



The Civil War Political Tradition offers many opportunities to stimulate students' interest in research. Some easily accessible primary sources relating to the Compromise of 1850 provide material for a vigorous and enlightening classroom debate about slavery in the territories.

I suggest choosing students (or teams of students) to research and then argue for the positions of Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Jefferson Davis, Stephen Douglas, and Salmon Chase. Each of these figures is discussed in *The Civil War Political Tradition*, and the primary sources will deepen the students' understanding.

For Henry Clay, the students could look up his compromise proposals and his speech in the Senate of February 5 and 6, 1850 (which appears in some documents readers as well as the *Congressional Globe*). For Calhoun, his speech of March 4, 1850 is important, and also his "positive good" speech of 1837, or his speech of June 27, 1848 on Oregon, or his position on the territories in response to the Wilmot Proviso. These documents are available online.

For Jefferson Davis, his position on the territories is in the *Congressional Globe*, 31st Congress, 1st Session, p. 249. For Douglas, even more important than his skill in passing the legislation of 1850 is his interpretation of its significance thereafter, which is found in his speech in the Senate, January 30, 1854. That speech was his reply to the "Appeal of the Independent Democrats" of January 19, 1854, which is available online and in many other sources.

By analyzing and debating these positions, your students can gain a deeper understanding of the conflict over slavery in the territories and experience some of the excitement of research.