question or problem
<b>Position or Decision</b>	Focuses on the central issue in the scenario	Answers the question or addresses the problem	Explains why this decision is better than other possible choices	Describes the process of making the decision
<b>Supporting Argument</b>	Explains the decision with reasons	Provides two or more logical reasons	Provides two or more reasons that, taken together, logically lead to the position	Provides at least one counter-reason to the position
<b>Evidence Sources</b>	Gives sources to explain the decision	Gives two or more reliable (good) sources	Gives sources to support the main parts of the argument	Gives sources that do not support the decision and tells why they were not accepted
<b>Argument</b>	Uses vocabulary that can be understood by the audience	Gives the question, decision, argument and evidence with sources	Explains why the ideas should be important to this audience	Uses a story, or other "hook" to get the audience interested
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	Repetitious; fragments and run-ons are frequent	Variety is present; some errors are evident	Complete and correct	Complete; varied; interesting
<b>Punctuation/ Spelling</b>	Block meaning	Careless or distracting	Errors present but do not interfere with meaning	Error-free
<b>Voice</b>	Unclear	Mechanical, formulaic	Clear and authentic	Distinctive; appropriate to task and audience

You must also include a Works Cited page in MLA format and use proper MLA citations in your letter or broadside.

Quick-Write: Why did southern states secede, and why might they have remained in the union?

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#### REFERENCES/CITATIONS

“History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States.” UCLA National Center for History in the Schools. 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 6 April 2010 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5>>.

Vis, Alyssa. “Letter/Broadside Rubric.” NWESD Organization. 2008. Anacortes, WA. 6 April 2010 <[http://www.nwesdorg/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/5.1-2\\_Secession.WestVirginia.Vis.10-12.pdf](http://www.nwesdorg/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/5.1-2_Secession.WestVirginia.Vis.10-12.pdf)>.

Vis, Alyssa. “West Virginia: To Be or Not to Be.” NWESD Organization. 2008. Anacortes, WA. 6 April 2010 <[http://www.nwesdorg/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/5.1-2\\_Secession.WestVirginia.Vis.10-12.pdf](http://www.nwesdorg/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/5.1-2_Secession.WestVirginia.Vis.10-12.pdf)>.