

# THE BOISTEROUS SEA OF LIBERTY

## Educator's Guide

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## INTRODUCTION

The documents in *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* offer an extraordinary window onto our ancestors' values, perceptions, aspirations, anxieties, and fears. The selections focus on the ways in which history was perceived and understood. They lay bare Americans' basic beliefs, ideals, and assumptions. By emphasizing perception and meaning, this volume reflects the most recent currents in historical scholarship.

As important as what happened in the past are what people thought was happening--and what people argued over and what they believed was worth fighting for.

*The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* gives students a chance to do history by allowing them to interpret and analyze the primary sources out of which we reconstruct the past. Out of personal letters, newspapers, speeches, diaries, and other documents, we must struggle to make sense of an earlier world that was just as complicated and diverse as our society today.

Spanning the entire period from the European discovery of the New World through the Civil War, this collection provides comprehensive coverage of all the major issues that high school teachers and college professors address in survey American history classes. Balancing breadth with depth, the volume allows instructors to pursue subjects of high student interest--such as Nat Turner's Rebellion, the Amistad Affair, and the attack on Fort Sumter--intensively. Unlike many anthologies that contain only brief snippets from primary sources and that illustrate issues with a single source, *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* contains a variety of documents of sufficient length to suggest alternate points of view and the development of pivotal ideas.

This volume begins with early colonization, showing how the European settlement and development of the New World depended on the introduction of chattel slavery and on a massive decline in Indian populations--developments which carried far-reaching consequences for the very meaning of America. After comparing and contrasting the societies that developed in British North America and on-going struggles with France and its Indian allies, the volume then turns to the escalating conflict over Britain's efforts to regulate and control the colonial economy, culminating in the Revolutionary War itself.

After examining the construction of the new nation's basic institutions, including the framing of the Constitution and the ratification of the Bill of Rights, the book explores the centrality of the slavery issue in the development of domestic policy and foreign affairs during the 1780s and 1790s. It pays particular attention to the question of whether there was a period of fluidity and missed opportunities in the aftermath of the Revolution during which Americans might have addressed the problem of slavery in a fundamental way. In addition, the volume analyzes the far-reaching political implications of the Haitian Revolution as well as the little-known ways that the slavery issue entered into the commercial warfare with Britain that led to the War of 1812.

The heart of the book focuses on the antebellum and Civil War eras. Among other topics, the book analyzes reformers' attempts to remove the underlying sources of inequality in American society; missionaries' efforts to assimilate and "civilize" Indians; and the paradox that the increasing opportunities available to antebellum whites coincided with the restriction of opportunities for African Americans.

The volume concludes with the nation's crucial defining event, the Civil War. The volume examines the fears that contributed to the conflict; the Union's evolving war aims; issues involving black enlistment and participation in the war effort; and the mounting debate in the North over slave emancipation and civil rights for African Americans.

*The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* contains 366 documents accompanied by introductions and running commentary designed to illuminate the central issues in early American history. Several key themes recur through the volume. One thread that cuts across the sources is the centrality of race in American history, politics, and culture. Few Americans realize that four times as many Africans as Europeans arrived in the New World before 1820. Few know that during the Revolution both the British and the Patriots viewed slaves as a potential insurrectionary force. Similarly, few are aware of the critical role that the slavery issue played in the emergence of the Federalist and Republican parties in the 1790s or in the events leading up to the War of 1812.

A second key theme involves the development of modern conceptions of rights. In *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty*, students can see the emergence of the notion of inalienable rights rooted in the laws of nature; of minority rights, which deserved protection against abuses of power and the majority's will; and the most radical right of all, the right to revolution.

A third overarching theme is power: its meanings, institutionalization, and uses. The book, however, does not look at power exclusively from an anti-elitist or populist perspective. American history has been marked by repeated efforts to establish protections, checks, and safeguards against excessive power. In this volume, we will trace the invention of the people as a source of sovereign power; the growing power of public opinion; and, above all, the power of moral ideals.

Other critical themes that run through the volume include slavery--both as a social institution and, metaphorically, as the paradigm of social evil and the epitome of unlimited power and dehumanization; American exceptionalism or the degree to which America has escaped the dismal laws, cycles, and coercions of Old World history; and the Declaration of Independence as a sacred fount of democracy and a scriptural document that would inspire all kinds of reformers including early feminists, labor leaders, and abolitionists.

Finally, this book examines Americans' repeated attempts to come to terms with certain fundamental paradoxes and dilemmas, especially the enduring contradiction of slavery and liberty. Among other questions, this volume asks how an institution like slavery could be tolerated by people no less intelligent or moral than Americans today, and why it was that slavery achieved its greatest vitality in a country committed to freedom and equality of rights.

### Evaluating Historical Documents:

Like a detective, a historian must reconstruct past events out of various pieces of evidence. Historians typically rely on written documents--letters, diaries, memoirs, newspapers, and government reports.

Some of this evidence is reliable; other pieces of evidence are less trustworthy, but valuable nonetheless. Still other pieces of evidence are misleading or even fraudulent. Evaluating the value of evidence and interpreting its meaning is one of the most difficult tasks a historian faces.

Generally, historians consider "primary sources" to be the most reliable source of historical documentation. A primary source is an observer's first-hand account of a historical event. Yet, even primary sources raise difficult issues of assessment. It is important to know whether a document was written at the time an event took place or later; whether the document's author was involved in the event or was an "impartial" observer; and whether the author had ulterior motives for writing the document.

One of the basic skills that all students need to learn is how to interpret a historical document. After closely reading the document, the students must respond constructively and analytically to the ideas advanced in the text. It is useful for students to conceive of the process of interpreting a historical document in terms of a series of questions:

1. Who wrote the document? What assumptions guide the author's arguments?
2. When was the document composed? What other events occurred around the same time?
3. For what purposes was the document composed? What evidence does the document present to support its argument?
4. How reliable do you consider the document as a source of factual information?
5. What information does the document convey?
6. What is the document's historical significance?
7. How does this information compare with other sources, of greater or lesser reliability?

Teaching with primary sources is an exciting and innovative way to allow your students to do history. History is no longer simply a subject that students study; it becomes a mode of intellectual exploration. This guide is specially designed to help you make effective use of the primary source documents contained in *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty*. It also suggests a variety of classroom activities that bring the realities of American history to life.

#### TRANSCRIBING PRIMARY SOURCES

In reconstructing the past, historians rely primarily upon written documents, such as letters, diaries, and government records. Reading documents from an earlier period is often a very demanding difficult task. The ink may have faded, the handwriting style may be unfamiliar, and words may be spelled differently or irregularly.

Before your students read a transcription of a particular document, you might ask them to try to transcribe a handwritten letter by themselves. *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* contains many reproductions of original letters that will give students an opportunity to experience the challenge of reconstructing the words that past writers used.

#### READING MAPS

Maps are essential, if often overlooked, historical sources. Maps can offer students a visual representation of the location of events or the geography and topography of an area or the layout of a city. In addition, maps can illustrate earlier peoples' erroneous and incomplete picture of the world.

*The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* contains a number of reproductions of historical maps. Your students might compare these maps with their modern-day counterparts to see how they differ.

In order to show your students how difficult it is to draw an accurate map, you might also ask them to map their own city or state, and compare that to a published map.

#### WHAT IF?

History is full of fascinating "what ifs" and "what might have beens." Today, we refer to such speculations as "counterfactual history." It is always interesting to speculate how differently events might have worked out. This can be a very valuable task, as well, since it helps us to better understand why events worked out the way they did.

#### DEBATING THE ISSUES

History is an intellectual battleground as exciting as any that students might encounter. It allows us to debate critical issues, explore controversies, and make moral judgments. This section identifies some of the important and provocative questions raised by each period in American history.

#### MAKING ETHICAL JUDGMENTS

One cannot study history with encountering profound moral issues. This special section suggests ways to develop your students critical thinking skills by asking them to wrestle with complex, often troubling moral dilemmas.

