The Great Debates!! Lesson Plan
Reading Schools
5/12/08
U.S. History- 1776-1876
Grade 8

Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks Standards:

Social, Political, and Religious Change, 1800-1860
USI.3I.1- Describe the formation of the abolitionist movement, the roles of various abolitionists, and the response of southerners and northerners to abolitionism.

Historical Thinking Benchmarks Addressed:
- Analysis of primary and secondary sources
- An understanding of historical debate and controversy

Essential Questions:
- What were the differing views/reactions on slavery?
- What arguments were used to support those views?

Learning Objectives:
- Students will identify differing views on slavery
- Students will debate and compare/contrast those views on slavery
- Students will analyze all of the varying points of views on slavery
- Students will write a persuasive essay about which view they agree with most and why.

Learning Activities
1) Students are assigned in heterogeneous groups of three.
2) Assign half of the groups George Fitzhugh and half the groups William Lloyd Garrison.
3) Each group reads and analyzes the provided background information and the primary source and answers the accompanying questions to become familiar with the views of their person.
4) After each group has completed the readings and the questions, the teacher assigns each group of three to debate/discuss their views with a group of three of the other person. Each member of each group will fill out the Great Debate sheet of questions as they listen to the opposing views.
5) After each group of six have had enough time to hear and write the views of their opposite, it’s time to rotate. All those groups of Garrison will rotate to another group of Fitzhugh. Now they share the responses they wrote down based on what they heard from the previous group. This gives each group of three to experience and share the views of both and also serves as a checking device to make sure that each group heard the previous group correctly.

6) When each new group of six has had enough time to share their information and responses, each group member should now be familiar with two differing views on slavery.

7) Now it is time to do it again with different views. Now assign half the groups Abraham Lincoln and half the groups Stephen Douglas. Repeat steps 3-6.

Authentic Assessment

Persuasive Essay- Students will write a four paragraph essay relating which of the four views of slavery they agree with most and why. Each essay will include a well written thesis and two well explained reasons to support the thesis.

How You Will Be Graded:

1) Introduction- Includes an attention-getting introductory sentence, one sentence thesis statement relating your opinion and reasons for your thesis statement. ________/ 10 pts.

2) Two body paragraphs- Each body paragraph includes a main reason for your opinion. Each reason is well supported with facts, examples, well explained beliefs, etc. ________/ 20 pts.

3) Conclusion- Includes a creative summary of your persuasive essay and a creative concluding sentence. (A quote from one of the primary sources would be a great idea!) ________/ 10 pts.

4) Good Effort- Includes careful proofreading, neatness, and proper grammar and mechanics. ________/ 10 pts.

Annotated Bibliography

The Approaching Fury by Stephen B. Oates was used for the background information for each person.

The Negro in American History: Volume 1: Which Way to Citizenship by Stanley Seaberg- Fitzhugh’s Primary Source

Speeches/Writings from Internet:
http://products.ilrn-support.com/wawc2c01c/content/w civ2/ readings/lincoln.html - Lincoln and Douglas Debate

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2928t.html - Garrison’s Primary Source

Michael Maday
Stephen A. Douglas

Read the following description of Stephen A. Douglas to help you become familiar with his ideas concerning the best way to preserve the Union and his ideas on slavery. As you read, respond to the questions on the accompanying question sheet. This will help prepare you for your debate/discussion with Abraham Lincoln.

**Stephen A. Douglas**

Stephen A. Douglas played a prominent role in introducing the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He claimed that the act was not proslavery. Douglas claimed that he hated slavery and that slavery was a curse to both the white race and the black race. He feels that war is the only way to end slavery as it existed and he did not want a war to occur. Douglas felt that the Union was more important than the whole black race. He felt that keeping blacks as slaves was much more preferable than breaking up the country.

