

Document Based Question

This question is based on the accompanying documents (1-10). The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of the documents have been edited for the purposes of this question. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source for each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

Historical Context:

No event affected the United States and its people more significantly than the secession of eleven Southern states and the Civil War that followed. Four years of bloody warfare, over one-half million deaths, untold misery and destruction, and long-lasting racial and sectional hatreds resulted. Even today, over one and a half centuries later, America is still marked—politically, economically, and socially—by these awful events.

Task: Using information from the documents and your knowledge of United States history and government, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay, which you will be asked to:

- What were the social, political and/or economic causes which led the Southern states to secede from the Union in 1860 and 1861?

In developing your answers to Part III, be sure to keep these general definitions in mind:

- a) describe means “to illustrate something in words or tell about it”
- b) explain means “to make plain or understandable; to give reasons for or causes of; to show the logical development or relationships of”
- c) discuss means “to make observations about something using facts, reasoning, and argument; to present in some detail”

Part A

Short-Answer Questions

Directions: Analyze the documents and answer the short-answer questions that follow each document in the space provided.

Document 1

To you, generous, noble-minded men and women, of the South,—you, whose virtue, and generosity and purity of character.... Have you not, in your own secret souls, in your own private conversations, felt that there are woes and evils, in this accursed system, far beyond what are here shadowed, or can be shadowed? Can it be otherwise? Is man ever a creature to be trusted with wholly irresponsible power? And does not the slave system, by denying the slave all legal right of testimony, make every individual owner an irresponsible despot? Can anybody fail to make the inference what the practical result will be? ...Are the honorable, the just, the high-minded and compassionate, the majority anywhere in this world?

Source: Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852

1. According to the document, why is slavery wrong?
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Document 2

...the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution. The right to traffic in it, like an ordinary article of merchandise and property, was guaranteed...the Government...is pledged to protect it in all future time...

Source: Chief Justice Roger Taney, majority opinion *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 1857

2. Based on the document, to what authority did Chief Justice Taney point in justifying the continued existence of Southern Slavery?
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Document 3

The non-slaveholder of the South preserves the status of the white man, and is not regarded as an inferior or a dependent. He is not told that the Declaration of Independence, when it says that all men are born free and equal refers to the negro equally with himself..[Unlike] The poor white laborer [in] the North [who] is at the bottom of the social ladder...his brother here [in the South] has [risen] several steps and can look down upon those who are beneath him...

Source: J.D.B. DeBow, editor of *DeBow's Review*, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1860

3. Based on this document, how did poor, non-slaveholding Southern whites benefit from the continued existence of slavery?
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Document 4

...we deny the authority of Congress, of territorial legislature, or of any individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any territory of the United States.

Source: Republican Party Platform, 1860

[Speaking of any territory of the United States]...all citizens of the United States have an equal right to settle with their property in the Territory without their rights, either of person, or property being...impaired...

Source: Southern Democratic Party Platform, 1860

4. Based on these documents, over what issue did the Southern Democratic and the Republican parties disagree?
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Document 5

[The Northerners] hate us now, and they teach their children in their schools and churches to hate our children...The John Brown raid, the burning of Texas, the stealthy tread of abolitionists among us, tell the tale...The North is accumulating power, and it means to use that power to emancipate your slaves. When that is done, no pen can describe...the horrors that will overspread this country...Disunion is a fearful thing, but emancipation is worse. Better leave the Union in the open face of day, than be lighted from it at midnight by the [arsonist's] torch.

Source: Albert Gallatin Brown, Mississippi politician, September 26, 1860

5. According to Albert Gallatin, state two reasons why he advocated secession.
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Document 6

...there is much, if not more, of the rampant spirit of disunion in the Black Republican ranks of the North, as there is in the South...[These Republicans] claim the rights to make a code of laws for the South, not only in the States, but in the Territories, which shall control or prohibit slavery...If Lincoln were President...the Union would be endangered from that hour.