#### INTERPRETING PRIMARY SOURCES

This section identifies the critical issues raised by the 366 documents contained in *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* and provides answers to pivotal questions.

## PART I. FIRST ENCOUNTERS

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The encounter that began in 1492 among the peoples of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres was one of the truly epochal events in world history. New foods reshaped the diets of people in both hemispheres. Global patterns of trade were overturned as crops grown in the New World, including tobacco, rice, and sugar, fed growing consumer markets in Europe. The New World environment was transformed as Europeans cleared vast tracts of forested land and introduced cattle, goats, horses, sheep, and swine as well as Old World weeds. The European discovery of the New World also resulted in the sharpest population decline in human history, as millions of Indians died from smallpox, measles, and other epidemic diseases. With the New World population decimated by disease, Europeans gradually introduced a new labor force: enslaved Africans. By the late eighteenth century, Europeans were debating whether Columbus's discovery of the New World had added to or subtracted from human happiness.

### DEBATING THE ISSUES

1. In the late eighteenth century, a French philosopher, Abbé Raynal offered a prize for the best answer to the question: "Has the discovery of America been beneficial or harmful to the human race?" How would you answer this question?
2. Why did European colonizers introduce slavery in their New World possessions?
3. What far-reaching changes did Columbus's voyages of discovery bring to the Americas? How would you evaluate Columbus and his legacy?

### WHAT IF?

How might American history have been different:

If Indians had greater resistance to Old World diseases?

If ocean currents had not favored shipping from Africa toward Brazil and the Caribbean?

### MAKING ETHICAL JUDGMENTS

How should we regard Bartolomé de las Casas--as an outspoken defender of Indians against harsh Spanish policies or as a man who helped open the way to slavery?

Las Casas delivered sermons and wrote books denouncing Spanish cruelty toward the Indians, founded towns of free Indians, and established Venezuela as a place where different races might live together in peace.

### ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

Many of Hollywood's most popular science fiction films--from *The Day the Earth Stood Still* to *Independence Day*--examine encounters with aliens. In 1492, a "close encounter of the 'third kind'" (physical contact) actually took place, as groups of people who had never known of each other's existence collided.

Before discussing the primary sources, it is useful to ask how students would react if they were to encounter a group of aliens. What would they want to know about these beings? Do they think that they could see these aliens in their true complexity?

Documents 1 and 2.

Christopher Columbus's letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain presents a view of the Indians that would have a lasting impact on the European mind. How does Columbus characterize the Taino Indians?

He describes these people as leading lives of freedom and innocence near the Biblical Garden of Eden.

What does the excerpt from Columbus's diary tell us about how he intended to treat the Taino Indians?

He says that these people can be easily subjugated and forced to adapt to European customs

Document 3.

Writing just twenty-four years after Columbus's first voyage of discovery, Sir Thomas More presented his vision of an ideal society, set in the New World, in a book entitled Utopia. What is life like in More's Utopia? Who does the work in More's perfect society?

In Utopia, all drudgery and labor is done by slaves.

Document 5.

Why does de Mercado condemn slavery?

He argues that a thousand acts of robbery and violence are committed in the course of carrying off Africans from their homeland.

## PART 2. EUROPEAN COLONIZATION NORTH OF MEXICO

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

For more than a century after Columbus's voyages, only Spain and Portugal established New World settlements. England did not establish its first enduring settlement in Jamestown, Virginia, until 1607; France did not found a settlement, in Quebec, until 1608. Early European migration to the New World took sharply contrasting forms. Compared to the Spanish, Portuguese, or the French, the English migration was larger and more gender balanced. Altogether, about 400,000 people migrated from England to the New World in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including many farmers, small merchants, and artisans. Outside of New England, most immigrants were indentured servants who agreed to serve a term of service in exchange for transportation across the Atlantic.

English settlement itself took a variety of forms. In New England, the economy was organized around small family farms and urban communities engaged in fishing, handicrafts, and Atlantic commerce. In the Chesapeake colonies of Maryland and Virginia, the economy was structured around larger farms and plantations, relying on indentured servants, and later slaves, to raise tobacco.

### DEBATING THE ISSUES

1. What factors led the English to colonize the North American mainland? What factors pushed certain people to leave England and what factors pulled them to the colonies?  
Envy of Spain's wealth and clashes with Spain over religion. Conditions in England that pushed people toward North America included poverty, overcrowding, and crime. People were pulled by desire to improve their way of life.
2. Why was the death rate so high in early Jamestown? Why do you think that Jamestown's population fell from 500 to 60 during the winter of 1609-1610?  
Because of disease, Indian attacks, and starvation.
3. What effects did demand for tobacco have on Virginia?  
It increased demand for field workers and the need for land, and therefore stimulated demand for slaves and provoked conflict with Indians.
4. Describe the steps by which slavery was introduced in Virginia and took hold.  
Students should discuss the declining availability of English servants and the significance of Bacon's Rebellion, which encouraged planters to shift away from white servants.
5. How was early Massachusetts similar to and different from Virginia?
6. What role did Squanto play in the Pilgrims' survival?  
He taught them how to adapt to their new environment and feed themselves

### WHAT IF?

How would American history have been different if:

1. Either the Spanish or the Indians had wiped out the Jamestown colonists during the Starving Time?
2. The original English settlement at Jamestown had failed just like the colony at Roanoke Island, North Carolina?

3. Opechancanough's attack on the Virginians in 1622 had succeeded or if the New England Indians had emerged victorious in King Philip's War?

#### READING MAPS

Locate Jamestown on a map. Why might the English colonists choose to locate a settlement here?

They thought it offered a good port and could be easily defended against Indian attacks. In fact, they got poor land and drinking water as well as mosquitoes and disease.

#### MAKING ETHICAL JUDGMENTS

How should Native Americans have acted toward the early English colonists? Should they have assisted them and taught them how to raise food? Or should they have tried to stop them from living nearby?

Was Opechancanough justified in ordering the Great Massacre of 1622? Was King Philip's war justified?

Were the English justified in colonizing lands already inhabited by Indians?

#### ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

The colonial period is truly this country's formative period. Many of this society's fundamental principles were planted in the colonial period--such as our commitment to freedom of religion, representative government, and liberty and equality. But the colonial period also left American society with less positive legacies, such as the institution of slavery and a long history of conflict with Indians.

#### Selections 1-2.

In 1584, Richard Hakluyt, a London lawyer, issued a call for English colonization in North America. According to Hakluyt, why shouldn't the New World belong exclusively to Spain? Why should England respect the Pope's decision to divide the New World between Spain and Portugal?

Hakluyt argues that the Pope had no right to give the New World to Spain and Portugal and that Spanish cruelty toward the Indians undercut any claim they might have.

According to Hakluyt, what benefits would England gain by colonizing the New World?

Hakluyt claims that England is overpopulated with loiters and idle vagabonds who might be put to work in the New World producing timber for ships' masts, planting sugar cane, maintaining silk worms, and pursuing many other profitable activities.

#### Document 5.

In 1622, Indians led by Opechancanough, Powhatan's successor, nearly succeeded in overrunning the colonists. What exactly took place? Why did the attack almost succeed? What consequences did the attack have upon English and Indian relations?

Edward Waterhouse maintains that the colonists never suspected an Indian attack. The attack resulted in the removal of all restraints on killing Indians.

#### Document 6.

In 1656 John Hammond, an English pamphleteer, described servitude in Virginia during the tobacco boom years. What was indentured servitude like, in his view?

Hammond argues that earlier in time, the servants' labor was almost perpetual and their food

allowance was small. Servants' suffered all the cruelty that tyranny could inflict. But Hammond claims that conditions had greatly improved.

Document 7.

During the 1660s, Virginia adopted a series of statutes formally recognizing slavery. Why do you think that it took Virginians over half a century to adopt a slave code? What was the purpose of these laws?