Douglas wanted everyone to understand that popular sovereignty was the base to self-government. Popular sovereignty to Douglas meant that the citizens of each new territory would vote as to whether or not slavery would be allowed to exist or not. He believed in the superiority of the white race and that God meant for this country to rule all of North America.

Douglas was raised in Vermont and eventually opened up a law practice. He first involved himself in politics as a defender of Andrew Jackson and his battle against the U.S. national Bank. He became a legislator, state's attorney, judge, and the leader of the Democratic party in Illinois.
Douglas Question Sheet

As you read about Stephen A. Douglas, respond to the following.

1) For what act did Douglas advocate?

2) What was Douglas’ view on slavery?

3) What was Douglas’ main intentions concerning the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

4) What role did popular sovereignty play regarding slavery according to Douglas?
Stephen A. Douglas

Get ready to be challenged! (Again!)
Read carefully and repeatedly the following speech excerpt by Stephen Douglas in a debate with Abraham Lincoln about the spread of slavery and preserving the Union. As you read sections A, B, C, D, E, and F respond to the questions that follow each section to help you grasp the main ideas. (Hint: Using a dictionary may not be a bad idea)

Stephen Douglas

A) Mr. Lincoln tries to avoid the main issue by attacking the truth of my proposition that our fathers made this government divided into free and slave States, recognizing the right of each to decide all its local questions for itself. Did they not thus make it? It is true that they did not establish slavery in any of the States, or abolish it in any of them; but finding thirteen States, twelve of which were slave and one free, they agreed to form a government uniting them together as they stood, divided into free and slave States, and to guarantee forever to each State the right to do as it pleased on the slavery question. ...He says that he looks forward to a time when slavery shall be abolished everywhere. I look forward to a time when each State shall be allowed to do as it pleases.

1) Why does Douglas think the Union should exist with slavery in some states?

B) If it chooses to keep slavery forever, it is not my business, but its own; if it chooses to abolish slavery, it is its own business, not mine. I care more for the great principle of self-government, the right of the people to rule, than I do for all the negroes in Christendom. I would not endanger the perpetuity of this union. I would not blot out the great inalienable rights of the white man, for all the negroes that ever existed. ... Our fathers, I say, made this government on the principle of the right of each State to do as it pleases in its own domestic affairs, subject to the Constitution, and allowed the people of each to apply to every new change of circumstances such remedy as they may see fit to improve their condition. This right they have for all time to come.

2) Explain in three or four sentences Douglas' main argument.
C) ... His idea is that he will prohibit slavery in all the Territories and thus force them all to become free States, surrounding the slave States with a cordon of free States, and hemming them in, keeping the slaves confined to their present limits whilst they go on multiplying, until the soil on which they live will no longer feed them, and he will thus be able to put slavery in a course of ultimate extinction by starvation...

3) What does Douglas suggest Lincoln wants to do about slavery?

D) ... I ask you to look into these things, and then tell me whether the Democracy or the Abolitionists are right. I hold that the people of a Territory, like those of a State (I use the language of Mr. Buchanan in his Letter of Acceptance), have the right to decide for themselves whether slavery shall or shall not exist within their limits.

4) What question does Douglas ask his audience to answer for themselves? Why do you think he asks this of the audience?

E) ... If you take negroes to Kansas, as Colonel Jefferson Davis said in his Bangor speech, from which I have quoted today, you must take them there subject to the local law. If the people want the institution of slavery, they will protect and encourage it; but if they do not want it, they will withhold that protection, and the absence of local legislation protecting slavery excludes it as completely as a positive prohibition. You slaveholders of Missouri might as well understand, what you know practically, that you cannot carry slavery where the people do not want it. All you have a right to ask is that the people shall do as they please: if they want slavery, let them have it; if they do not want it, allow them to refuse to encourage it.

