

# Secession and the Start of the Civil War

## Option A

Lexile: 1320  
Word Count: 430

### Vocabulary

- |              |                    |                |                |             |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| ▶ seceded    | ▶ militia          | ▶ insurrection | ▶ vested       | ▶ secession |
| ▶ duly       | ▶ enthusiastically | ▶ aggregate    | ▶ proclamation |             |
| ▶ obstructed | ▶ platform         |                |                |             |

In November 1860, Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln was elected president. Lincoln ran on a platform that called for a stop to the expansion of slavery into new territories. However, he repeatedly stated he had neither the desire nor the constitutional authority to use federal authority to outlaw the institution in states where it already existed. Despite this, South Carolina seceded from the country in December 1860, fearing that Lincoln posed a huge threat to slavery. In the following months, six more Southern states seceded. In April 1861, the South Carolina militia attacked federal troops at Fort Sumter off the coast of Charleston.

President Lincoln believed secession from the Union was unconstitutional and not possible, and that the Confederacy was not a separate country. Instead, he believed rebels from each state were preventing federal laws from being carried out. Following the attack on Fort Sumter, Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers from the various state militias to put down what he deemed to be an insurrection.

The proclamation stated:

**WHEREAS** the laws of the United States have been, for some time past, and now are opposed, and the **execution thereof obstructed...by combinations** too powerful to be **suppressed** by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers **vested** in the marshals by law.

**execution thereof obstructed:** the laws are unable to be enforced

**combinations:** groups of people

**suppressed:** stopped

**vested:** given to

Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN,  
President of the United States, in  
virtue of the power in me vested by the  
Constitution and the laws, have thought  
fit to call forth, and hereby do call forth,  
the **militia** of the several States of  
the Union, to the **aggregate** number of  
seventy-five thousand, in order to  
**suppress** said combinations, and to  
cause the laws to be **duly** executed.

**militia:** an unprofessional military  
force that is summoned during  
times of emergency made up of  
regular citizens

**aggregate:** total

**suppress:** stop

**duly:** correctly

Northern states responded enthusiastically, but the call resulted in more Southern states, including Virginia, declaring secession as well. Their governors stated that the call for volunteers was an act of aggression against their fellow Southerners that they would not go along with.

The Civil War literally divided brother against brother. Families were torn apart as they grappled with whether to remain loyal to the Union or to join the secession cause. While slavery was the primary cause of the Civil War, some Southerners fought for the Confederacy simply because they believed they were defending their state against Northern aggression. Some Northerners did not believe they were fighting to end slavery but instead to preserve the Union and uphold the Constitution. Citizens across the country needed to pick which side they would join in the conflict.



# Secession and the Start of the Civil War

## Option B

Lexile: 1120  
Word Count: 365

### Vocabulary

- ▶ seceded      ▶ militia      ▶ vest      ▶ duly      ▶ enthusiastically
- ▶ secession      ▶ aggregate      ▶ proclamation      ▶ rebellion      ▶ uphold

In November 1860, Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln was elected president. Lincoln believed slavery should not spread to new parts of the country. However, he said slavery should not be banned in areas where it already existed because he didn't think the federal government could legally do that. Despite this, South Carolina seceded from the country in January 1861, fearing that Lincoln posed a huge threat to slavery. In the following months, six more Southern states seceded. In April 1861, the South Carolina militia attacked federal troops at Fort Sumter off the coast of Charleston.

President Lincoln did not believe the Confederacy was a separate country. Instead, he stated rebels from each state were preventing federal laws from being carried out, and the South still was part of the country. Following the attack on Fort Sumter, Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers from the various state militias to put down what he deemed to be a rebellion. The proclamation stated:

I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, in virtue of the power in me **vested** by the Constitution and the laws, have thought fit to call forth, and hereby do call forth, the **militia** of the several States of the Union, to the **aggregate** number of seventy-five thousand, in order to...cause the laws to be **duly** executed.

**vested:** given to

**militia:** an unprofessional military force that is summoned during times of emergency made up of regular citizens

**aggregate:** total

**duly:** correctly

Northern states responded enthusiastically, but the call resulted in more Southern states, including Virginia, to declare secession as well. Their governors stated that the call for volunteers was an act of aggression against their fellow Southerners that they would not go along with.

The Civil War divided brother against brother. Families were torn apart as they had to decide whether to remain loyal to the Union or to join the secession cause. While slavery was the primary cause of the Civil War, some Southerners fought for the Confederacy simply because they believed they were defending their state against Northern aggression. Some Northerners did not believe they were fighting to end slavery but instead to preserve the Union and uphold the Constitution. Citizens across the country needed to pick which side they would join in the conflict.