Earlier in Virginia's history, when the number of blacks in the colony was small, the status of Africans varied widely. But as the number of Africans grew and the economy began to rely more heavily on slavery, new statutes were adopted to denigrate blacks and distinguish black slaves from white indentured servants.

Document 11.

What does John Winthrop mean when he speaks of a covenant?

He refers to the idea that all societal relations rested on consent and mutual responsibilities.

What, according to Winthrop, will happen if people violate their covenant with God?

If the Puritans abide by the covenant, God would make them an example for the world; but if they broke the covenant the entire community would feel God's wrath.

Document 15.

The idea that prices should fluctuate according to the laws of supply is a relatively recent invention. In early seventeenth century New England, Puritans held to the idea that goods had a "just price." What modern capitalistic ideas did the Puritans reject?

That the marketplace should determine the price of goods; that merchants should strive to maximize their profits or that they should raise prices to make up for losses on other goods or that they should take advantage of the ignorance of others.

Documents 18-19.

How was the Salem witch scare related to the introduction of slavery into New England?

The first accused witch was an Indian slave from South America who had carried new ideas about the supernatural to New England.

Document 21.

During the seventeenth century, the notion spread that Englishmen had greater rights than people anywhere else in Europe. What, according to Henry Care, constituted English liberties?

That Englishmen were not subject to a ruler's arbitrary will, but rather were protected by rule of law.

## PART 3. A LAND OF CONTRASTS

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The most distinctive feature of colonial America was the diversity of its population, which was a product of the way that the colonies were originally settled. The earliest settlements were established by commercial companies, religious organizations, and individual entrepreneurs. In the mid-seventeenth century, the English government adopted a more systematic approach to colonization; it annexed New Netherlands and New Sweden and began to grant territory to specific persons called proprietors. Some proprietors projected utopian fantasies over the lands they were granted. Schemes to set up feudal manors and Georgia's attempt to ban the importation of hard liquor and slaves failed. To attract settlers, it proved necessary to guarantee religious freedom, offer land grants, and permit self-government through a representative assembly.

### DEBATING THE ISSUES

1. Why do you think that the Dutch, the English, and the French scrambled to establish overseas colonies and trading posts during the early seventeenth century?
2. Foreign travelers were more impressed by the differences among the colonists than their similarities. What linked them together? In what ways were the colonies and colonists diverse?  
Linking the colonists together was the absence of a titled aristocracy, widespread ownership of land, and religious diversity. The colonies were diverse in their economies, climate, and topography. The colonists were diverse ethnically, racially, religiously, and in the source of their livelihood.
3. During the colonial period, slavery could be found in every one of the 13 colonies. Why didn't slavery offend the colonists' sense of morality?  
In part because they lived in a society in which many people lived in situations of "unfreedom": as indentured servants, apprentices, household servants.
4. What were the English liberties that Americans kept demanding for themselves?  
Limits on the power of government and protection for individual liberties; certain basic political rights and freedoms, including the right to self-government, representative assemblies, and rule of law.

### WHAT IF?

How would American history have been different:

1. If there had been no Indians in North America?
2. If German settlers in the Middle Colonies had continued to speak only German?
3. If Indian peoples had uniformly supported the French?

### READING MAPS

Ask your students to look closely at the map on page 86. What is the picture of the various people supposed to illustrate? What can this picture tell us about the values and attitudes of the Dutch toward their colonial possessions?

The picture shows Indian peoples and African slaves providing various goods for the Dutch.

## MAKING ETHICAL JUDGMENTS

The Zenger case helped establish the principle of freedom of the press. Should there be limits to freedom of the press? Does the principle of freedom of the press mean that newspapers should be able to publish anything?

## INTERPRETING PRIMARY SOURCES

Document 1.

It is useful for students to know the difference between capitalism and mercantilism. Under capitalism, the production and pricing of goods largely takes place because of competition within a free market. Mercantilism, in contrast, seeks to increase a nation's wealth through strict government regulation of the economy. It usually involves the establishment of foreign trading monopolies and development of agriculture and manufactures. According to the mercantilist economist Thomas Mun, how can colonies contribute to the wealth of nations?

By reducing a nation's imports and encouraging shipping.

Documents 4-8.

In interactions between the English and neighboring Indian peoples, power was not only on one side. Throughout the colonial period, the English felt forced to deal with Indians as nations. Why, according to the English find it necessary to negotiate with Native Americas?

To establish military alliances against the France and to gain access to furs.

Document 10.

The idea of religious tolerance is a relatively recent historical development. As the example of the Quakers illustrates, even in colonial America religious intolerance existed. A key question that your students might want to ponder is how religious conflict eventually grows into greater religious tolerance in the colonies. This selection by William Penn, the Quaker leader, points to a possible answer. On what grounds does Penn reject the idea of religious uniformity?

He argues that the quest for religious uniformity increases religious dissent and discredits Protestantism.

Document 12.

How is the founding of Georgia an example of a noble ideal that was overcome by human nature?

James Ogelthorpe had a utopian vision of Georgia as a haven for English debtors and persecuted European Protestants. A rational plan for a good and orderly society was worked out on paper, but the realities of human weakness, greed, rivalry, and conflict with the Indians prevented it from working out in practice.

Document 13.

Two contradictory trends were at work in colonial America. On the one hand, there was a growth of wealthy regional elites that aped English manners and fashions. On the other hand, there were growing claims of English liberties against all forms of tyranny and subservience and mounting challenges to social deference.

How does the legal case involving Governor Joseph Dudley and Thomas Trowbridge illustrate both of these trends?

Two cart men refuse to show deference to the Massachusetts governor and are charged with

insubordination. This case limited the authority of public officials.

Document 15.

Ask students to define the word "redemptioner." What does Mittelberger's account tell us about the plight of German redemptioners, forced to sell themselves or their children into servitude in order to pay for their passage to the New World?

Mittelberger describes the sale of human beings in Philadelphia. In this case, the people who were sold were not Africans, but Germans.

Document 16.

Colonial Americans were very familiar with a variety of forms of unfree labor. Many youths, like Javin Toby, served a term of years as servants or apprentices, which gave a highly charged meaning to such words as liberty, freedom and tyranny. You might ask your students how long Toby's indenture was supposed to last and what restrictions he was supposed to obey.

Document 17.

The trial of Peter Zenger for seditious libel is a landmark in the history of freedom of the press. What are some of the issues raised by the Zenger case?

One of the key issues raised by the case involves the freedom of the press to print truthful criticisms of a public official. The jury ruled that truth is not libelous.

What does the article from Zenger's Weekly Journal in 1733 tell us about popular attitudes?

That the colonists considered themselves English citizens with the rights and liberties guaranteed by English law and custom. The articles underscore the popular suspicion of arbitrary and unchecked power.

Document 19.

One of the greatest challenges that historians face is trying to determine what actually happened in the face of contradictory or ambiguous evidence. Even today, no one knows for sure whether there was a concerted plan among slaves in New York in 1741 to burn down the city. What do your students think: Was there a conspiracy to commit arson, or did civic official exaggerate the threat? Did the fear of a Spanish invasion and severe food shortages lead New Yorkers to overreact to isolated fires?

Document 20.

Why does Benjamin Franklin believe that the American population is growing much faster than Europe's?

In contrast to Europe, which was fully settled, an abundance of land in America meant that even a laborer could establish a farm, marry at an early age, and have more children than his European counterpart.

How accurate do your students find Franklin's argument?

On what grounds does Franklin criticize the institution of slavery and foreign immigration?

He contends that slavery is inefficient because slaves lack incentives to work hard and he criticizes foreign immigration because he wants a homogeneous population.

## PART 4. THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The culmination of more than half a century of conflict between Britain and France over North America, the French and Indian War (known in Europe as the Seven Years' War) freed the colonists from the needs for British protection against the French. Indirectly, the war gave a new impetus to antislavery thought.