5) What seemingly logical argument does Douglas make about why his plan of popular sovereignty will work?
F) My friends, if, as I have said before, we will only live up to this great fundamental principle, there will be peace between the North and the South. Mr. Lincoln admits that, under the Constitution, on all domestic questions, except slavery, we ought not to interfere with the people of each State. What right have we to interfere with slavery any more than we have to interfere with any other question? He says that this slavery question is now the bone of contention. Why? Simply because agitators have combined in all the free States to make war upon it.

6) What logical argument is made by Douglas?

G)...The only remedy and safety is that we shall stand by the Constitution as our fathers made it, obey the laws as they are passed, while they stand the proper test, and sustain the decisions of the Supreme Court and the constituted authorities.

7) According to Douglas, what are the people left to do?

Abraham Lincoln

Read the following description of Abraham Lincoln to help you become familiar with his ideas concerning the best way to preserve the Union and his ideas on slavery. As you read, respond to the questions on the accompanying question sheet. This will help prepare you for your debate/discussion with Stephen A. Douglas.

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was very much against the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He believed that the founding fathers wanted slavery to eventually disappear from the U.S by allowing it to exist where it did in 1789 and keep slavery from spreading to territories where it did not exist.

Lincoln always hated slavery. He thought it was an evil that should never have existed here. Lincoln hated it because he felt that it went against the principles of the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal and are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He thought it went against the great notion of this country being the great experiment where all people would have a say in government and live with liberty and equality and would serve as a model all people throughout the world.

Lincoln felt that abolitionists were too extreme and too loud. Their grandstanding caused many southerners to ridicule the Declaration of Independence in order to preserve slavery. Lincoln accepted slavery where it already existed. It was evil but it could not be abolished in the southern states without a civil war, which he thought was worse than slavery. Also, it was unconstitutional for the federal government to change slavery laws in the southern states during peace time. Only the southern states could end slavery.

Lincoln focused on national territories that had not become states yet. The national government did have the power to keep slavery from existing in these areas. Lincoln felt that slavery had to be able to spread to survive. Once a plantation owner many slaves and was working his land full tilt with slaves, he naturally would want more land to make more money. More land would be in the new territories and he would have to bring slaves to make more money. If plantation owners were not allowed to bring slaves to work the new land, the plantation owner would eventually exhaust his old land and lose the need for slaves and slavery would eventually die out. In order for the institution of slavery to succeed, it had to be able to grow.

Lincoln felt that when all of the slaves were granted freedom they would be colonized in Africa. When slavery existed no more in our country and the freed slaves returned to their homeland, this country could come together again. Under the new policy of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, this could not happen. Instead, slaves would be brought to the territories and slavery would become permanent there and we would never be able to get rid of it.

Michael Maday
Abraham Lincoln

Read the following description of Abraham Lincoln to help you become familiar with his ideas concerning the best way to preserve the Union and his ideas on slavery. As you read, respond to the questions on the accompanying question sheet. This will help prepare you for your debate/discussion with Stephen Douglas.

Abraham Lincoln

1) Why was Lincoln opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

2) What are some of the specific reasons why Lincoln hated slavery?

3) Why was Lincoln willing to allow slavery to continue in the states where it presently existed?

4) Why was Lincoln so vehement about not allowing for the spread of slavery?

5) What would happen to the freed slaves once slavery ended?

Michael Maday
Abraham Lincoln

Get ready to be challenged! (Again!)
Read carefully and repeatedly the following speech excerpt by Abraham Lincoln in a debate with Stephen Douglas about the spread of slavery and preserving the Union. As you read sections A, B, C, D, E, and F respond to the questions that follow each section to help you grasp the main ideas. (Hint: Using a dictionary may not be a bad idea)

Abraham Lincoln

A) ...The real issue in this controversy - the one pressing upon every mind - is the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery as a wrong, and of another class that does not look upon it as a wrong. The sentiment that contemplates the institution of slavery in this country as a wrong is the sentiment of the Republican party. It is the sentiment around which all their actions, all their arguments, circle, from which all their propositions radiate. They look upon it as being a moral, social, and political wrong; and while they contemplate it as such, they nevertheless have due regard for its actual existence among us, and the difficulties of getting rid of it in any satisfactory way, and to all the constitutional obligations thrown about it. Yet, having a due regard for these, they desire a policy in regard to it that looks to its not creating any more danger. They insist that it should, as far as may be, be treated as a wrong; and one of the methods of treating it as a wrong is to make provision that it shall grow no larger. They also desire a policy that looks to a peaceful end of slavery at some time, as being wrong...

