

# NULLIFICATION CRISIS

## FACILITATION GUIDE

### PREPERATION BEFORE CLASS

## REVIEW BACKGROUND

Here's some background information to help prepare you to lead your students through this role-play.

### SUMMARY

Set in Charleston, South Carolina in 1832, this VOXPOP revolves around the question of nullifying the federal Tariff of 1828. Students take on the roles of Laborers, Plantation Owners, Abolitionists, Northerners and Merchants. Students work together to craft South Carolina's response to the crisis by voting on proposals (see page 5).

### KEY QUESTIONS

- How should the country balance the power of states and the federal government?
- How should residents and the government respond when state and federal laws clash?

### STUDENT ROLES

As students log into VOXPOP, they are distributed across the following five groups:

PLANTATION OWNER	MERCHANT	NORTHERNER	LABORER	ABOLITIONIST
<p>Plantation Owners feel trapped by a new federal tariff that helps the North and hurts the South. They say that the tariff is unconstitutional, and we should ignore it!</p> <p><b>Plantation Owners support proposals that priotize law &amp; order.</b></p>	<p>Merchants say that ignoring the tariff breaks federal law. This could start a civil war!</p> <p><b>Merchants support proposals that balance power between the federal government and South Carolina.</b></p>	<p>Northerners say that every state makes sacrifices to be part of the union. States can't ignore federal laws; if they did, the country would fall apart!</p> <p><b>Northerners support proposals that empower the federal government.</b></p>	<p>Laborers fear the growing unrest between Black and White people in South Carolina. They worry that another slave rebellion will wipe out life as they know it.</p> <p><b>Laborers support proposals that give more authority to South Carolina.</b></p>	<p>Abolitionists say that the tariff is only an excuse: what Plantation Owners really care about is slavery. They fear that if the state ignores the federal tariff now, they'll ignore future federal laws against slavery.</p> <p><b>Abolitionists worry about proposals that undermine federal authority.</b></p>

# SETUP

Prepare to run the role-play in your classroom.

## CREATE A SESSION

Create a session for each class period in which you will run the role-play. Go to:

[voxpath.io/role-plays/the-nullification-crisis](https://voxpath.io/role-plays/the-nullification-crisis)

You will be asked to **Name** your session. We suggest naming it after the class period in which you will run it.

Then you will be asked to enter your **email address**, so we can send you an email with the link to the session. Save the email and use it to open the session when the class starts.

VOXPOP saves your progress as you play, so you can run the role-play over multiple days. Just click on the link in the email to re-open it.

## DECIDE ON DURATION

In this guide, we suggest timings for a 60-minute session, including notes about sections that you can skip if you are pressed for time.

For a more relaxed experience, you can split the role-play into multiple sessions. Running a VOXPOP over two 45-minute sessions works particularly well. Look for the + in suggested timings to see where it's beneficial to add time. If you split the role-play into two sessions, we suggest ending the first day after the Issues (page 3). You can always revisit the videos the next day if you like. Just hit the Back button at the bottom.

## CLASSROOM SETUP

When you're ready to start the role-play, use the link in the email to open the session on your classroom's main screen.

Students should each use an individual device to log in and interact with the role-play. They can use any web-enabled device, including PCs, Chromebooks, tablets and phones.

You can leave desks in their normal configuration, but students will be moving around the class and meeting in different groups throughout the role-play. They should carry their device with them when they move.



# INTRODUCTION

During this phase students are introduced to the situation, read their profiles and get into character.

10 minutes total

## ASSIGN PROFILES - 3 min

Before class starts, open the VOXPOP session you created on your classroom screen.

As students arrive they can log in on their web-enabled device by going to the **URL**

[voxpath.io/student](https://voxpath.io/student)

Students should then enter the 6-character alphanumeric **Code** displayed on the classroom screen.

They will be asked to type in a display name.

- If students are returning to a session that's already in progress, they must type their name exactly as they did before. Names are case- and punctuation-sensitive.
- Names will be displayed on the classroom screen.

As students log in, they will be assigned to **Groups** and their name will appear on the screen.

If students arrive late, you can bring up the **URL** & session **Code** by clicking on .

## WELCOME - 1.5 min

A video introduces students to VOXPOP.

## THE SITUATION - 4 min

A video provides the historical background that students need to know.

## PROFILES - 3 min

Your students receive information about their roles, including their **Group** and a personal **Bio**.

Students should hit the yellow button on their screen when they're done reading.

## INTRODUCTIONS - 3 min

In this phase, students get into character by introducing themselves to one another.

Walk around and look at your students' profiles to get a sense of who they are.

# VALUES

During this phase students discuss their group's goals and share them with the class.

10 minutes total

## VALUES INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

## DISCUSS VALUES - 4+ min

Students meet with their **Group** and establish common goals.

Each **Group** has a different question to discuss. The questions are listed below along with their group's perspective on the value. Each **Group** must each select one representative to explain the answer to the class.

PLANTATION OWNERS value SAFETY	MERCHANTS value PEACE	NORTHERNERS value UNITY	LABORERS value INDEPENDENCE	ABOLITIONISTS value AUTHORITY
<p><b>Why does South Carolina need to make and enforce our own laws?</b></p> <p>South Carolina is in danger of economic collapse and slave rebellions.</p> <p>The federal government has no idea how to protect us!</p>	<p><b>Why would ignoring the tariff threaten peace?</b></p> <p>If South Carolina ignores the tariff, the federal government might see it as rebellion.</p> <p>Military conflict with the federal government would destroy South Carolina.</p>	<p><b>Why would ignoring the tariff threaten unity in the U.S.?</b></p> <p>Every state makes sacrifices to be part of the union.</p> <p>If states start ignoring federal laws, the country could fall apart!</p>	<p><b>Why does the Constitution protect state independence?</b></p> <p>States know what is best for themselves!</p> <p>The Constitution limits federal power because states know what their people need.</p>	<p><b>Why is federal authority important for abolition?</b></p> <p>South Carolina will never outlaw slavery because rich slaveholders have too much power.</p> <p>Our only hope is for the federal government to outlaw slavery.</p>

## SHARE YOUR VALUES - 5 min

In this phase, students practice public speaking and learn about the other **Groups**.

