

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Goal

Students work with numbers to see how representation in the House of Representatives was calculated under the Constitution, see why Southern and Northern states argued over slave population counts, and understand why the Three-Fifths Compromise was primarily about political power and representation—not a statement about human value.

Instructions

1. Divide students into pairs or small groups.
2. Read the instructions together as a class.
3. Give student pairs about 8–10 minutes to determine how many representatives (1 per 30,000) that each hypothetical state gets, using the free/slave population numbers, and decide whether that state would support the 3/5 compromise or not.
4. Ask for volunteers to offer their answers, and discuss as a class.
5. **SWITCH-UP:** Now tell teams that **slaves count for full persons** and have them **recalculate** the populations AND determine how many representatives each state has now!

Key (3/5 Representation)

STATE A: Free: 148,000; Slave: 4,000 $3/5$ of 4,000 = 2,400, so total: 150,200 (5 representatives)
STATE B: Free: 61,000; Slave: 89,000 $3/5$ of 89,000 = 53,400, so total: 114,400 (3 representatives)
STATE C: Free: 122,000; Slave: 0 $3/5$ of 0 = 0, so total: 122,000 (4 representatives)
STATE D: Free: 84,000; Slave: 66,000 $3/5$ of 66,000 = 39,600, so total: 123,600 (4 representatives)

Key (Full Representation)

STATE A: Free: 148,000; Slave: 4,000 **New Total: 152,000 (still 5 representatives)**
STATE B: Free: 61,000; Slave: 89,000 **New Total: 150,000 (5 representatives – 2 additional)**
STATE C: Free: 122,000; Slave: 0 **Same Total: 122,000 (still 4 representatives)**
STATE D: Free: 84,000; Slave: 66,000 **New Total: 150,000 (5 representatives – 1 additional)**

Wrap-Up/Final Direction

Ask students:

- Which states gained the most political power when slaves counted fully?
- Which states gained little or nothing?
- Why would Northern states resist full counting?
- Why would Southern states favor it?
- Why is it inaccurate to say the Three-Fifths Compromise said slaves were “worth” only 3/5 of a person?

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For each state below, do the following:

1. Calculate the population used for representation (free persons + $\frac{3}{5}$ slave population).
2. Determine the number of House representatives; assume 1 representative per 30,000 individuals.
3. Decide: Would this state **SUPPORT** the Three-Fifths Compromise or **OPPOSE** it? Why?

STATE A: Free: 148,000; Slave: 4,000

Population used for representation:

Number of House representatives:

Would this state support the $\frac{3}{5}$ compromise or not?

STATE B: Free: 61,000; Slave: 89,000

Population used for representation:

Number of House representatives:

Would this state support the $\frac{3}{5}$ compromise or not?

STATE C: Free: 122,000; Slave: None

Population used for representation:

Number of House representatives:

Would this state support the $\frac{3}{5}$ compromise or not?

STATE D: Free: 84,000; Slave: 66,000

Population used for representation:

Number of House representatives:

Would this state support the $\frac{3}{5}$ compromise or not?