### DEBATING THE ISSUES

Most historical events seem inevitable in hindsight. It seems unimaginable, in retrospect, that Nazi Germany could have won World War II or that the Confederacy might have won the Civil War. Yet, at the time, the outcome of these conflicts seemed wholly uncertain. One of the greatest challenges confronting teachers is to give students a sense of historical contingency--a recognition that events did not have to work out the way they did.

In retrospect, the British victory in the Seven Years' War was one of the truly pivotal events in American history. Not only did the war give Britain all French lands in Canada and east of the Mississippi River (with the exception of two small islands south of Newfoundland), it also set in motion a train of events that culminated in the American Revolution.

Yet, at the time that the Seven Years' War began, no one could be certain of British victory. The great nineteenth-century American historian Francis Parkman argued that a British victory over the French in the Seven Years' War was anything but a foregone conclusion. Despite the fact that the colonists' population was far greater than that of the French settlers in Canada, Parkman argued that the British colonial system suffered from severe weaknesses, including a lack of centralized authority and bitter jealousies among the colonists.

1. Imagine you are a minister in the British government in 1759. Explain why it is worthwhile for Britain to fight on behalf of the American colonies.
2. What factors would have influenced the decision of Indians to fight with either the French or the British?
3. "Wartime victories inevitably cause new problems." Does the Seven Years' War support this statement? Explain.  
By eliminating the French threat, Britain's victory in the Seven Years' War made the colonists less dependent on British military aid. In addition, by creating a huge debt, the war encouraged British determination that colonists should pay the cost of their own defense.
4. At the end of the Seven Years' War Britain had the opportunity to take possession either of Canada or the Caribbean island of Guadaloupe. Why might Britain have given serious consideration to taking the Caribbean island over Canada?  
In the mid-eighteenth century, the sugar-producing slave colonies of the West Indies were still the most profitable area in the New World.
5. What is the significance of the Seven Years' War for the colonists and for Native Americans?  
For the colonists, the war planted the seeds of future conflicts over western settlement and repayment of war debts. As a result of the British victory, Indians could no longer play the British and French against one another. The colonists' encroachment on Indian land provoked frontier wars and retaliation in the form of Pontiac's uprising.

### WHAT IF?

How would American history have been different:

1. If the Seven Years' War, like the early conflicts between Britain and France, had ended in a draw?
2. If, at the end of the war, Britain had elected to take the Caribbean island of Guadaloupe instead of Canada?

#### READING MAPS

Compare and contrast the political landscape in 1759 and 1763.

Draw a large outline map of the American colonies around 1759, the eve of the Seven Years' War. After students read the excerpt from the *Maryland Gazette* on pages 126-128 of *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty*, have them illustrate the map with symbols that reflect the distinct economies of each of the colonies.

#### INTERPRETING PRIMARY SOURCES

John Adams traced the roots of the Revolution to the French and Indian War. Britain's victory forever changed the balance of power in North America. Native Americans could no longer play the French and British against each other. The war robbed Britain of powerful diplomatic leverage against the colonists. With France swept from the continent, the colonists had little need for British protection against a foreign enemy.

##### Document 1.

What does the article reprinted from the *Maryland Gazette* tell us about the diversity and economic potential of the American colonies?

The article expresses fear that the French will easily overrun the colonies because they are disunited. Were the British right to regard the colonists as fragmented and disunited?

##### Document 2.

Robert Moses offers a graphic first-hand account of the violence of war during the mid-eighteenth century. How does warfare then differ from the highly mechanized warfare of the late twentieth century?

Much of the fighting involved cutlasses, hatchets, and bayonets at close quarters; war was not yet depersonalized.

##### Document 5.

The Seven Years' War ignited the first collective protests against slavery in history. The Quaker John Woolman played a critical role in encouraging antislavery sentiment. Why was he opposed to slavery?

His antislavery beliefs were rooted in religion, especially the biblical precept that "God is no respecter of persons." He also argues that slaveholders do not respect slave marriages and fail to provide slaves with adequate clothing.

What rationalizations did the people Woolman met during his travels in the South use to justify slavery?

The belief that life was wretched in Africa and the so-called Biblical curse of Cain.

## PART 5. THE AGE OF REVOLUTION, 1765-1825

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

During the 1760s and 1770s many colonists began to conceive of America as a truly "republican" society--one that emphasized personal independence, public virtue, and a suspicion of concentrated power as essential ingredients of a free society. They conceived of America as a society inhabited by people whom governed themselves and enjoyed personal rights and liberties. A growing number of colonists contrasted their society with Britain's political corruption and bloated governmental bureaucracy.

The American Revolution was not simply the result of British political missteps; it was also a product of the way that colonists interpreted British actions. When Britain began to tax Americans, regulate their trade, station troops in their midst, and deny colonists the right to expand westward, many colonists viewed these events through an ideological prism that had been shaped by English thinkers who had warned about the dangers posed by a standing army, the evils of public debt, and government officials lusting after power.

The Revolution's success was not preordained. France's entry into the conflict in 1778 (followed by Spain in 1779 and the Netherlands in 1780) significantly aided the American struggle for independence by transforming the Revolution into a global war.

### DEBATING THE ISSUES

Few topics in American history arouse more heated controversy than the causes of the American Revolution. Some historians trace the causes of the Revolution to British high-handedness: to Britain's determination to impose policies by parliamentary fiat rather than negotiation. Others attribute the coming of the Revolution to designing demagogues and firebrands, like Samuel Adams, Thomas Paine, and Patrick Henry, who aroused peoples' opinions by their words and actions.

Still others believe that the Revolution grew out of a growing sense of American identity. Long before the Revolution, the colonists began to recognize that their experience diverged sharply from Britain's. Their population was growing faster (doubling about every twenty years); there was greater religious freedom; land was more widely distributed; and men had greater access to the vote. Increasingly, the colonists contrasted American simplicity, morality, and republicanism with British aristocratic corruption and responded forcefully to British policies that threatened to restrain their economic and geographical growth.

But perhaps the most important cause of the Revolution lay in the way that the colonists perceived and interpreted events. In the years before the Revolution, the colonists embraced an ideology which held that liberty was fragile and threatened by the conspiratorial designs of scheming politicians. This ideology led colonists to interpret British policies as part of a deliberate scheme to impose tyrannical oppression in America and reduce the colonists to slavery.

1. After visiting the colonies toward the end of the French and Indian War, the Rev. Andrew Burnaby, a minister for the Church of England, described the Americans as too diverse and disunited to successfully oppose British rule: "[F]ire and water are not more heterogeneous than the different colonies in North America. Nothing can exceed the jealousy... which they possess in regard for each other.... [W]hen they left to themselves, there would soon be a civil war from one end of the continent to other...."

Why do you think that the colonists were able to overcome a long history of bickering and unite in opposition to British rule?

2. Up until 1763, most colonists took pride in their membership in the British Empire. They regarded themselves as among the freest and most prosperous people in the world. Yet, within less than a decade and a half, they had begun to wage a revolution against British authority.

Was this the mainly product of misguided British policies that violated the colonists' liberties? Was it largely the result of arbitrary and unchecked British power, and Parliament's unwillingness to consult the colonists about tax, trade, and other policies and persuade them that the policies were reasonable? Was the Revolution primarily caused firebrands, like Samuel Adams, Thomas Paine, and Patrick Henry, who aroused public opinion through impassioned speeches and actions? Was the Revolution mainly the product of ideas--including a belief that government is the result of a voluntary agreement between rulers and the people and that when the agreement is broken, people have a right to establish a new government? Or was the Revolution the largely result of the way that the colonists perceived and interpreted British actions--as a conspiracy to strip them of their liberties and reduce them to slavery?

3. Were Britain's actions sufficiently tyrannical to justify a revolution?
4. Was the American Revolution a "tax revolt" launched by people unwilling to pay the costs of government? Or was it motivated by larger principles and grievances?  
In addition to conflict over taxes, the colonists were angry about abuses of royal power, British efforts to control westward expansion, and restrictions on trade and manufacturing.
5. Was conflict between the colonies and Britain inevitable? Or could the conflict have been resolved as a result of political compromise?
6. Why were the Patriots able to defeat Britain's professional army, backed up by the world's finest navy?  
Because the Patriots adopted guerrilla warfare tactics; Britain was unable to knock out the Continental Army or to control the American countryside; and Americans received valuable support from France, Spain and the Netherlands.

