**United States History Klausur
The John F. Kennedy School**Victoria L, Rebecca S, Christian P, Isabelle P, Isabelle K

**Theme:** **To what extent was slavery the primary cause for the Civil War?**

**Directions**: Write one unified essay, which evaluates two opposing visions for America embodied in the first political parties. The documents provided must be integrated into the body of your essay. You may paraphrase or quote the documents, but in either case you must cite the source (document, line number). When analyzing the material, provide *specific* historical references—utilizing both the documents provided and previous historical knowledge—to support your thesis.

Provide an appropriate title for your essay. Write on both sides of the paper, number the pages, leave five lines between paragraphs and underline your thesis statement.

1. Identify and describe five distinct and significant causes of the Civil War.
2. Carefully analyze the documents dealing with acts of secession and slave abolition to illustrate how the institution of slavery might have led to the Civil War.
3. Based on the five significant causes you described in Task 1, develop an analytical essay which assesses the degree to which slavery was *the primary* cause of the Civil War.

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**Source A: Mississippi Declaration of Secession. January 9, 1861.**

*A Declaration of the Immediate Causes which Induce and Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union*

In the momentous step, which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery - the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product, which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin.

That we do not overstate the dangers to our institution, a reference to a few facts will sufficiently prove.

The hostility to this institution commenced before the adoption of the Constitution, and was manifested in the well-known Ordinance of 1787, in regard to the Northwestern Territory.

The feeling increased, until, in 1819-20, it deprived the South of more than half the vast territory acquired from France. The same hostility dismembered Texas and seized upon all the territory acquired from Mexico.

It has grown until it denies the right of property in slaves, and refuses protection to that right on the high seas, in the Territories, and wherever the government of the United States had jurisdiction.

It refuses the admission of new slave States into the Union, and seeks to extinguish it by confining it within its present limits, denying the power of expansion.

It tramples the original equality of the South under foot.

It has nullified the Fugitive Slave Law in almost every free State in the Union, and has utterly broken the compact, which our fathers pledged their faith to maintain.

It advocates negro equality, socially and politically, and promotes insurrection and incendiarism in our midst.

It has broken every compact into which it has entered for our security…

Utter subjugation awaits us in the Union, if we should consent longer to remain in it. It is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. We must either submit to degradation, and to the loss of property worth four billions of money, or we must secede from the Union framed by our fathers, to secure this as well as every other species of property. For far less cause than this, our fathers separated from the Crown of England.

Our decision is made. We follow their footsteps. We embrace the alternative of separation; and for the reasons here stated, we resolve to maintain our rights with the full consciousness of the justice of our course, and the undoubting belief of our ability to maintain it.