Arguments Used to Justify Slavery

**Directions***:* Although freed slaves and abolitionists attempt to expose its brutality, the peculiar institution of slavery persisted in America for over 250 years. Southerners attempted to justify this institution. With a partner, explain which arguments would have been most convincing to a Southerner and which were weak attempts to defend an institution they knew was wrong.

1. Defenders of slavery argued that the sudden end to the slave economy would have had a profound and killing economic impact in the South where reliance on slave labor was the foundation of their economy.

**Strong** **Weak**

5 4 3 2 1

**Explanation**:

1. Defenders of slavery argued that if all the slaves were freed, there would be widespread unemployment and chaos.

**Strong** **Weak**

5 4 3 2 1

**Explanation:**

1. Defenders of slavery argued that slavery had existed throughout history and was the natural state of mankind.

**Strong** **Weak**

5 4 3 2 1

**Explanation**:

1. Defenders of slavery noted that many prophets in the Bible had slaves and the Bible did not denounce the institution of slavery.

**Strong** **Weak**

5 4 3 2 1

**Explanation**:

1. Defenders of slavery turned to the courts, who had ruled, with the Dred Scott Decision, that all blacks — not just slaves — had no legal standing as persons in our courts — they were property, and the Constitution protected slave-holders' rights to their property.

**Strong** **Weak**

5 4 3 2 1

**Explanation**:

1. Defenders of slavery argued the science of phrenology which studied the size and shape of skulls proved that African-Americans were inferior and therefore it was only naturally for the strong to dominate the weak.

**Strong** **Weak**

5 4 3 2 1

**Explanation**:

1. Defenders of slavery argued that by comparison with the poor of Europe and the workers in the Northern states, that slaves were better cared for.

**Strong** **Weak**

5 4 3 2 1

**Explanation**:

**Directions**: Rank them from strongest (1) to weakest (7) and explain your rankings.

**Ranking**:

**Explanation**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.