#### WHAT IF?

How would American history have been different:

1. If Britain had issued an emancipation proclamation, freeing all slaves in the rebellious colonies?
2. If France, Spain, and the Netherlands had not intervened on the Patriot's side during the Revolution?

#### MAKING ETHICAL JUDGMENTS

1. Recently, a Louisiana school district in voted to change the names of all schools that are named in honor of slave owners. The principal author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, was a slave owner. So too was George Washington, who led the struggle for American Independence, as was James Madison, the father of the U.S. Constitution. Do you agree with the school board's decision?

How could Jefferson, Washington, and Madison reconcile their commitment to liberty with ownership of slaves? To what extent should we empathize with people in the past?

To what extent should we impose our moral judgments upon the past?

2. What would you have done if you had been an African American during the Revolution? Would you have responded to Lord Dunmore's proclamation granting freedom to slaves who fled behind British lines? Would you have enlisted in the Continental Army?

#### INTERPRETING PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

In our daily lives, Americans tend to give little thought to the importance of ideas. In fact, however, ideas--often simplified and misunderstood--have immense power. They can even change the course of history. At various times in the past, ideas have arisen that grip the popular imagination. That was very much the case with the Declaration of Independence and its ideals of liberty, equality, and popular self-government. The Declaration would inspire many groups of peoples--including enslaved African Americans and women--to demand greater rights.

Document 1.

Why did Britain close the west to settlement? Was Britain right or wrong to prohibit settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains?

The proclamation was designed to prevent frontier warfare between Indians and colonists, who committed frauds and abuses in acquiring Indian lands.

Why did the colonists, most of who lived within 50 miles of the Atlantic seaboard, view the Proclamation as oppressive?

The colonists feared being walled in along the eastern coast, which would result in overpopulation and social stratification along rigid class lines.

Document 2.

What do you think accounts for the intense opposition to the Stamp Act by the colonists?

It was the first direct tax Parliament levied in the colonies and violated the principle that only assemblies directly elected by the people could impose taxes. Further, the act also provided that violators would be punished summarily, without jury trials.

Document 7.

John Adams infuriated his cousin Samuel Adams when he agreed to defend soldiers involved in the Boston massacre. After reading Deacon John Tutor's account of events in Boston, would you have been willing to defend the soldiers? Why or why not?

Students might debate whether it was more important to defend the principle of rule of law than to let it appear that Boston was governed by mob rule.

Document 18.

Why are the members of the first Continental Congress convinced that Britain has adopted policies "calculated for enslaving these Colonies"? Do the colonists literally mean that Britain intended to enslave them?

The Continental Congress accused Britain of imposing illegal taxes; depriving Americans of trial by jury; restricting western settlement.

Why do you think that the colonists argued that Parliament was attempting to reduce them to slavery? Why did they choose that particular word? In what precise ways, according to the Continental Congress, was Parliament stripping the colonists of their freedom?

By restricting trade; illegally imposing oppressive taxes; depriving colonists of the right to trial by jury; blockading American ports; and nullifying colonial charters.

How does the Continental Congress propose to protest British policies?

By adopting non-importation and non-exportation agreements, including a prohibition on the slave trade.

Document 31.

Why would Jefferson accuse the British King of forcing the colonists to engage in the slave trade?

Because the British government had vetoed attempts to restrict or halt slave importations.

Why do you think that the Continental Congress ultimately deleted this clause from the final version of the Declaration?

Because it smacked of hypocrisy.

Document 32.

Both the British and the Patriots recognized that slavery might play a pivotally important role in the outcome of the Revolution. Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, promised liberty to slaves who joined British forces and later John and Henry Laurens urged the Continental Congress to recruit an army of three thousand slave troops. Although some 5,000 African Americans served in the American army during the Revolution, there were few efforts to foment slave unrest as a way to win the Revolution. Why didn't Britain or the Patriots make greater efforts to exploit slave unrest?

Because they were unwilling to risk a social revolution and the loss of support from slaveholders.

Document 37.

Some historians say the Revolution was also a civil war. How does the story of Lucy Knox support that claim?

Divided loyalties tore her family apart.

While her husband, General Henry Knox, fought against the British, Lucy Knox managed the family business and finances. What does her 1777 letter suggest about the impact of the war upon her life and her attitudes?

The war encouraged a new independent spirit.

Document 39.

Despite the popular image of a Revolutionary army consisting primarily of citizen-soldiers, most soldiers were landless, unskilled and young, and many were unfree, either indentured servants and slaves. After reading Washington's letter, ask students to describe the hardships that these soldiers faced.

Document 40.

In October 1787, Sir Henry Clinton made Britain's last formal attempt at a reconciliation with the colonies. What arguments does he make in support of reunion and why did the Patriots refuse the offer?

Clinton warns that Patriots that thus far Britain had waged a limited war and that if the Americans formed alliance with Britain's enemies, then the British were justified in using every means in their power to suppress the Revolution. The Patriots declined the offer because the foreign alliances had made independence a realistic possibility.

Document 43.

While today we take an American victory in the Revolution for granted, no one in 1780 knew what the future would bring. As Virginia's governor, Thomas Jefferson witnessed two British invasions of his state; the capture and burning of Richmond; and a raid on his own home at Monticello. At the time, would you have felt confident or pessimistic about an American victory in the Revolution?

## PART 6. CREATING A NEW NATION

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Constitution had scarcely been drafted and ratified when political divisions began to emerge over Alexander Hamilton's economic program, which envisioned a political economy that had no place for slavery. Political polarization was intensified by the French Revolution, by France's efforts to entangle America in its war with Britain, by popular protests in western Pennsylvania against a federal excise tax on whiskey, an undeclared naval war with France, and enactment of the Alien and Sedition Acts. For a quarter century, the new nation wrestled with threats to its existence. It faced repeated schemes to manipulate presidential elections, plots to dismember the country, and threats of secession. A former Vice President even found himself put on trial for treason.

Overseas events carried profound consequences for the new republic. The French defeat by the Haitians in 1803 that convinced Napoleon to sell the Louisiana Territory to the United States. The prolonged war between France and Britain led both countries to interfere with American shipping. This commercial warfare gradually escalated into the War of 1812, in which the United States waged war with Britain and defeated powerful Indian confederations in the Old Northwest and the South.

### DEBATING THE ISSUES

The entire history of the United States encompasses just three seventy-year life times. Seventy years ago, the United States had entered into the Great Depression. Seven decades earlier, the United States was undertaking Reconstruction. And seventy years before that, the United States was just beginning to institute a new system of government based on the U.S. Constitution.

It is extraordinary how much American society is transformed over the course of a single human lifetime. A person born seventy years ago witnessed the introduction of antibiotics, computers, and television into American life. A person born two lifetimes ago lived through the appearance of the electric light, the telephone, the modern corporation, professional sports, and the movies. And a person born three life times ago witnessed unprecedented urban growth, the first stages of the industrial revolution, the emergence of the first political party systems, and the appearance of the first movements to reform society through collective action. It may be enlightening to ask students which generation witnessed the most profound and far-reaching societal and technological transformations.

1. What conflicts did the Framers of the Constitution have to be overcome in order to design a new system of government?  
Disagreements between larger and smaller states and between advocates of a strong central government and strong state governments as well as differences over slavery.
2. How did the Framers try to prevent abuses of power within the central government?  
They adopted a system of checks and balances.
3. The framers of the Constitution adopted a rule of secrecy. Do you think they were justified in drafting the Constitution in secret?
4. An impassioned debate erupted following the Constitutional Convention. Federalists defended the Constitution as vital to the nation's survival, while Anti-Federalists criticized it as unnecessary and un-republican. Why did Anti-Federalists oppose the Constitution?  
They claimed it weakened the states and undermined the peoples' liberties. They felt the new government created by the Constitution was insufficiently democratic and that because the House of Representatives was small, ordinary citizens would find it difficult to influence Congressional

decisions. Further, they feared that a president might become a tyrant. Finally, the Anti-Federalists observed that the Constitution lacked a bill of rights, placing clear limits on the central government's powers and specifying the peoples' rights.

