

Title: Was the Three-Fifths Compromise Fair?
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Abstract: When learning about the Three-Fifths Compromise, students often will memorize the ratio and perhaps even the definition of the term and then leave it at that. This lesson will allow students to visual see the effects of the Three-Fifths Compromise on the United States House of Representatives. With the use of a national census, the students will be able to chart the number representatives in each of the states under both the New Jersey and Virginia Plans in addition to the compromise. By incorporating the use of the order of operations (interdisciplinary mathematics lesson), students will determine the number of representatives in each state for each plan and then create a ranking list of states according to the number of representatives/votes. After the lists are created, students will analyze the results by answering the guided questions and determine if the Three-Fifths Compromise fairly settled the problem of representation and slavery between the northern and southern states.

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings:

1. How do political leaders solve political problems?
2. How did the idea of compromise change the government of the United States?
3. Did the Constitutional Convention effectively settle the issue of representation and slavery?

Duration: 1-2 class periods

Assessment: A list of questions will be used to help students analyze the chart ranking states according to their number of representatives under the each of the three plans. The answers the questions, more specifically the question of whether the Three-Fifths Compromise was an effective and fair solution, will demonstrate if the students have sufficiently understood the lesson.

Setting the Purpose:

The students will analyze James Madison's Constitutional Convention notes from Monday, July 9, 1787 (primary source). Students will be asked to determine the two groups of states debating over the issue of representation and slavery. In addition, students will identify the arguments for both the northern and southern states. The teacher will provide guidance and highlight specific portions of Madison's notes to analyze.

Analysis of and Ties to Another National Primary Source:

The other national primary source used the lesson is the lesson is the 1790 U.S. Census. The teacher will instruct the students the use the information on the website, "[Slave Population in 1790](#)", to determine the number of United States representatives for each states. While working small groups or pairs, the students will then use the following equations to determine the number of representatives for each plan:

Northern States Plan	Southern States Plan	3/5ths Compromise
$\frac{\text{Total Pop.} - \text{Slave Pop.} = \text{Non-Slave Pop.}}{30,000}$	$\frac{\text{Total Pop.}}{30,000}$	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total Pop. – Slave Pop. = Non-Slave Pop. 2. $\frac{(\text{Non-Slave Pop.} + (3/5)(\text{Slave Pop.}))}{30,000}$

The students will use the ratio of 1 representative for every 30,000 constituents in each state. The ratio was taken from Article I of the Constitution. The instructor will also remind students not to round up or down, but to simply use the whole number after finishing the calculations. Furthermore, the teacher will also review the order of operations from mathematics class to help students determine the number of representatives under the Three-Fifths Compromise.

After the students have determined the number of representatives, they will list and rank the states under each plan from greatest (#1) to least (#13) on the Three-Fifths Compromise Ranking Chart.

With the assistance of the teacher, the students will then analyze the different rankings of each of the plans noting the significant changes in power in the House of Representatives. Students will see how states move up and down the rankings as they lose and gain number of representatives/votes under each proposal.

Annotated List of Materials and Resources for the Lesson:

Copies of Three-Fifths Compromise Ranking Chart & Questions

Slave Population in 1790 (United States census information)

<http://www.vw.vccs.edu/vwhansd/HIS121/Census1790.html>

Copies of The Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 reported by James Madison: July 9, 1787. (The Avalon Project at Yale University)

Set of classroom calculators

Computers with Internet access

Projector