

Primary Source Set

Abolition Views Sorting

Guiding Question

- What did Americans think about slavery in the nineteenth century?

Objectives

- ☐ I can analyze primary sources to identify different perspectives on slavery in the nineteenth century.
- ☐ I can sort individuals and groups into categories based on their stance toward abolition or slavery.

Directions: Cut out the sort cards. Then use the primary sources to determine where they should be situated on your T-chart.

Sort Cards

William Lloyd Garrison	U.S. Supreme Court
American Anti-Slavery Society	George Fitzhugh
Chief Justice Roger Taney	John Quincy Adams
Dred Scott	John C. Calhoun



Primary Sources

Background Information

The American Anti-Slavery Society, founded in 1833, called for the immediate and uncompensated emancipation of all enslaved persons. The group's main organizer and author of its Declaration of Sentiments, William Lloyd Garrison, was well-known as one of the most uncompromising of North American abolitionists. His anti-slavery journal, "The Liberator," used fiery rhetoric to condemn slavery.

William Lloyd Garrison, American Anti-Slavery Society Declaration of Sentiments, 1833

Source: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/declaration-of-the-national-anti-slavery-convention/>

Text	Vocabulary and Context
More than fifty-seven years have elapsed , since a band of patriots convened in this place , to devise measures for the deliverance of this country from a foreign yoke. The corner-stone upon which they founded the Temple of Freedom was broadly this – “that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY , and the pursuit of happiness.”	elapsed -passed this place... - Garrison is referring to the Declaration of Independence. Temple of Freedom - Garrison states America is a holy place like a temple with the words of the Declaration of Independence being its cornerstone, or foundation. LIBERTY - Garrison has capitalized this word to make the point that those enslaved do not have liberty.
At the sound of their trumpet-call, three millions of people rose up as from the sleep of death, and rushed to the strife of blood ; deeming it more glorious to die instantly as freemen, than desirable to live one hour as slaves. They were few in number – poor in resources; but the honest conviction that Truth, Justice and Right were on their side, made them invincible. . .	rushed to the strife of blood - Garrison is referring here to the soldiers who fought in the American Revolution.

... Their grievances, great as they were, were **trifling** in comparison with the wrongs and sufferings **of those for whom we plead**. Our fathers were never slaves – never bought and sold like cattle – never shut out from the light of knowledge and religion – never subjected to the lash of brutal taskmasters.

trifling- small and insignificant

of those for whom we plead- Garrison is referring to those enslaved in the United States.

Background Information

As the lucrative cotton economy and dependence on slave labor expanded in the lower South, abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison grew louder in their attacks on slavery and southern culture. In response, several white southerners produced a new defense of slavery. In his 1837 Speech on Abolition Petitions, John C. Calhoun, then a U.S. senator for South Carolina, defended the institution of slavery.

John C. Calhoun, Speech on Abolition Petitions, 1837

Source: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/speech-on-abolition-petitions/>

Text	Vocabulary and Context
Abolition and the Union cannot coexist ... We of the South will not, cannot, surrender our institutions . To maintain the existing relations between the two races, inhabiting that section of the Union, is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both. It cannot be subverted without drenching the country in blood, and extirpating one or the other of the races.	institutions- referring to the institution of slavery indispensable- cannot be thrown away subverted- undermine or overthrow an established system extirpating- removing or exiling

Be it good or bad, [slavery] has grown up with our society and institutions, and is so interwoven with them that to destroy it would be to destroy us as a people. But let me not be understood as admitting, even by implication, that the existing relations between the two races in the slaveholding states is an evil: far otherwise; I hold it to be a good, as it has thus far proved itself to be to both...	
I appeal to facts. Never before has the black race of central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually . . .	civilized- developed in terms of society or culture
I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding states between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good. . .	intellectual- intelligence or brainpower, a fake science made some people believe that different races had different intellectual abilities in this time period.

Background Information

In June 1839, dozens of Africans in chains destined for slavery on Cuba's plantations successfully broke free and took control of the ship, named the *Amistad*. They intended to sail back to Africa, but the remaining Spanish crew secretly altered course and the ship arrived in the United States. The *Amistad* was seized by the U.S. Navy and the courts were asked to determine the fate of the ship and the people on board. Spain demanded the return of the ship and the enslaved people, but wealthy U.S. abolitionists organized a legal team led by John Quincy Adams to defend the Africans in their bid for freedom. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled 7-1 in the Africans' favor.