Encourage **Groups** to cheer for each other and show support for the **Values** that align with theirs.

As you click **Next**, the software will call up the **Groups**, in this order:

- PLANTATION OWNERS
- MERCHANTS
- NORTHERNERS
- LABORERS
- ABOLITIONISTS

# ISSUES

During this phase, we break the challenge facing the class into three issues.

8 minutes total

ISSUES INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

THE ISSUES - 7+ min

VOXPOP divides the conflict into three main **Issues**. There is one video per **Issue**.


These are the **Issues**:

FINANCE	LAW	POWER
<p>South Carolina produces raw material, mainly cotton and rice. It relies on imports for almost everything else, from clothing to farm equipment. In an attempt to make Northern goods more competitive with European goods, the federal government passed the Tariff of 1828.</p> <p>Nullifiers say the tax is unconstitutional because it only helps Northern businesses. Unionists argue tariffs will benefit everyone in the long run.</p> <p><b>How should we save South Carolina's economy? Should we stand up to the federal government?</b></p>	<p>Many residents live in fear of slave rebellions. To keep the state safe many Laborers have stepped up the use of citizen's arrests. Abolitionists and Northerners say these arrests must stop.</p> <p><b>How do we keep the state safe?</b></p>	<p>Nullifiers insist that the federal government can only exercise the powers given in the Constitution. All other powers belong to the states.</p> <p>Unionists argue that when state conventions ratified the Constitution, they ceded final authority to the federal government.</p> <p><b>If a state law breaks a federal law, does the state law need to change?</b></p>

## POST-VIDEO DISCUSSIONS - Time-permitting

A discussion question will appear after each video plays, with suggestions for groups to call on. These classwide discussions are a good way to review the **Issues** and establish alliances between **Groups**.

However, **they are not necessary, and discussion is not included in the time estimates** given in this guide.

If you choose to answer the questions with your class, remind students to click the **Perspective** button  to learn more about what their group thinks.

# COMMITTEES

During this section, students are divided into committees to work on one of the three issues.

10 minutes total

## COMMITTEE INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

## WORK IN COMMITTEES - 9 min

In this phase, students must work with members of other **Groups** to select proposals that address the crisis.

Students from each **Group** are distributed across three **Committees**.

In their **Committees**, students:

- Vote on their individual devices to select one **Proposal** for a whole class vote,
- Pick a representative to explain and argue for their **Proposal** to the class,
- If applicable, pick a representative to present arguments against the proposal.

These are the **Proposals**:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE	COMMITTEE ON LAW	COMMITTEE ON POWER
<p><b>BUY LOCAL GOODS</b></p> <p>Encourage Carolinians to buy only Southern goods.</p> <p>Supporters: MERCHANTS</p>	<p><b>MORE ARRESTS IN CHARLESTON</b></p> <p>Demand more law enforcement to punish small crimes like loitering and public drunkenness.</p> <p>Supporters: PLANTATION OWNERS, LABORERS</p>	<p><b>BUILD A SOUTH CAROLINA ARMY</b></p> <p>Unlike the South Carolina militia, which can be commanded by the president, the new army will only be controlled by the state.</p> <p>Supporters: PLANTATION OWNERS, LABORERS</p>
<p><b>NULLIFICATION</b></p> <p>Declare the tariffs unconstitutional and stop paying them. South Carolina will reject a federal law but remain part of the union.</p> <p>Supporters: PLANTATION OWNERS, LABORERS</p>	<p><b>STOP CITIZEN'S ARRESTS</b></p> <p>Deny civilians the power to arrest or detain another person if they see them committing a crime.</p> <p>Supporters: ABOLITIONISTS</p>	<p><b>STOP JAILING BLACK SAILOR</b></p> <p>The federal government commanded us to stop jailing Black sailors because it violates a trade agreement with Britain.</p> <p>Supporters: MERCHANTS, ABOLITIONISTS</p>

Your students' devices have more information about the proposals they can access by clicking 

**Ask your students to tell you more about the proposals.**

## VOTE & EPILOGUE

During this section, students debate the solutions, cast votes, learn about what really happened and reflect on the experience.

17 minutes total

### VOTE INTRO - 1 min

A video explains the next activity.

### DEBATE & VOTE - 9 min

The class decides by majority vote whether to pass the **Proposals** selected by the **Committees**.

This is an opportunity for students to practice public speaking as they attempt to persuade classmates to vote for or against proposals.

**Encourage debate! This is the last chance to address the crisis.**

As you click **Next**, the website will prompt a **DEBATE** and then a **VOTE** on each proposal, in this order:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

COMMITTEE ON LAW

COMMITTEE ON POWER

### WHAT HAPPENED - 7+ min

An **Epilogue** video explains what really happened.

When the video is done playing, these suggested discussion questions appear:

- Do you think states should have the power to ignore federal laws?
- Are citizen's arrests a good idea? How should regular citizens uphold or enforce the law?

The post-activity discussion gives students time to decompress from the role-playing experience.