1) According to Lincoln, what is the real debate?

2) According to Lincoln, what are the feelings of his Republican Party?

B) ...On this subject of treating it as a wrong, and limiting its spread, let me say a word. Has anything ever threatened the existence of this Union save and except this very institution of slavery? What is it that we hold most dear amongst us? Our own liberty and prosperity. What has ever threatened our liberty and prosperity, save and except this institution of slavery? If this is true, how do you propose to improve the condition of things by enlarging slavery, - by spreading it out and making it bigger? You may have a wen or cancer upon your person, and not be able to cut it out, lest you bleed to death; but surely it is no way to cure it, to engraft it and spread it over your whole body. That is no proper way of treating what you regard a wrong. You see this peaceful way of dealing
with it as a wrong, restricting the spread of it, and not allowing it to go into new countries where it has not already existed. That is the peaceful way, the old-fashioned way, the way in which the fathers themselves set us the example...

3) What is Lincoln saying to those who wish to see slavery spread?

C) ... The Democratic Policy in regard to that institution will not tolerate the merest breath, the slightest hint, of the least degree of wrong about it. Try it by some of Judge Douglas's arguments. He says he "don't care whether it is voted up or voted down" in the Territories. I do not care myself, in dealing with that expression, whether it is intended to be expressive of his individual sentiments on the subject, or only of the national policy he desires to have established. It is alike valuable for my purpose. Any man can say that who does not see anything wrong in slavery; but no man can logically say it who does see a wrong in it, because no man can logically say he don't care whether a wrong is voted up or voted down. He may say he don't care whether an indifferent thing is voted up or down, but he must logically have a choice between a right thing and a wrong thing. He contends that whatever community wants slaves has a right to have them. So they have, if it is not a wrong. But if it is a wrong, he cannot say people have a right to do wrong. He says that upon the score of equality slaves should be allowed to go in a new Territory, like other property. This is strictly logical if there is no difference between it and other property. If it and other property are equal, this argument is entirely logical. But if you insist that one is wrong and the other right, there is no use to institute a comparison between right and wrong. You may turn over everything in the Democratic policy from beginning to end, whether in the shape it takes on the statute book, in the shape it takes in the Dred Scott decision, in the shape it takes in conversation, or the shape it takes in short maxim-like arguments, - it everywhere carefully excludes the idea that there is anything wrong in it.

4) According to Lincoln, what are the Democratic Party (Douglas' party) views of slavery?

D) ... That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles-right and wrong-throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. ..
5) *Lincoln* once again declares what is the real issue. *What do you think is meant when he says that one principle is, “the common right of humanity” and the other principle is, “the divine right of kings”?*

E) ...Whenever the issue can be distinctly made, and all extraneous matter thrown out so that men can fairly see the real difference between the parties, this controversy will soon be settled, and it will be done peaceably too. There will be no war, no violence. It will be placed again where the wisest and best men of the world placed it...

6) *According to Lincoln, why is it important to define the issue of what the great debate going on in the country is really about?*
William Lloyd Garrison

Read the following description of William Lloyd Garrison to help you become familiar with his ideas and background. As you read, respond to the questions on the accompanying question sheet. This will help prepare you for your debate/discussion with George Fitzhugh.

William Lloyd Garrison

William Lloyd Garrison was a non-violent abolitionist. He believed that people could be persuaded to end slavery with moral arguments. Garrison was well-known for his anti-slavery newspaper, the *Liberator*. The periodical contained articles explaining the evils of slavery. Garrison believed that the emancipation of slaves would save the South and the nation from punishment from Heaven.

