*Kansas-Nebraska Act Simulation*

**Date:** 1854

**Location:** US Congress

**Issue:** By the early 1850s settlers and entrepreneurs wanted to move into the area now known as Nebraska. However, until the area was organized as a territory, settlers would not move there because they could not legally hold a claim on the land. The southern states' representatives in Congress were in no hurry to permit a Nebraska territory because the land lay north of the 36°30' parallel — where slavery had been outlawed by the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Just when things between the north and south were in an uneasy balance, Kansas and Nebraska opened fresh wounds.

**Activity:** Each of you represents a delegate to Congress in 1854. You will be assigned a specific party (Northern Democrat, Southern Democrat, Northern Whig, Southern Whig, Know-Nothing, Free-Soil) with which you are a member. You will need to create a compromise with the various political parties at the time to allow for the settlement of the Nebraska and Kansas.

This compromise needs to accomplish the following:

* 4 out of 6 of the political party factions need to agree to support the compromise
* The compromise must address the extension of slavery into the territories
* The compromise must determine if it will continue the Missouri Compromise ruling of 36’ 30 for this territory
* It must address the needs of the majority of the political parties at the time

Each political party will choose people to do the following tasks:

* A writer to record the interests and strategy of your political party
* A runner to send requests and proposals to other parties
* 1-2 presenters to discuss the interests of the political party with the rest of Congress

Timeframe:

* 15 minutes to decide strategy. Address the following questions:
  + What is your political party faction’s stance on slavery and its expansion?
  + What would your group like to see happen with the Kansas-Nebraska Territory?
  + What is your group’s plan to get other groups to support your proposal?
* 10-15 minutes to create and negotiate compromise with other groups.
* 15 minutes each group will present their compromise then as a Congress, we will vote on the most effective compromise
* 10 minutes de-briefing written response

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| **Democrats**   * Founded in 1828 * Andrew Jackson is first leader * Support came especially from farmers, rural areas, and the frontier. Most urban immigrants, especially Catholics, also voted Democratic. * Represented tradition and expansion (supported Mexican-American War) * Supported states’ rights and small government, against national bank * Appealed to common man * Support Manifest Destiny | |
| **Northern Democrats** | **Southern Democrats** |
| * Supported Compromise of 1850 and popular sovereignty * Against expansion of slavery into the Caribbean | * Slavery ensured republican freedom because, in a slave society, all white men equally enjoyed the same freedoms and opportunities. * Supported Compromise of 1850 and popular sovereignty * Some considered disunionist because considered seceding if expansion of slavery prohibited. * Support expansion of slavery into the Caribbean (including places like Cuba |
| **Whigs**   * Started in 1833 in opposition to Jackson * End over divisions concerning slavery after Kansas-Nebraska Act * Notable leaders included Henry Clay and Daniel Webster * Wanted “modernization” of the economy and society. * Support came from cities and market towns. Most conservative Protestants were Whigs, as most wealthy men. * Supported strong federal government, national bank, moral reform, internal improvement and protective tariff | |
| **Northern Whigs** | **Southern Whigs** |
| * Nicknamed “The Conscience Whigs” * Against Fugitive Slave Act * Against expansion of slavery into territories | * Nicknamed “The Cotton Whigs” * Supportive of Fugitive Slave Act * Against nomination of Winfred Scott in 1852 Election * Supportive of expansion of slavery into territories |
| **Know-Nothing Party** | **Free-Soil Party** |
| * Opposed immigration, especially of Catholics. Wanted an extension of naturalization period before immigrants could vote. * Before formation of party many nativist voted Whig; changed after Scott appealed to Catholic Southerners in 1852 election. * Opposed expansion of slavery * Originally worked in secret, and when asked about their activities, replied “I know nothing.” * In the 1850s, as the American Party, elected some representatives to Congress. | * Opposed the expansion of slavery into the western territories, but were not in favor of abolition. Ran on the slogan “Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor and Free Men.” * Exclusively a northern and western party. Drew support from former Whigs and some northern Democrats. * Emerged after the Mexican War but was quickly replaced by the Republican Party. |

Debriefing of Kansas-Nebraska Act Simulation:

**This activity allowed you to consider the roles of various political factions in addressing sectional tensions relating to the expansion of slavery into new territory. Reflect upon the simulation through the following questions:**

***-What political faction did you represent? What decisions did your faction make?***

***-Did you find it difficult to create a compromise with the other political factions? Why or why not?***

***-Of the compromises suggested by each group, which one best addressed the issues facing America in 1854?***

***-Explain the actual events that influenced the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Consider the results of the Missouri Compromise and Compromise of 1850, popular sovereignty, and disintegration of the Whig Party.***

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