

- David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (1976).
“Thus slavery suddenly emerged as a transcendent sectional issue in its own right, and as a catalyst of all sectional antagonisms, political, economic, and cultural. . . . The slavery question became the sectional question, the sectional question became the slavery question, and both became the territorial question. . . . From the sultry August night in 1846 when Wilmot caught the chairman’s eye, the slavery question steadily widened the sectional rift until an April dawn in 1861 when the batteries along the Charleston waterfront opened fire on Fort Sumter. . . .”
- Michael Holt, *Forging a Majority: The Formation of the Republic Party in Pittsburgh, 1848–1860* (1969).

“Politics did not revolve around [slavery and the South] just as politics today does not revolve around communism, although most people dislike it. Instead, social, ethnic, and religious considerations often determined who voted for whom between 1848 and 1861. Divisions between native-born Americans and immigrants and between Protestants and Catholics, rather than differences of opinion about the tariff or the morality of slavery, distinguished Whigs and Republicans from Democrats. . . . Interpreting the rise of the Republican party in the North solely in terms of hostility to slavery or economic issues is, therefore, too simplified.”

Using the excerpts, answer parts a, b, and c.

- a) Briefly explain ONE major difference between Potter and Holt’s historical interpretation of the politics of the 1850s.
- b) Briefly explain how ONE development from the period 1844 to 1861 not directly mentioned in the excerpts supports Potter’s argument.
- c) Briefly explain how ONE development from the period 1844 to 1861 not directly mentioned in the excerpts supports Holt’s argument.