Southerners blamed Garrison for inciting violence and slave insurrections in the South. The Georgia government even offered $5,000 to anyone who would bring Garrison to Georgia in order to be prosecuted. Garrison responded to that argument by saying that it was slavery itself that led to violence. If there was not any slavery, there wouldn’t be any violence! Garrison claimed that his newspaper was not a violent newspaper but rather a newspaper that was out to save lives.

Garrison believed that all races of men are equally God’s children, that all are created and loved by God and that all are entitled to the same *inalienable* rights. Only the total and immediate end to slavery and freedom to all blacks and the acceptance of them into society would meet the demands of Christianity.

Garrison would be at odds with the American Colonization Society. The Society believed that slaveowners could be persuaded to end slavery and free their slaves if the freed slaves were to be colonized outside the country. Garrison felt that would be labeling blacks as inferior to whites in order to remove them from the United States. Garrison felt that no matter how badly black were discriminated against in this country, America was their home. They had roots here, as well as family and that they should not be forced to leave. On top of that, of the over 300,000 freed slaves at the time, less that 2,000 agreed to move back to Africa (Liberia). Also, the argument of colonization was not persuading the slaveowners to end slavery anyway.

Garrison helped form the American Anti Slavery Society, the first national abolitionist organization. The Society’s goal was to end slavery immediately and the end all laws that helped perpetuate slavery. The Society published a newspaper, handed out abolitionist tracts, and circulated thousands of abolitionist petitions.

Michael Maday
Garrison Question Sheet

As you read about William Lloyd Garrison, respond to the following.

1) What was Garrison’s belief about slavery?

2) How did Southern slaveowners feel toward Garrison?

3) Why did garrison believe that blacks should be freed?

4) Why was Garrison at odds with the American Colonization Society?

5) What was the American Anti-Slavery Society? How did it try to accomplish its goals?
Get ready to be challenged!
Read carefully and repeatedly the following excerpt written by William Lloyd Garrison. As you read sections A, B, C, and D, respond to the questions that follow each section to help you grasp the main ideas. (Hint: Using a dictionary may not be a bad idea)

The Liberator: "To the Public"
From The Liberator
January 1, 1831

To the Public

A) ... Assenting to the "self-evident truth" maintained in the American Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights -- among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population. In Park-street Church, on the Fourth of July, 1829, in an address on slavery, I unreflectingly assented to the popular but pernicious doctrine of gradual abolition. I seize this opportunity to make a full and unequivocal recantation, and thus publicly to ask pardon of my God, of my country, and of my brethren the poor slaves, for having uttered a sentiment so full of timidity, injustice and absurdity. A similar recantation, from my pen, was published in the Genius of Universal Emancipation at Baltimore, in September, 1829. My conscience in now satisfied.

1) According to the above paragraph, what does he set out to do?

2) Why is his conscience now satisfied?

B) I am aware, that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire, to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hand of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; -- but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest -- I will not equivocate -- I will not excuse -- I will not retreat a single inch -- AND I WILL BE HEARD. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

3) Why does he want to make sure that he is heard?
4) Why does Garrison not apologize for using harsh language?

C) It is pretended, that I am retarding the cause of emancipation by the coarseness of my invective, and the precipitancy of my measures. The charge is not true. On this question my influence, -- humble as it is, -- is felt at this moment to a considerable extent, and shall be felt in coming years -- not perversely, but beneficially -- not as a curse, but as a blessing; and posterity will bear testimony that I was right. I desire to thank God, that he enables me to disregard "the fear of man which bringeth a snare," and to speak his truth in its simplicity and power. And here I close with this fresh dedication:

5) What charge is not true?

6) Why is the charge not true?

7) What is meant by posterity?

