

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**Using Source Materials**

HISTORICAL CONTEXT In 1801 a series of large, outdoor, religious meetings were held in Kentucky. Mass revivals later spread through the other western states. In the 1820s and 1830s preachers such as Charles Finney promoted revivalism in western New York and other parts of the Northeast. The movement became known as the Second Great Awakening. Religious passion intensified. Church membership soared. The Awakening also helped spark an era of social reform. Americans moved by spiritual fervor became a force for cultural change in the mid-1800s.

TASK Using information from the documents and your knowledge of American history, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay.

Part A

DIRECTIONS Examine the following documents and answer the short-answer questions that follow each document.

DOCUMENT 1

The meeting was protracted for weeks. Ministers of almost all denominations flocked in from far and near. The meeting was kept up by night and day. Thousands heard of the mighty work, and came on foot, on horseback, in carriages and wagons . . . From this camp-meeting . . . the news spread through all the Churches, and through all the land, and it excited great wonder and surprise; but it kindled a religious flame that spread all over Kentucky and through many other states.

—Description of a camp meeting in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, 1801
Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, The Backwoods Preacher

1. Who attended the camp meeting at Cane Ridge?

2. How does Cartwright assess the impact of the camp meeting?

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**DOCUMENT 2**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *depravity*, *sanctification*, *penitents*, *ere*, *incessant*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

It was in the course of this summer that I found the opportunity I had long wished for, of attending a camp-meeting . . . this was in a wild district in the confines of Indiana . . .

At midnight a horn sounded through the camp, which, we were told, was to call the people from private to public worship; and we presently saw them flocking from all sides to the front of the preachers' stand . . . There were about two thousand persons assembled.

One of the preachers began in a low nasal tone, and, like all other Methodist preachers, assured us of the enormous depravity of man as he comes from the hands of his Maker, and of his perfect sanctification after he had wrestled sufficiently with the Lord to get hold of him . . .

The preachers came down from their stand and placed themselves in the midst of it, beginning to sing a hymn, calling upon the penitents to come forth. As they sang they kept turning themselves round to every part of the crowd, and, by degrees, the voices of the whole multitude joined in chorus . . . but ere I had well enjoyed it, the scene changed . . .

Above a hundred persons, nearly all females, came forward, uttering howlings and groans, so terrible that I shall never cease to shudder when I recall them. They appeared to drag each other forward, and on the word being given, "let us pray," they all fell on their knees . . . they were soon all lying on the ground in an indescribable confusion of heads and legs. They threw about their limbs with such incessant and violent motion, that I was every instant expecting some serious accident to occur.

—Frances Trollope, English traveler in America
Domestic Manners of the Americans, 1832

1. What was the message of the preacher's sermon?

2. Why do you think some people at this camp meeting howled, groaned, and flailed on the ground?

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**DOCUMENT 3**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *backslidden*, *profligates*, *harlots*, *infidels*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

There is so little principle in the church, so little firmness and stability of purpose, that unless the religious feelings are awakened and kept excited, counter worldly feeling and excitement will prevail, and men will not obey God . . . The state of the world is still such, and probably will be till the millennium is fully come, that religion must be mainly promoted by means of revivals . . .

1. A revival always includes conviction of sin on the part of the church. Backslidden professors cannot wake up and begin right away in the service of God, without deep searchings of heart . . .

2. Backslidden Christians will be brought to repentance. A revival is nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God. Just as in the case of a converted sinner, the first step is a deep repentance, a breaking down of heart, a getting down into the dust before God, with deep humility, and forsaking of sin.

3. Christians will have their faith renewed . . . They will feel grieved that others do not love God, when they love him so much. And they will set themselves feelingly to persuade their neighbors to give him their hearts. . . They will have a longing desire for the salvation of the whole world . . .

5. When the churches are thus awakened and reformed, the reformation and salvation of sinners will follow . . . Very often the most abandoned profligates are among the subjects. Harlots, and drunkards, and infidels, and all sorts of abandoned characters, are awakened and converted. The worst part of human society are softened, and reclaimed, and made to appear as lovely specimens of the beauty of holiness.

—Charles Finney, revivalist minister
Lectures on the Revivals of Religion, 1835

1. What criticisms does Charles Finney make regarding the church?

2. How does Finney suggest that revivals can have a larger social impact on America?

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**DOCUMENT 4**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *execrate*, *intemperance*, *lazar*, *ardent*, *proscribed*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

We execrate the cruelties of the slave trade—the husband torn from the bosom of his wife—the son from his father—brothers and sisters separated forever—whole families in a moment ruined! But are there no similar enormities to be witnessed in the United States? None indeed perpetrated by the bayonet—but many, very many, perpetrated by intemperance.

Every year thousands of families are robbed of fathers, brothers, husbands, friends. Every year widows and orphans are multiplied, and grey hairs are brought with sorrow to the grave—no disease makes such inroads upon families, blasts so many hopes, destroys so many lives, and causes so many mourners to go about the streets . . .

We have heard of the horrors of the middle passage—the transportation of slaves—the chains—the darkness—the stench—the mortality and living madness of woe—and it is dreadful. But bring together the victims of intemperance, and crowd them into one vast lazar-house, and sights of woe quite as appalling would meet your eyes . . .

The commerce therefore, in ardent spirits, which produces no good, and produces a certain and an immense amount of evil, must be regarded as an unlawful commerce, and ought, upon every principle of humanity, and patriotism, and conscience, and religion, to be abandoned and proscribed.