5. Would you have supported or opposed the War of 1812?
6. Do you think it would have been best for the Indian people of the eastern United States to:  
to form alliances across tribal lines and mount armed resistance?  
to move westward, across the Mississippi river?  
to learn the ways of the Americans and become, like them, farmers and traders, than to continue as if it were the past?

#### WHAT IF?

How would American history be different if:

Northern delegates at the Constitutional Convention had refused to give in to demands from delegates from South Carolina and Georgia for strong protections for slavery?

If Congress had voted during the 1780s or 1790s to exclude slavery from all western territories, just as the Northwest Ordinance barred slavery from the Northwest territories?

#### INTERPRETING OUR MONEY

A series of Latin phrases appear on our coins and dollars:

annuit coeptis  
novus ordo seclorum  
e pluribus unum

What do these phrases mean?

Year of conception  
A new order for the ages  
From many one

#### READING MAPS

Compare the size of the United States in the 1780s to the size of countries in Europe.

Compare the location of Indian peoples in 1492 and 1840.

#### MAKING ETHICAL JUDGMENTS

1. Imagine you were a delegate to the Constitutional Convention who opposed slavery. Would you, like George Mason, refuse to sign the Constitution? Or would you, like Benjamin Franklin, sign it?
2. The cotton gin revitalized the institution of slavery and led to rapid western settlement in the South, all the way to Texas. Should Eli Whitney have thought about the consequences of his invention? Should inventors be held responsible for the consequences of their inventions?
3. Were missionaries right or wrong to want to share their religion with Native Americans?

4. Did whites have a right to settle land that the United States owned, even though Indians inhabited the land?

#### INTERPRETING PRIMARY SOURCES

The United States was one of the first nations in history to win independence from colonial rule. It was followed in the late eighteenth century by Haiti, in the early nineteenth century by many of Spain's New World colonies, and in the twentieth century by European colonies in Africa and Asia.

Unlike most other former colonies, the United States was much more successful in establishing a stable political system and a prospering economy. Nevertheless, the first two decades under the new Constitution were marked by mob violence, threats of disunion, attempts to suppress political dissent, and efforts to manipulate presidential elections.

The story of the 1790s and the first decade of the nineteenth century is how Americans took abstract framework of government and put it into practice. In the process, they developed a host of innovations that had not appeared in the Constitution itself, such as a two-party political system and the principle of judicial review.

#### Document 2.

What were the Revolution's consequences for Native Americans? In his 1780 letter, what does Thomas Jefferson regard as the most effective Indian policy?

The American victory brought a surge of American settlers westward, onto Indian lands. Jefferson rejects the idea of stationing troops on the frontier; instead he calls for removal of Native Americans beyond the Great Lakes and Mississippi River.

#### Document 4.

Why did the Revolution make Americans more sensitive to the issue of slavery--and encourage many states in the North to either emancipate slaves or adopt gradual emancipation schemes?

The Revolution's promise of natural rights and equality underscored the contradiction between slavery and fundamental American values.

Why is the Quaker abolitionist James Pemberton hesitant to admit African Americans into membership into the Society of Friends?

Because of his concern about racial intermarriage.

#### Documents 8 and 9.

Compare and contrast John Adams and Thomas Jefferson's appraisal of American-British relations immediately following the Revolution. Why do you think they reached such different conclusions?

According to Adams, the King committed himself to recognizing the United States as an independent power, while Jefferson was convinced that the King and his ministers hated the United States and treated America's trade overtures with derision.

#### Documents 10 and 11.

Why did Massachusetts Governor James Bowdoin issue a proclamation calling on all judges and sheriffs to suppress Shays' Rebellion?

Because he feared that they would "subvert all law and government...dissolve our excellent Constitution, and introduce universal riot, anarchy, and confusion...."

How does Benjamin Lincoln describe the causes and significance of Shays' Rebellion?

He attributes the rebellion to high taxes, the scarcity of money, and the large number of debtors in the state.

Document 33.

On what grounds does Judith Sargent Stevens Murray argue for the equality of the sexes?

She maintains that women's occupations, such as cooking and needlework, are inadequate to stimulate women's minds and that women's intellectual capabilities are equal to men's.

Document 37.

What economic vision did Alexander Hamilton lay out in his "Report on Manufacturers"?

He believed that manufacturing would ensure the nation's economic independence, which was necessary to secure the nation's political independence.

How does he respond to those who object to the growth of manufacturing?

That industry will offer job opportunities to farmers and people who are not yet in the workforce; it will encourage foreign immigration and attract foreign capital; it will reduce prices by providing competition for foreign imports; and it will provide an expanded market for agricultural products.

Document 53.

Why does Washington refuse to consider running for the presidency in 1800?

Because politics has grown so partisan that he would not get a single Republican vote.

How would you describe his attitude toward the Jeffersonian Republicans?

He considers the Republicans naive in their attitude toward Revolutionary France.

Documents 75.

Why did many New Englanders, like J.C. Jones and other citizens of Boston and the *Columbian Centinel*, oppose the War of 1812?

Because they believe that the war was unnecessary, was an effort to help France in its conflict with Britain, and hurt the American economy.

Document 80.

On what grounds does *Niles' Weekly Register* defend the war?

Because peaceful measures, like the embargo, had failed and because Britain had incited Indian attacks and slave revolts.

## PART 7. ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Throughout the Western world, the end of the Napoleonic Wars brought an end to a period of global war and revolution and the start of a new era of rapid economic growth. For Americans, the end of the War of 1812 unleashed the rapid growth of cities and industry and a torrent of expansion westward. The years following the war also marked a notable advance of democracy in American politics. Property qualifications for voting and office holding were abolished; voters began to directly elect presidential electors, state judges, and governors; and voting participation skyrocketed. In addition, the antebellum era saw a great surge in collective efforts to improve society through reform. Unprecedented campaigns sought to outlaw alcohol, guarantee women's rights, and abolish slavery.

Rapid territorial expansion also marked the antebellum period. Between 1845 and 1853, the nation expanded its boundaries to include Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The United States annexed Texas in 1845; partitioned the Oregon country in 1846 following negotiations with Britain; wrested California and the great Southwest from Mexico in 1848 after the Mexican War; and acquired the Gadsden Purchase in southern Arizona from Mexico in 1853.

The period's most fateful development was a deepening sectional conflict that brought the country to the brink of civil war. The addition of new land from Mexico raised the question that would dominate American politics during the 1850s: whether slavery would be permitted in the western territories. The Compromise of 1850 attempted to settle this issue by admitting California as a free state but allowing slavery in the rest of the Mexican cession. But enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law as part of the compromise exacerbated sectional tensions. The question of slavery in the territories was revived by the 1854 decision to open Kansas and Nebraska territories to white settlement and decide the status of slavery according to the principle of popular sovereignty. Sectional conflict was intensified by the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision, which declared that Congress could not exclude slavery from the western territories; by John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry; and by Abraham Lincoln's election as president in 1860.

### DEBATING THE ISSUES

Between the French Revolution and World War I, the American Civil War was the most violent conflict in the Western world. No topic has aroused deeper disagreement among American historians than the causes of the Civil War. James Ford Rhodes argued that the conflict's causes lay in the issue of slavery. Charles Beard and Frank Owsley emphasized the economic conflict between an agrarian South and an industrializing North. Charles Ramsdale and James Randall blamed the conflict on irresponsible agitators and blundering politicians operating in an atmosphere of whipped-up emotions and false propaganda.

