

Some Northerners approved of the Southern secession. If the Union could survive only by giving in to slavery, they declared, then let the Union be destroyed. Still, most Northerners believed that the Union had to be preserved. As Lincoln put it, the issue was “whether in a free government the minority have the right to break up the government whenever they choose.”

## Lincoln Takes Over

As always, several months passed between the November election and the start of the new president’s term. Buchanan would remain in office until March 4, 1861. In December 1860, Buchanan sent a message to Congress. He said that the Southern states had no right to secede from the Union. He added that he had no power to stop them from doing so.

As Lincoln prepared for his inauguration, people throughout the United States wondered what he would say and do. They wondered, too, what would happen in Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Delaware, Maryland, and Arkansas. These slave states had not yet seceded, but their decisions were not final. If the United States used force against the Confederates, the remaining slave states also might secede.

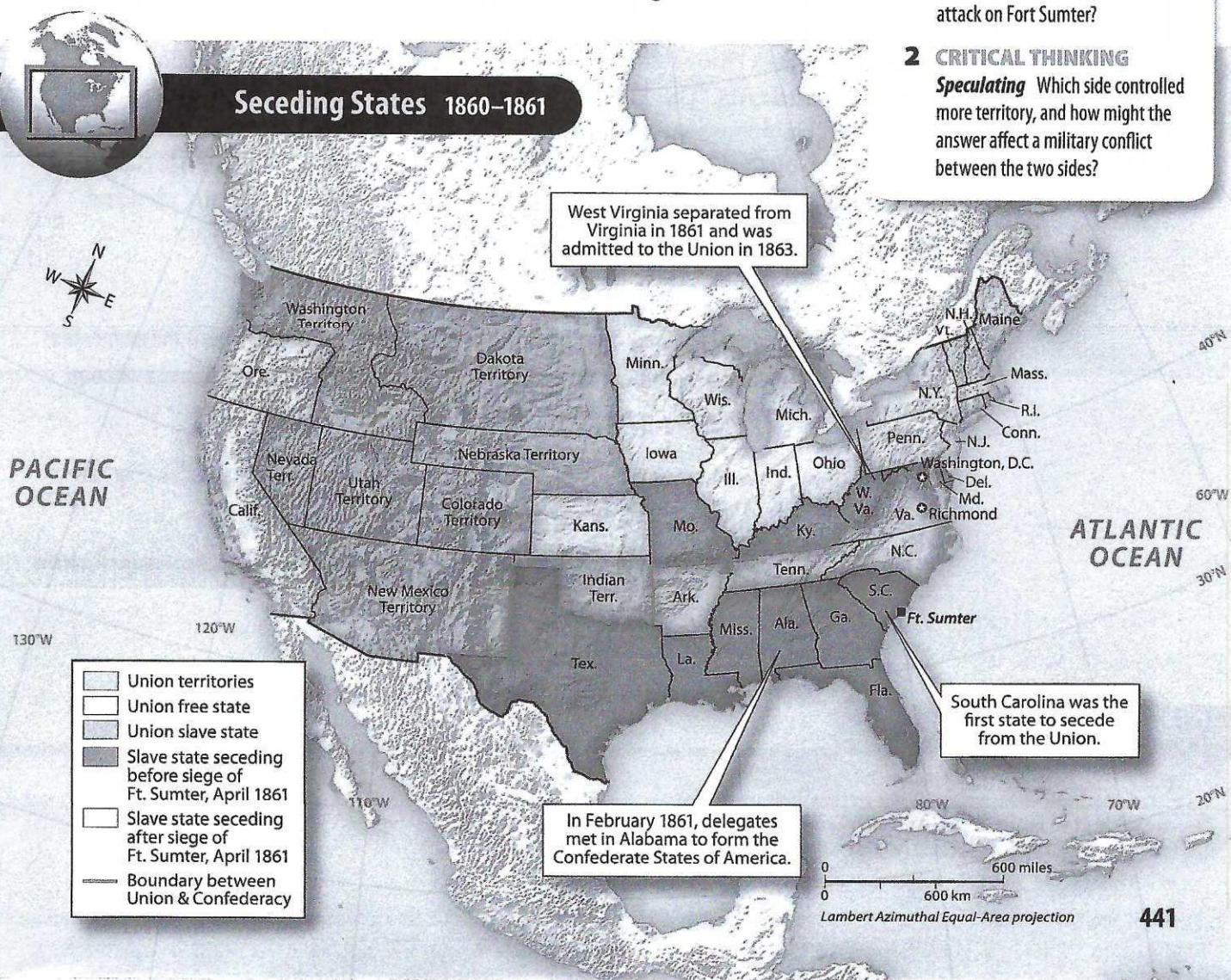
### GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

Some slaveholding states and territories did not secede from the Union.

**1 LOCATION** Which states seceded before the attack on Fort Sumter? Which seceded after the attack on Fort Sumter?

**2 CRITICAL THINKING**  
*Speculating* Which side controlled more territory, and how might the answer affect a military conflict between the two sides?