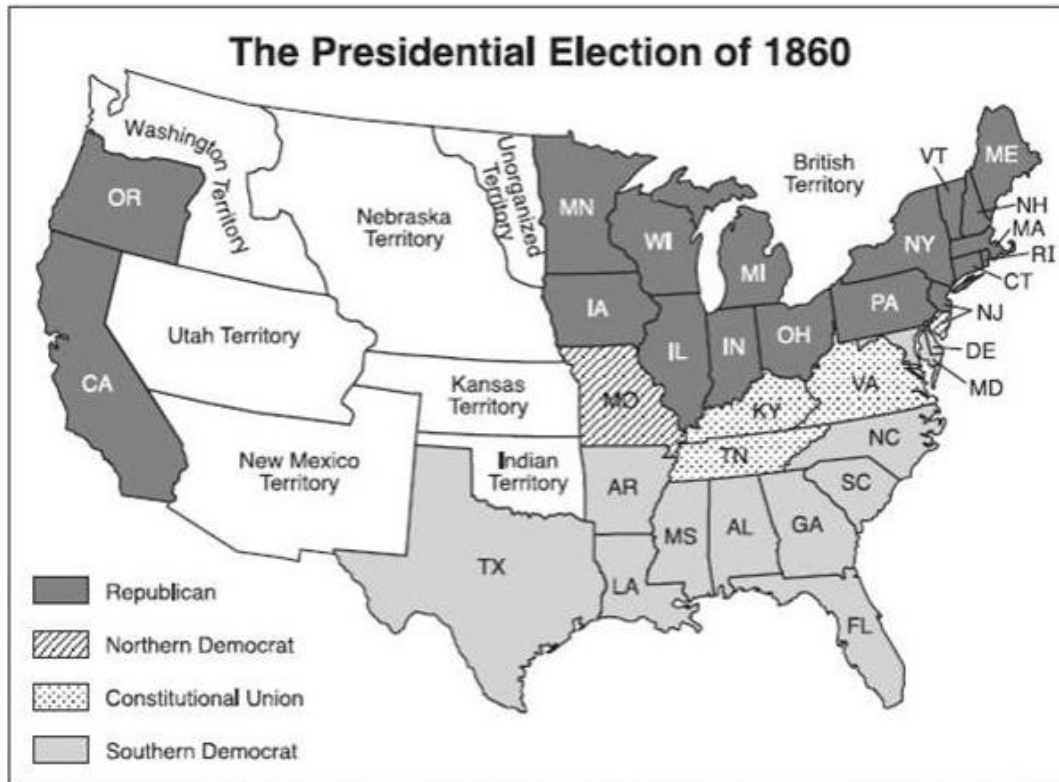
Source: Editorial endorsing Stephen Douglas for president, *Pittsburgh Press*, October 10, 1860

6. Based on this document, why do they believe Lincoln's election will cause disunion?
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Document 7

Results of the 1860 Election

Candidate	Popular Vote	Electoral Vote
Lincoln (Republican)	1,865,600	180
Douglas (Democrat)	1,382,700	12
Breckinridge (Democrat)	848,350	72
Bell (Constitutional Union)	592,900	39



Source: James West Davidson et al., *The American Nation*, Prentice Hall (adapted)

7. Based on these documents, from which region did most of Lincoln's support come?

Document 8

November 7, 1860. Lincoln is elected. Hooray...The next ten days will be a critical time. If no Southern state commit itself to treason within a fortnight [two week period] or so, the urgent danger will be past.

November 10...News from the South continues to be menacing and uncomfortable.

November 12. No material change in the complexion of Southern news. Unless writers of telegraph items lie loudly, secession is inevitable.

November 15...We are generally reconciling ourselves to the prospect of secession by South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama,...Florida, and perhaps Mississippi, too.

November 29. Thanksgiving Day...There's a bad prospect for both sections of the country. Southern ruffianism and brutality are very bad, but the selfishness, baseness, and corruption of the North are no good at all. Universal suffrage...[is] at the root of our troubles...[the] nucleus [of the crisis] was the abolition handful that...till about 1850, was among the more insignificant of our isms. Our feeling at the North till that time was not hostility to slavery, but indifference to it, and reluctance to discuss it...But the clamor of the South about the admission of California ten years ago introduced the question of slavery...That controversy taught us that the two systems could not co-exist in the same territory. It opened our eyes to the fact that there were two hostile elements in the country, and that if we allowed slaves to enter any territorial acquisition, our own free labor must be excluded from it. The question was unfortunate for our peace. But we might have forgotten it had not S.A. Douglas undertaken to get Southern votes by repealing the Missouri Compromise. That was the final blow.

Source: George Templeton Strong, diary entries

8. State two of the major factors, according to George Templeton Strong, that were about to split the nation in the autumn of 1860.
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Document 9

A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States whose opinions and purposes are hostile to Slavery...he had declared that the "Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free." And that the public mind must rest in the belief that Slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

Source: South Carolina ordinance of secession, unanimously approved, December 20, 1860

9. Based on this document, what reason did the state of South Carolina give for seceding from the Union?
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Document 10

The Election was not the Cause [of secession] it was but the last feather which you know breaks the Camel's back. Sectional hostility manifested in hostile legislation by states and raids of organized bodies sustained by Contributions...of northern Society furnish to us sufficient cause...

Source: Jefferson Davis, letter to George Lunt, January 17, 1861

10. Based on this document, what did Jefferson Davis say caused the South to secede?