—Lyman Beecher, Presbyterian minister
Six Sermons on Intemperance, 1827

1. How does Lyman Beecher compare intemperance with the slave trade?

2. What change is Beecher calling for?

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**DOCUMENT 5**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *adjudicated*, *begotten*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

The case of Human Rights against Slavery has been adjudicated in the court of conscience times innumerable. The same verdict has always been rendered—"Guilty;" the same sentence has always been pronounced, "Let it be accursed;" and human nature, with her million echoes, has rung it round the world in every language under heaven, "Let it be accursed. Let it be accursed." . . . There is not a man on earth who does not believe that slavery is a curse. Human beings may be inconsistent, but human *nature* is true to herself. She has uttered her testimony against slavery with a shriek ever since the monster was begotten . . .

We will prove that the slaves in the United States are treated with barbarous inhumanity; that they are overworked, underfed, wretchedly clad and lodged, and have insufficient sleep; that they are often made to wear round their necks iron collars armed with prongs, to drag heavy chains and weights at their feet while working in the field, and to wear yokes . . . that they are often kept confined in the stocks day and night for weeks together, made to wear gags in their mouths for hours or days, have some of their front teeth torn out or broken off, that they may be easily detected when they run away; that they are frequently flogged with terrible severity . . .

Reader, what have you to say of such treatment? Is it right, just, benevolent? Suppose I should seize you, rob you of your liberty, drive you into the field, and make you work without pay as long as you live, would that be justice and kindness, or monstrous injustice and cruelty?

—Theodore Weld, revivalist minister and abolitionist
American Slavery as It Is, 1839

1. According to Theodore Weld, what is the condition of slaves in the United States?

2. Does Weld use legal, religious, or moral reasoning to make the case that slavery is wrong? Explain.

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**DOCUMENT 6**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *reverence, endeavor, naught, Jehovah*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

In every man's mind the good seeds of liberty are planted, and he who brings his fellow down so low, as to make him contented with a condition of slavery, commits the highest crime against God and man. Brethren, your oppressors aim to do this. They endeavor to make you as much like brutes as possible. When they have blinded the eyes of your mind—when they have embittered the sweet waters of life—when they have shut out the light which shines from the word of God—then, and not till then has American slavery done its perfect work.

TO SUCH DEGRADATION IT IS SINFUL IN THE EXTREME FOR YOU TO MAKE VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION. The divine commandments, you are in duty bound to reverence, and obey. If you do not obey them you will surely meet with the displeasure of the Almighty He requires you to love him supremely, and your neighbor as yourself—to keep the Sabbath day holy—to search the Scriptures—and bring up your children with respect for his laws, and to worship no other God but him. But slavery sets all these at naught and hurls defiance in the face of Jehovah . . .

Brethren, the time has come when you must act for yourselves. It is an old and true saying, that “if hereditary bondmen would be free, they must themselves strike the blow.” You can plead your own cause, and do the work of emancipation better than any others.

—Henry Highland Garnet, African American minister
An Address to the Slaves of the United States, 1843

1. How does Henry Garnet use religion as part of his argument against slavery?

2. What do you think Garnet had in mind when he encouraged slaves to “act for yourselves”?

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
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Before You Read The following word in the document below may be new to you: *fettered*. You may want to use a dictionary to look it up.

You seem greatly alarmed at the idea of our advocating the rights of woman . . .

Can you not see that women could do, and would do a hundred times more for the slave if she were not fettered? Why! We are gravely told that we are out of our sphere even when we circulate petitions; out of our “appropriate sphere” when we speak to women only; and out of it when we sing in the churches. Silence is our province, submission our duty . . . If we are to do any good in the Anti Slavery cause, our right to labor in it must be firmly established . . . How can we expect to be able to hold meetings much longer when people are so diligently taught to despise us for thus stepping out of the ‘sphere of woman!’ Look at this instance: after we had left Groton the Abolition minister there, at Lyceum meeting poured out his sarcasm and ridicule upon our heads and among other things said, he would as soon be caught robbing a hen roost as encouraging a woman to lecture . . . If we surrender the right to speak to the public this year, we must surrender the right to petition next year and the right to write the year after and so on. What then can woman do for the slave when she is herself under the feet of man and shamed into silence? . . .

Anti Slavery men are trying very hard to separate what God hath joined together. I fully believe that . . . no such attempt can ever be successful. They blend with each other like the colors of the rainbow.

—Angelina Grimké, abolitionist and women’s rights advocate
Letter to abolitionists Theodore Weld and John Greenleaf Whittier
August 20, 1837

1. According to Angelina Grimké, what was expected of women at the time?

2. Why do you think Grimké began fighting for women’s rights as well the rights of slaves?

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**Writing a Document-Based Essay**

HISTORICAL CONTEXT In 1801 a series of large, outdoor, religious meetings were held in Kentucky. Mass revivals later spread through the other western states. In the 1820s and 1830s preachers such as Charles Finney promoted revivalism in western New York and other parts of the Northeast. The movement became known as the Second Great Awakening. Religious passion intensified. Church membership soared. The Awakening also helped spark an era of social reform. Americans moved by spiritual fervor became a force for cultural change in the mid-1800s.

TASK Using information from the documents and your knowledge of American history, write an essay in which you:

- Explain why so many people attended religious revivals in the early 1800s.
- Discuss how the Second Great Awakening inspired movements for social change in America.

Part B

DIRECTIONS Using the information from the documents provided and your knowledge of history, write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, a body of several paragraphs, and a conclusion. In the body of the essay, use examples from at least *four* documents. Support your response with relevant facts, examples, and details. Include additional outside information.

GUIDELINES

In your essay, be sure to:

- Address all aspects of the **Task** by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least *four* documents.
- Incorporate information from the documents in the body of the essay.
- Incorporate relevant outside information.
- Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details.
- Use a logical and clear plan of organization.
- Introduce the theme by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple statement of the **Task** or **Historical Context**.
- Conclude the essay with a summation of the theme.