

Law On Edge Answer Key

Student responses should show the following core understandings:

1. Major turning point in U.S. law

- Court declared African Americans were **not citizens**
- Limited federal power to restrict slavery → weakened balance over slavery issue

2. Legal and social changes

- Rights denied; African Americans categorized as **property**, not protected individuals
- Reinforced racist laws and social beliefs

3. Regional reactions

- North = anger, stronger antislavery movement
- South = support for spread of slavery
- Deepened division between regions, increasing tension

4. Path to Civil War

- Intensified conflict between free and slave states
- Increased distrust in government decisions
- Helped push political compromises to the breaking point

Final Thought:

- Reasoning should be historically grounded and reflect understanding of fairness, rights, and citizenship.

Differentiation

- Support: Allow students to use their notes or a short reference sheet.
- Challenge: Ask students to reference the 14th Amendment or legal precedents overturned by later cases.

Engagement Strategies

- Conduct a short debate on whether courts should follow past precedents or change them.
- Use Think-Pair-Share before individual writing so students verbalize ideas first.