D) Oppression! I have seen thee, face to face,
And met thy cruel eye and cloudy brow;
But thy soul-withering glance I fear not now --
For dread to prouder feelings doth give place
Of deep abhorrence! Scorning the disgrace
Of slavish knees that at thy footstool bow,
I also kneel -- but with far other vow
Do hail thee and thy hord of hirelings base: --
I swear, while life-blood warms my throbbing veins,
Still to oppose and thwart, with heart and hand,
Thy brutalising sway -- till Afric's chains
Are burst, and Freedom rules the rescued land, --
Trampling Oppression and his iron rod:
Such is the vow I take -- SO HELP ME GOD!

William Lloyd Garrison

8) What is oppression?
9) What does Garrison promise "Oppression" he will do?

William Lloyd Garrison

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Michael Maday
George Fitzhugh

Read the following description of George Fitzhugh to help you become familiar with his ideas and background. As you read, respond to the questions on the accompanying question sheet. This will help prepare you for your debate/discussion with William Lloyd Garrison.

George Fitzhugh

George Fitzhugh was a resident of Port Royal, in the Northern Neck of Virginia. Fitzhugh believed that liberty and equality were evil. He wrote that liberty and equality led to conflict in society because the stronger in society would take advantage of the weak. Fitzhugh also felt that slavery protected the weaker members of society just as parents protect their children.

Fitzhugh argued that the industrial North, France, and the manufacturing cities of England experimented with liberty and equality and the experiments all failed. Liberty and equality had not led to happiness. Instead, it increased unhappiness. It increased crime. It increased labor strikes for higher wages and revolutionary outbreaks. Conditions were worse under this new system of competition than when the old system of order was in place (feudalism and aristocracy, for example.)

Free Society failed because it encouraged competition. It encouraged everyone to be out for himself. It led to the strong and smart to dominate the weak and stupid. This liberty and equality where everyone could compete for the same things took advantage of the weak members of society. For example, when women were allowed to do the same jobs as men, the women were paid half as much. Also, employers would fight for given low wages and the employees would demand higher wages. It was a society of constant war where everyone is trying to improve his condition at the expense of someone else’s.

Fitzhugh wrote about how Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Judea were great civilizations because of their domestic slavery. They were stable societies where the interests of the weak and strong, poor and rich were identified and addressed.

Fitzhugh argued that slaves were always taken care of. The never had to worry about not being taken care of. There was no war between master and slave. The master’s interests and needs prevented him from poorly treating his slaves. Slaves were always well fed, well clothed, had warmth in the winter and were happy. Slaves never had to worry about not getting what was needed. Fitzhugh believed that this order of people depending on other people was the only system that eliminated competition among humans and brought about peace and goodwill among all.

Fitzhugh wrote that free blacks were bad for any neighborhood in which they lived. They were thieves because they had to be. They were not used to preparing for the
future. They were always cared for and could not handle this freedom. The competition of free blacks with our white citizens was damaging to order. To maintain order, blacks must always be subordinate to whites.

The Declaration of Independence, according to Fitzhugh, declared war on slavery as well as war on all government and all order. He did not think all men were equal, not physically, morally or intellectually. Some men were large, strong and healthy while others are small, weak and sickly. Those born weak must be supported by the strong. Whites must be blacks’ best friends for their happiness and for society to maintain order.
Fitzhugh Question Sheet

As you read about George Fitzhugh, respond to the following.

1) What beliefs of Fitzhugh are introduced?

2) Why was Fitzhugh against “liberty and equality” that were found in other parts of the world?

3) List some benefits slaves gained from slavery according to Fitzhugh.

4) According to Fitzhugh, why was slavery good for blacks and whites?

5) Why didn’t Fitzhugh like the Declaration of Independence?