John Quincy Adams' Arguments in *United States v. The Amistad* (1841)

Source: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/40/518/>

Text	Vocabulary and Context
It is plain beyond controversy, if we examine the evidence, that these negroes never were the lawful slaves of Ruiz or Montez or of any other Spanish subjects . They are natives of Africa, and were kidnapped there, and were unlawfully transported to Cuba in violation of the laws and treaties of Spain and the most solemn edicts and declarations of that government.	John Quincy Adams is speaking to the Supreme Court in this quote. Ruiz or Montez or of any other Spanish subjects- The Africans on board the <i>Amistad</i> were not Spanish citizens solemn edicts- official laws
By those laws and treaties and edicts, the African slave trade is utterly abolished ; the dealing in that trade is deemed a heinous crime; and the negroes thereby introduced into the dominions of Spain are declared to be free.	utterly abolished- completely illegal heinous- extremely bad, evil

Background Information

Seventeen years after John C. Calhoun referred to slavery as "a positive good," the Virginian George Fitzhugh defended slavery by comparing it with the free labor system of the North. Fitzhugh contrasted what he believed was the paternalistic benevolence of slavery and southern culture favorably with that of free laborers working for low wages in dangerous northern factories.

George Fitzhugh, *Speech on Abolition Petitions, 1837*(1841)

Source: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/sociology-for-the-south-or-the-failure-of-free-society/>

Text	Vocabulary and Context
... There is no rivalry, no competition to get employment among slaves, as among free laborers. Nor is there a war between master and slave... His feeling for his slave never permits him to stint him in old age. The slaves are all well fed, well clad, have plenty of fuel, and are happy. They have no dread of the future – no fear of want.	as among free laborers- the implication here is that freedom in the north is bad for all workers, white and Black, because they have to make their own way. stint- limit or restrict.
A state of dependence is the only condition in which reciprocal affection can exist among human beings – the only situation in which the war of competition ceases, and peace, amity and good will arise. A state of independence always begets more ... of jealous rivalry and hostility.	dependence- reliance or control by someone else. For example, children are dependent on their parents. amity- friendship rivalry and hostility- competition and violence
A man loves his children because they are weak, helpless and dependent; ... slaves are always dependent, never the rivals of their master. Hence... we never saw one who did not like his slaves, and rarely a slave who was not devoted to his master ...	Hence- so devoted- lovingly loyal
The institution of slavery gives full development and full play to the affections. Free society chills, stints and eradicates them. In a homely way the farm will support all, and we are not in a hurry to send our children into the world, to push their way and make their fortunes. ... We are better husbands, better fathers, better friends, and better neighbors than our Northern brethren...	affections- warmth of relationship, liking eradicates- erases homely- home like, cozy than our Northern brethren- the people of the north, who were known for being against slavery.

Background Information

The *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) case was brought to the Supreme Court just four years before the start of the Civil War. Dred Scott was an enslaved man in Missouri who moved with his master to the free state of Illinois and the free federal territory of Wisconsin. Upon moving back to Missouri, Scott sued his master for his freedom, claiming that he became free when they moved to the northern free state and territory.

The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case because the justices hoped it would settle political tensions over slavery. Their 7-2 ruling established two things: first, African Americans were not citizens and had no right to sue in court; and second, Congress did not have the constitutional authority to ban slavery from the territories. The opinion of the court was written by Chief Justice Roger Taney, a southern supporter. Like John C. Calhoun and other southern defenders of slavery, Taney read the Declaration of Independence as an affirmation of the natural rights of whites only, rather than a universal statement of the inherent rights of all humans.

Chief Justice Roger Taney, *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1856)

Source: <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/60/393/>

Text	Vocabulary and Context
Yet the men who framed [the Declaration of Independence] were great men...They perfectly understood the meaning of the language they used, and how it would be understood by others, and they knew that it would not in any part of the civilized world be supposed to embrace the negro race, which, by common consent, had been excluded from civilized Governments and the family of nations, and doomed to slavery.	
They spoke and acted according to the then established doctrines and principles, and in the ordinary language of the day, and no one misunderstood them. The unhappy black race were separated from the white by indelible marks, and laws long before established, and were never thought of or spoken of except as property, and when the claims of the owner or the profit of the trader were supposed to need protection.	