Today, the debate continues. Michael Holt stresses the importance of the breakdown of the party system, due in part to a massive influx of foreign immigrants into the country. Eric Foner and James McPherson maintain that there were irreconcilable ideological differences between North and South.

Recent explanations of the coming of the Civil War stress three factors. One is contingency--the notion that the conflict was not inevitable, but was the result of a complex set of actions, decisions, and reactions. A second factor is the importance of ideology, the notion that the North and South embraced distinct and mutually antagonistic outlooks and sets of values. The North's "free labor" ideology portrayed the region as a land of unprecedented equality and opportunity, free of rigid class divisions and glaring extremes of wealth and poverty. The South, in turn, regarded its society as the true preserve of America's revolutionary traditions, which had been betrayed by an industrializing, urbanizing North.

The third factor is the significance of perception--of how Northerners and Southerners understood the critical events of the antebellum era. Many Northerners came to believe that an aggressive Slave Power had seized control of the

federal government, subverted civil liberties, fomented revolution in Texas and War with Mexico in order to expand the South's slave empire, and wanted to reduce all laborers--white as well as black--to a state of virtual slavery. At the same time, an increasing number of Southerners began to believe that antislavery radicals dominated Northern society and would rejoice in the ultimate consequences of abolition--race war and racial amalgamation.

The antebellum era--the period stretching from the War of 1812 to the Civil War--was an era of political democratization, unprecedented reform energies, and explosive territorial and economic growth. But it also saw the emergence of bitter sectional and political conflicts, as the North and South developed along diverging lines. The great question haunting the period was whether the spirit of sectional or the spirit of nationalism would triumph.

1. Why did the first reform movements in American history arise during the early nineteenth century?  
Certain religious developments made Americans more sensitive to sin and increased their faith in peoples' ability to cure social problems. The liberal revolt against Calvinism convinced many reformers that people were basically good and that only a flawed environment caused social evils. The evangelical revival defined sin and concrete terms and encouraged reformers to address social problems. At the same time, in an increasingly urban society, some problems had become more visible. But reformers also had a heightened faith in peoples' ability to cure social problems.
2. Why was the antislavery movement, which was nearly as unpopular in the North as the South in the early 1830s, able to persuade a growing number of Northerners that slavery was an intolerable moral evil?
3. What changes made the American political system more democratic between 1820 and 1840?  
The diminution of property qualifications for voting; direct election of judges, governors, and presidential electors; the emergence of political nominating conventions; the elimination of voting by voice; and popular campaigning.
4. The doctrine of "manifest destiny" makes westward expansion seem like a noble thing to do. Why did Americans move westward between 1820 and 1850? Were they motivated mainly by national pride and a desire to spread American institutions or by lust for land and resources?  
Motives varied widely. Some were motivated by land hunger. Others sought to preempt settlement by other nations. The Mormons were motivated by a desire for religious freedom.
5. On the eve of the Civil War, a growing number of Northerners had come to believe that an aggressive southern Slave Power had seized control of the federal government and threatened to subvert republican ideals of liberty, equality, and self-government. Why had many Northerners come to hold this view?  
The debate over the Gag Rule, the Amistad case, Texas annexation, the Mexican War, the Fugitive Slave Law, the defeat of the Wilmot Proviso, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the Dred Scott decision convinced many Northerners that the slavery threatened their civil liberties and that the Slave Power had seized control of the federal government.
6. Why did John Brown's raid and Lincoln's election as president convince slaveholders that they needed to secede from the Union?  
Because they were convinced that the South was losing the ability to shape national decisions; that the North was unified in opposition to slavery; and that an antislavery president could take steps to weaken the institution of slavery.

#### WHAT IF?

How would American history have been different if:

1. Texas had remained an independent republic and had not been annexed by the United States?

2. James Knox Polk had not been elected president in 1844?
3. President Zachary Taylor, who opposed the Compromise of 1850, had not died in that year?

#### MAKING ETHICAL JUDGMENTS

1. Did the United States rob Mexico of its territory? If so, in what way, if any, should the United States compensate Mexico for its loss of territory?
2. Suppose you learned of Thoreau's refusal to pay a government tax. Like Thoreau, you oppose slavery and the war with Mexico. Would you join Thoreau in his refusal to pay the tax?
3. John Brown believed that the only effective way to fight slavery was through violence. "We must fight fire with fire," he said. Does Brown's goal--slavery's abolition--justifies his means? Do you approve or disapprove of John Brown's raid and his resort to violence, bloodshed, and an attack on a federal arsenal? Are freedom fighters justified in killing civilians in order to overcome oppression?

#### INTERPRETING MAPS

Ask your students to locate the Missouri Compromise line, north latitude 36 degrees 30 minutes. Have them determine how many states were created out of the area north of the compromise line, within the Louisiana Purchase, and how many states were created south of that line.

Ask your students to identify the states acquired from Mexico.

#### INTERPRETING PRIMARY SOURCES

The American Revolution did far more than simply win American independence. It also popularized a set of values emphasizing liberty and equality. This ideology has represented an ideal against which later generations of Americans have measured the imperfections of their society. It has inspired reformers to seek to expose and correct abuses, like slavery, that contradicted the nation's fundamental principles.

The theory of natural rights embodied in the Declaration of Independence--that "all Men are created equal," that they are endowed with certain natural, essential, and inalienable rights--would serve as a powerful stimulus for later reformers. Proponents of women's rights, world peace, temperance, public schools, and abolition all drafted Declarations of Sentiments modeled on the wording of the Declaration. America's pre-civil war reformers saw their own crusades as attempts to realize the republican ideals enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and as the fulfillment of the political struggles begun during the Revolution.

Document 7.

What were schools like before the introduction of public school systems?

School terms were short; the tenure of teachers was brief; classes were very large and included some very young students; and the schoolhouses themselves were poorly maintained.

Document 16.

Was President James Monroe justified in sending Major General Andrew Jackson into Florida and demanding that Spain cede the area to the United States?

Monroe contends that Spain had failed to properly govern Florida, and that the area had become

"the theatre, of every species of lawless adventure."

Document 31.

In his "Proclamation to the People of South Carolina," President Jackson affirmed the supremacy of the federal government over the states, declared nullification illegal, and became the first president to declare the Union indissoluble. Why did Jackson oppose nullification?

Because the doctrine violates the Constitution and threatens the existence of the Union.

Document 32.

On what grounds did South Carolina Governor Robert Y. Hayne defend nullification?

He claimed that the federal government has exceeded its constitutional powers, violated the rights of the states, and threatens to reduce South Carolina to "a condition of 'Colonial vassalage.'"

Documents 42.

How does the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison compare and contrast his experience in jail to a slave's experience in bondage?

He sees one parallel--that both are confined to a limited geographical area. But he says his food is better and more abundant; he can freely choose his activities; he can read and write; and he eventually will be freed.

Documents 46, 47, and 48.

Nat Turner's insurrection was the most violent antebellum slavery revolt and marked a major turning point in attitudes about slavery. In the South, slave codes were made stricter and after a debate about abolishing slavery in the Virginia legislature, serious discussions of emancipation ended. In the North, abolitionists became more vocal in their attacks on slavery. What does each of the following have to say about the significance of Turner's insurrection and what this incident has to say about the nature of southern slavery?

--Samuel Warner

--The Liberator

--Thomas R. Dew

Warner argues that the slaves revolted because of the discrepancy between American ideals of liberty and the reality of perpetual bondage. The Liberator contends that the revolt was the result of the sinful way slaves were treated--whipped, denied adequate food, and kept in ignorance--while whites celebrate liberty. Dew claims that Turner suffered from a mental aberration.

Documents 50-56.

What it was like to be a slave? How well were slaves fed, clothed, and housed? What kinds of punishment did slaves face? What was the impact of slavery on family life? How do you think that slaves were able to endure the hardships and oppressions of slavery?

Document 59.

On what grounds does Elizabeth Cady Stanton demand equal rights for women?