Michael Maday
10. Slavery is Good for the Negro

From Sociology for the South, by George Fitzhugh, 1854

George Fitzhugh was a well-to-do Virginia lawyer whose family was of the aristocratic planter class. Although he was only one of many Southerners who felt threatened enough by the fervor of the abolitionists to write defenses of the slavery system, he was among the first to set forth an aggressive racist doctrine of slavery’s positive benefits. Fitzhugh lectured widely in defense of his doctrine, in the North as well as in the South.

... Now, it is clear ... [that] democracy would not suit a Negro nation, nor will the government of mere law suffice for the individual Negro. He is but a grown-up child, and must be governed as a child. ... The master occupies toward him the place of parent or guardian.

Secondly. The Negro is improvident; will not lay up for the wants of winter; will not accumulate in youth for the exigencies of age. He would become an insufferable burden to society. Society has the right to prevent this, and can only do so by subjecting him to domestic slavery.

In the last place, the Negro race is inferior to the white race, and living in their midst, they would be far outstripped or outwitted in the chase of free competition. Gradual but certain extermination would be their fate.

We would remind those who deprecate and sympathize with Negro slavery, that slavery here relieves him from a far more cruel slavery in Africa, or from idolatry and cannibalism, and every brutal vice and crime that can disgrace humanity; and that it christianizes, protects, supports and civilizes him; that it governs him far better than free laborers at the North are governed. ... Our Negroes are not only better off as to physical comforts than free laborers, but their moral condition is better.

But abolish Negro slavery, and how much of slavery still remains. Soldiers and sailors in Europe enlist for life; here, for five years. Are they not slaves who have not only sold their liberties, but their lives also? ... Wives and apprentices are slaves; not in theory only, but often in fact. Children are slaves to their parents, guardians, and teachers. Imprisoned culprits are slaves. Lunatics and idiots are slaves also. Three fourths of free society are slaves, no better treated, when their wants and capacities are estimated, than Negro slaves. The masters in free society, or slave society, if they perform properly their duties, have more cares and less liberty than the slaves themselves.

... It is probably no cause of regret that men are so constituted as to require that many should be slaves. Slavery opens many sources of happiness and occasions and encourages the exercise of many virtues and affections which would be unknown without it. It begets friendly, kind, and affectionate relations, just as equality engenders antagonism and hostility on all sides.

It is, we believe, conceded on all hands, that men are not born physically, morally, or intellectually equal. ... Their natural inequalities beget inequalities of rights. The weak in mind or body require guidance, support, and protection; they must obey and work for those who protect and guide them. ... Nature has made them slaves; all that law and government can do is to regulate, modify, and mitigate their slavery. In the absence of legally instituted slavery, their condition would be worse under that natural slavery of the weak to the strong, the foolish to the wise and cunning. The wise and virtuous, the brave, the strong in mind and body, are by nature born to command and protect, and law but follows nature in making them rulers, legislators, judges, captains, husbands, guardians, committees, and masters.

... Men are not created or born equal, and circumstances, and education, and association, tend to increase and aggravate inequalities among them, from generation to generation. Generally, the rich associate and intermarry
with each other, the poor do the same; the ignorant rarely associate with or intermarry with the learned... Men are not “born entitled to equal rights!” It would be far nearer the truth to say, “that some were born with saddles on their backs, and others booted and spurred to ride them”—and the riding does them good. They need the reins, the bit, and the spur. No two men by nature are exactly equal or exactly alike. No institutions can prevent the few from acquiring rule and ascendency over the many. Liberty and free competition invite and encourage the attempt of the strong to master the weak... Questions for Thought and Discussion:

1. Frances Anne Kemble’s depiction of plantation slavery differs in almost every respect from that of Sir Charles Lyell—in terms of hospital conditions, housing, treatment of children, working hours, and rest periods, etc. What might account for the disparity between what they saw? Between their reactions to what they saw?

2. Where Lyell speaks of the aged as “old and superannuated” and of infants as “babies,” Frances Anne Kemble refers to a “poor old slave” and to “poor little Negro sucklings.” Could it be argued, on the basis of such evidence, that Miss Kemble had a more biased view of slavery than did Lyell?

