



North or South?

By: Lori McDonald
Elementary school teacher; Ed.D. in School Leadership/Administration

History
Grades 9-12



Introduction

After a study of the Civil War, this activity can be used to encourage students to think about the problems that freed slaves faced even though their freedom had been granted. Students will participate in lively debate in which they will discuss whether, as freed slaves, they should stay in the South or go North.

Learning Objectives

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1](#); Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence

Materials Needed

- Access to article listed below

Procedure

Warm-up - Begin by allowing students to read [the article found here](#). This is an overview of some of the problems faced by freed slaves after the Civil War.

1. Discuss the difficulties faced by freed slaves after students have read the article. You may also want to consider having students read excerpts from the autobiographical writings of Frederick Douglass or from *Twelve Years a Slave* by Solomon Northup.
2. Put students in small groups of 4-6 students. Assign some of the students the role of defending staying in the South and let the other students defend moving to the North. Allow each group several minutes (10-15) to debate.
3. Bring all students back together to discuss their debates. Let each group share the points they heard and why or why not they felt these were good reasons.
4. Then, give students independent writing time for the writing prompt evaluation below.

Continued on page 2



North or South?

By: Lori McDonald
Elementary school teacher; Ed.D. in School Leadership/Administration

History
Grades 9-12



Continued from page 1

Evaluation

For an evaluation of the understanding of the issues at hand for freed slaves, students will complete the following writing prompt.

Imagine you are a slave who has just been freed. Where would you go? Would you stay in the South where there are people and places you know and are familiar with? Or would you head North to start a brand new life? Give specific reasons to support your decision.

Your essay should include at least five paragraphs:

- an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement that contains at least 3 reasons to support your decision
- at least 3 paragraphs in the body of the essay (One for each of your reasons with several sentences to support that reason. Give specific examples of support from your reading.)
- a concluding paragraph