Like the American revolutionaries, she protests against a government that exists without the consent of the governed. Even though women pay taxes and are citizens, they are denied the vote and the right to change unjust laws that give husbands authority over their wives.

Document 100.

What did Supreme Court rule in the Dred Scott decision and why do you think the decision is significant?

The Supreme Court overturned the Missouri Compromise; Ruled that African Americans, both free and enslaved, had no right to citizenship; and prohibited Congress from restricting slavery in the territories. The decision made war almost certain because it placed resolution of the slavery issue outside of Congress and the courts.

Document 101.

How, according to Hinton Rowan Helper, had slavery harmed poor Southern whites?

Slavery discouraged commerce, left many southerners in poverty and ignorance, and made the South economically dependent on the North.

Document 124.

On what grounds did South Carolina justify its decision to secede from the Union?

Because northern states have refused to fulfill their constitutional obligation to return fugitive slaves; have denounced slavery as sinful; have given African Americans citizenship rights; elected a president opposed to slavery.

## Part 8. CIVIL WAR

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

When President Lincoln took office, he discovered that Fort Sumter, which guarded the entrance to Charleston harbor, was running out of provisions. He informed South Carolina's governor that he had decided to resupply the fort, but not to dispatch reinforcements or arms and ammunition. On April 12, 1861, before the supplies arrived, Confederate forces opened fire on the fort, which surrendered the next day. Lincoln responded by declaring that an insurrection existed and calling for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion. Lincoln's actions led Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas to leave the Union.

Both sides expected a brief war. But while the North imposed a naval blockade and cleared Confederate troops from West Virginia, Kentucky, and much of Tennessee, hopes for a quick end to the conflict faded. Several Union attempts to capture the Confederate capitol at Richmond ended in failure. Despite the capture of New Orleans, Union efforts to control the Mississippi River and split the Confederacy into two stalled after the Battle of Shiloh. Meanwhile, Robert E. Lee's offensive into Maryland was defeated at the Battle of Antietam.

As a result of the military stalemate, the Civil War became a total war that required the mobilization of all resources necessary for victory. By the summer of 1862, both sides had imposed a military draft. To finance the war, Congress issued bonds and paper money; imposed income, inheritance, and corporation taxes; and established a centralized banking system. Lincoln expanded the power of the presidency by imposing martial law and imprisoning about ten thousand people without trial.

At first, the North fought to preserve the Union, not to free the slaves. Lincoln handled the slavery issue cautiously because he did not want to lose support of the border states and pro-Union Democrats. But as the war dragged on, pressure for abolition mounted. After the Union victory at Antietam, Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which was followed by the formal Proclamation on January 1, 1863. It transformed the Civil War into a struggle to end slavery and also legitimized the use of African Americans as troops. Altogether, 186,000 black soldiers served in the Union Army and another 29,000 in the Navy, accounting for nearly 10 percent of all Union forces and 68,178 of the Union dead or missing. Three-fourth of all African American troops were former slaves.

In mid-July 1863, the military balance shifted in the North's favor, although the outcome was still chancy until November 1864. Following Confederate victories at Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg in Virginia, Robert E. Lee marched his army into Pennsylvania, hoping to demoralize the northern public and prompt British and French intervention to end the war. At the Battle of Gettysburg, Lee suffered nearly 25,000 casualties and was never able to launch another major offensive. At the same time, the Union army captured Vicksburg, gaining control of the Mississippi River.

Nevertheless, before the capture of Atlanta in September 1864, Lincoln expected a war weary public to elect Democratic candidate General George McClellan president, who would likely end the Civil War through negotiations and preserve slavery. During the last stages of the conflict, William Tecumseh Sherman's army marched through Georgia, while Ulysses S. Grant forced Lee's army back toward the Confederate capitol of Richmond. So desperate was the South's plight that in March 1865 the Confederate Congress authorized the use of slave troops. On April 9, 1865, Lee, his army, faced with encirclement and shrunk to 25,000 men, surrendered at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

### DEBATING THE ISSUES

The Civil War is the crucial, defining event in American history. It would determine whether the nation would remain part slave and part free.

1. Why did white Southerners in 1860 feel so embattled that they saw only one course open to them--secession?
2. What advantages and disadvantages did the Union and Confederacy each possess at the start of the Civil War?  
The North had a larger population, more industry, a superior transportation system, and an existing army and navy. The South had a population skilled in the use of firearms and only had to wage a defensive war.
3. Why was the Civil War more deadly than past wars?  
Because of new weapons were much more lethal and accurate than earlier weapons; and because the Civil War expanded warfare beyond the battlefield, creating total war.
4. Ask your students which of the following two viewpoints on the Emancipation Proclamation is most accurate.

In October 1862, the London Times dismissed the preliminary emancipation proclamation as an empty gesture. "Where he has no power Mr. Lincoln will set the Negroes free," the newspaper commented; "where he retains power he will consider them as slaves. This is more like a Chinaman beating his two swords together to frighten his enemy than like an earnest man pressing forward his cause."

The American philosopher, orator, and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson took a very different point of view: "The force of the act is that it commits the country to...justice.... Done it cannot be undone.... The...act makes clear that the lives of our heroes have not been sacrificed in vain. It makes a victory of our defeats. Our hurts are healed. The health of the nation is repaired."

5. Read your students these two viewpoints on war. Which do they think is most accurate?

In 1862, Robert E. Lee wrote: "It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it."

In 1879, William Tecumseh Sherman declared: "It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell."

#### WHAT IF?

How would American history been different if:

Britain had decided to recognize the Confederacy?

George B. McClellan had been elected president in 1864?

Lincoln had not been assassinated?

#### DISCUSSING ETHICAL ISSUES

1. Was the outcome of the Civil War worth its costs?
2. General William Tecumseh Sherman used total war against the South's population. In order to crush peoples' will to fight, he destroyed peoples' crops, their transportation, and many of their towns. Do you think that such destruction can be justified in times of war? Why or why not?

3. How do you think an assassination, like Lincoln's, alters the course of history?
4. Should the South have been punished for secession and the Civil War? How?

#### INTERPRETING PRIMARY SOURCES

Americans tend to think of our country as one committed to tolerance, negotiation, and compromise. In 1861, however, the mechanisms of compromise broke down and the result was a prolonged war that cost more than 600,000 lives. A key question that *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* addresses is why the war lasted as long as it did and why it was accompanied with a will to kill and destroy. Among the questions that the sources address are: Why did the North ultimately insist on unconditional victory? Why did the war bring about the greatest social revolution in American history--the emancipation of slaves?

#### Document 8.

In general, President Lincoln handled the slavery issue cautiously in order to avoid alienating the border states. Why do you think that he authorized the execution of an illegal slave trader? What does this action tell us about his attitude toward slavery?

#### Document 14.

Why did President Lincoln dismiss Major John J. Key from military service? Did the President made the right decision?

He dismissed Key because the major had failed to follow up on the American victory at Antietam.

#### Document 28.

What does Christian M. Epperly's letter suggest about the state of Southern morale in August 1863?

That there was a deepening sense of defeatism, reinforced by wartime inflation.

#### Document 29.

What does Abram Bogart's letter tell us about the grim realities of wartime as Union forces attempted to conquer Charleston, South Carolina?

He offers a graphic description of awful smells and the sight of bodies torn apart.

#### Document 31.

How does the Western Sanitary Commission describe the plight of African American wartime refugees?

Most are poorly clad, inadequately housed, and sleep on the ground.

#### Document 40.

Compare and contrast the Democratic and Republican platforms of 1864.

The Democratic platform condemns "four years of failure to restore the Union by experiment of war." The Republican platform demands the unconditional surrender of the Confederacy; supports the Emancipation Proclamation; and favors a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery.

#### Document 47.

What does Edwin H. McCaleb's letter suggest about the problems the country would face in reconstructing the South?

That many white Southerners expected the government maintain white supremacy in the South and

adopt "a magnanimous merciful & conciliatory" set of policies.