3. Lyell contrasts the “mild and forgiving” nature of plantation slaves with the “serious quarrels” and “broken heads” that characterized free Irish laborers. George Fitzhugh argues along the same lines when he claims that the “moral condition” of the slave is far better than that of “free laborers.” Are these arguments a convincing defense of slave labor? What might account for the fact that both of these men denigrate the “free laborer” class?

4. According to Fitzhugh, how was “nature” responsible for the existence of slavery? Does Fitzhugh’s analysis of the term “equality” seem convincing to you? Why or why not?

5. How do Fitzhugh’s assertions about the benefits of slavery stand up in relation to the accounts given by Frederick Douglass and Solomon Northup?

6. Was Northup’s description of the slave market an objective, factual one? Or was it “slanted” and propagandistic?

PART III

Negro Voices of Protest

The number of free Negroes grew steadily in the decades before the Civil War. By 1860 they numbered almost half a million and were about evenly divided between the North and the South. The influx to the North was augmented by newcomers who had purchased their freedom, been freed by the wills of their masters, or simply escaped, either alone or with the assistance of the “Underground Railroad.” Many Quakers and abolitionists, Negro and white, frequently risked their fortunes and their lives by acting as “conductors” at the “stations” of this underground freedom network.

Although free Negroes in the North faced almost insurmountable obstacles—in many states they were denied the right to vote, their testimony was not acceptable in courts where whites were concerned, their taxes supported public schools from which their children were excluded—many of them somehow made their way up into the trades and professions. Some became respectably middle class; a few became wealthy.

Free Negroes of the North took an increasingly active part in the antislavery movement. Their cause was not a universally popular one. Abolitionists, black and white, were often mobbed and beaten, their meetings broken up, their houses and businesses ransacked or burned, their tracts and books and presses destroyed. Yet they fought on. They fought from the pulpits, streetcorners, lecture platforms, newspaper columns—any forum available.

Their message was not always the same. Some free Negroes put their faith in reason, persuasion, and conversion. Others were not so patient. They advocated force as the only means of overthrowing slavery and resisting the laws which supported it.
George Fitzhugh

Get ready to be challenged! (Again!)
Read carefully and repeatedly the following speech excerpt by George Fitzhugh’s Sociology for the South about his views on slavery. As you read sections A, B, C, D, E, F, and G respond to the following to help you grasp the main ideas. (Hint: Using a dictionary may not be a bad idea)

George Fitzhugh

Paragraph A
1) According to Fitzhugh, why won’t democracy work for the “Negro” (blacks)?

Paragraph B
2) What does “improvident” mean? Why does Fitzhugh think this is a bad characteristic?

Paragraph C
3) What are some benefits of slavery for the blacks brought here?

Paragraph D
4) Why does Fitzhugh make the statement, “Soldiers and sailors in Europe enlist for life; here, for five years”?

5) What groups does he compare to slavery? Why does he write this?

Paragraph E
6) Why does Fitzhugh claim that many men should be slaves?
Paragraph F
7) What role does nature play in the slavery issue according to Fitzhugh?

8) What does man do in reaction to nature’s role?

Paragraph G
9) According to Fitzhugh, why aren’t men born entitled to equal rights?
The Great Debate!!

After reading a brief description and a primary source reading, you should be familiar with your person’s beliefs about slavery. Now you are going to use your gained knowledge to discuss and debate your person’s views with someone who thinks differently. You and your group will listen to your “opposite” and fill out the following based on what you hear. This means you need to listen carefully. The knowledge you gain from your adversary will be needed later.

1) What is your adversary’s name?

2) What are the views your adversary shares with you?

3) List and describe at least three specific points made by your adversary.
   a)
   b)
   c)

4) Summarize the main points of contention between your adversary and your person.

Michael Maday