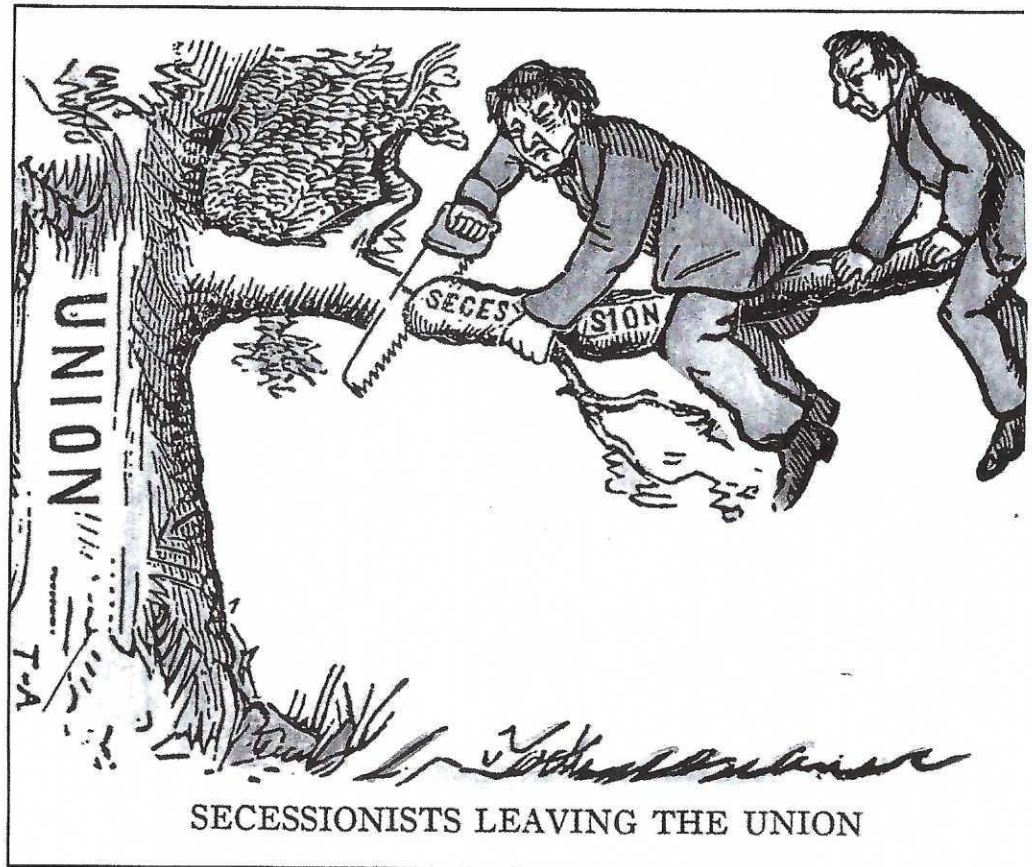
### Seceding States 1860–1861



This cartoon was created in 1861, just before the Civil War began. At that time, secession was breaking apart the United States.

**1 INTERPRETING** What do the men in the cartoon represent?

**2 CRITICAL THINKING**  
*Drawing a Conclusion* What do you think the cartoonist is predicting will happen because of the men's action?



In his Inaugural Address, Lincoln spoke to the seceding states directly. He said that he could not allow secession and that “the Union of these States is perpetual [forever].” He vowed to hold federal property in the South, including a number of forts and military installations, and to enforce the laws of the United States. At the same time, Lincoln pleaded with the South:

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

“In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of *civil war*. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. . . .

. . . We are not *enemies*, but *friends*. *We must not be enemies*. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.”

—Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address

**✓ PROGRESS CHECK**

**Explaining** What was John Crittenden’s proposal to save the Union?

Reading **HELPDESK** **CCSS**

**Build Vocabulary: Word Parts**

The suffix *-ist* on the word *cartoonist* tells you that a cartoonist is a person. The same is true of the words *pianist* (a person who plays the piano) and *essayist* (a person who writes essays). Can you think of other examples with the suffix *-ist*?

# Fighting at Fort Sumter

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What did the attack on Fort Sumter signify?*

The day after taking office, Lincoln received a message from the commander of Fort Sumter, a U.S. fort on an island guarding Charleston Harbor. The message warned that the fort was low on supplies and the Confederates demanded its surrender.

Lincoln responded in a message to Governor Francis Pickens of South Carolina that he was sending an unarmed group to the fort with supplies. He promised Union forces would not “throw in men, arms, or ammunition” unless they were fired upon.

Jefferson Davis ordered his forces to attack Fort Sumter before the Union supplies could arrive. Confederate guns opened fire on April 12, 1861. Union captain Abner Doubleday witnessed the attack from inside the fort:

## PRIMARY SOURCE

“Showers of balls . . . and shells poured into the fort in one incessant stream, causing great flakes of masonry to fall in all directions.”

—quoted in *Fort Sumter*

Meanwhile, high seas kept Union ships from reaching the fort. Facing a hopeless situation, the Union surrendered the fort on April 14. Despite heavy bombardment, no one had died.

With the loss of Fort Sumter, Lincoln decided he had to act. He issued a call for troops. Volunteers quickly signed up. In reaction to Lincoln’s call, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas voted to join the Confederacy. The Civil War had begun.

## ✓ PROGRESS CHECK

**Explaining** Why did Lincoln decide not to send armed troops to Fort Sumter?

## LESSON 3 REVIEW



### Review Vocabulary

1. Use the word *secession* in a sentence about Florida.
2. Explain the meaning of *states’ rights* as it relates to the U.S. Constitution.

### Answer the Guiding Questions

3. **Specifying** What did South Carolina do after Lincoln won the election of 1860? Why?
4. **Explaining** What was the impact of the attack on Fort Sumter?

5. **Drawing Conclusions** What was President Lincoln’s priority when he took office in March 1861?

6. **Analyzing** What role did the idea of states’ rights play in the Civil War?

7. **INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY** Write a brief newspaper article about the attack on Fort Sumter that describes the battle in an objective way, without bias for one side or the other.