

Christine Miranda

*Lesson Plan on Party Platforms in the Election of 1848*

*Introduction:* Students will study the issue of expanding slavery westward into new states and territories as a result of the Mexican War and how it affected the outcome of the presidential election in 1848.

*Objectives:* Students will:

- Understand the political and social makeup of the three political groups; Democrats, Whigs, and Free Soil Party
- Study the Democratic party platform
- Study the Whig party platform
- Study the Free Soil party platform
- Understand why the Democrats won the presidential Election of 1848

*Instruction:*

Using a powerpoint presentation, I will give the students background information on the Northern and Southern views on slavery as well as the events leading up to the Presidential election of 1848. See attached powerpoint slides.

*Guided Practice:*

Students will read, “The Political System Fractures Party Platform, 1848 “ (pp.547-551) in Wilentz. Then answer the following questions:

1. Which political party supported the Mexican War as just and necessary? What reasons did they give for doing so?
2. Which party platform supported states rights and slavery? Give some political, social and economic reasons why.
3. What were three important elements of the Whig party platform and explain why.
4. Which party wanted to limit the spread of slavery? Why didn't they want to abolish slavery?
5. Should the federal government ( Congress) or individual states or citizens have the power to determine if the new territories become slave or free states? Give reasons why.

*Independent Practice:*

In this classroom exercise, students will be divided into groups representing the Democrats, Whigs, and Free Soil party. Each group will study the party platform and choose a candidate to represent them in the Election of 1848. Then the three candidates will debate on the strengths of their individual party platforms. The rest of the group will make posters supporting their candidates and highlighting their party platform. Students will listen to the candidates and hold an election the next day to see who will win the election.

*Closure:*

Students will write an essay explaining who they would have voted for if they had been present for the 1848 presidential election and the reasons why. Follow up with a discussion in class and what they learned about the issue of states rights, slavery, free states and constitutional rights.