

The United States' Civil War
Grades 6-8

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TBTE 412

Introduction

The Civil War era is one of the most critical and fascinating times in our nation's history. The many books and Websites about this period written for young audiences provide a rich context in which to learn about the Civil War itself and to explore more basic issues about the nature of human life and society. The North and South had some shared cultures, such as Manifest Destiny, political institutions and parties, religious denominations, and the military, but they were all killed by sectionalism. As political views began to change and became more sectional war seemed inevitable. With land issues, slavery, and sectional political views it seemed as though the North and South had no other option but to go to war.

Hindsight shows that sectionalism and controversy in the United States started as early 1793 when Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin. The cotton gin gave the south power of manufacturing that they never had before. The Compromise of 1850 seemed to call a cease-fire to the endless debates on slavery and slave laws in new states. Two years down the road things just got worse. The release of Uncle Tom's Cabin and the election of 1852 showed that the controversy was only getting worse. The election of 1852 fractured political parties and started sectional politics. Then within the next five years the United States faced the Kansas/Nebraska Act (1854), Bloody Kansas (1856), and the Dred Scott case (1857).

One month after Abraham Lincoln is voted president (even without any Southern electoral votes) South Carolina seceded from the Union; followed within two months by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. A few months later the Confederate States of America is formed with Jefferson Davis as its president.

The Civil War officially began in 1861 when the confederates opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. As more states secede from the Union, the battles continue all over the country. From the First Bull Run, Shiloh, Antietam, to Gettysburg and Grant's march to the sea, many Americans lost their lives fighting for what they believed.

General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses Grant at Appomattox in 1865, putting the final nail in the Confederate's coffin, ending the bloodiest war in American history. Then in December 1865 Congress passes an amendment banishing

slavery. The Civil War seemed to be over, but the same controversies and differences still plagued the United States for years to come.

Generalizations/Main Ideas

- Change (History-Sociology): Human society is characterized by change.
- Conflict (History-Political Science): Whenever human beings have lived, conflicts between individuals, groups, and nations have arisen. Although conflicts have some negative effects on society, they are often the impetus for effective change.
- Culture (History-Anthropology): Wherever humans have lived, they have developed systems of artifacts, beliefs, and behavior patterns that enabled them to satisfy their physical and social needs.
- Historical Bias (History): A historian's view of the past is influenced by the availability of evidence, his or her personal biases and purposes for writing, and the society and times in which he or she lives and writes.
- Government: Within every society, some individual or group is authorized to make binding decisions and to allocate values. Many different types of political systems are used in various societies to determine public policy and to regulate behavior.
- Leadership: Leaders emerge when individuals are able to articulate and personify the wishes and goals of groups; leaders lose their power and influence when groups perceive their goals as different from those of the leaders.
- Discrimination: Groups are often the victims of discrimination and prejudice because of age, sex, race, religion, or cultural differences.

Concepts of the Unit

- Culture
- Tradition
- Ethnocentrism
- Family
- Prejudice, Discrimination
- Values
- Conflict

Behavioral Objectives of the Unit

- Knowledge – recall of specifics (particularly dates and battles), universals, methods, and patterns.
- Comprehension – basic understanding of material such that it can be transformed into another mode, interpreted, summarized or cast into simple outcomes (i.e. why the South lost/ North won)
- Application – using abstractions and knowledge to solve specific or straightforward problems (i.e. writing a letter explaining to the “enemy” why you are on a particular side of the war)
- Analysis – comprehending the elements in a communication, identifying their interactions and distinguishing its structure.
- Synthesis – producing a novel structure given its constituent parts.
- Evaluation – using internal and external evidence to make judgments according to certain criteria (i.e. deciding which side had the better argument and whether or not you agree with either side).

Lesson Plans

1. Topic: Introduction (beginning events leading to the war)

Generalizations: Human society is characterized by change; whenever human beings have lived, conflicts between individuals, groups, and nations have arisen. Although conflicts have some negative effects on society, they are often the impetus for effective change; wherever humans have lived, they have developed systems of artifacts, beliefs, and behavior patterns that enabled them to satisfy their physical and social needs; groups are often the victims of discrimination and prejudice because of age, sex, race, religion, or cultural differences.

Grade: 6th-8th grades

Time: Two 45-minute periods

Assessment of student performance: Each student will be assessed by a reflection in the next lesson.

Key words: Cotton Gin, government (Union, Confederacy), secession, discrimination/prejudices, war. Dates: 1793, 11-6-1860, 2-9-1861, 4-12-1861, 7-21-1861, 9-17-1862, 7-1-1863, 11-15-1864, 4-9-1865, 12-6-1865.

Lesson development: Essential questions 1) What were the main causes for the war? 2) Who were the main “characters” involved in the war? 3) What were the major battles? 4) What was the turning point for the North?

Interest building: Raise interesting questions/discussions at beginning of lesson – i.e. Can any of you imagine fighting a war against other Americans; What about against your own family; How would that make you feel; Can you imagine anything that you could believe in that would make you want to do such a thing?

Lesson development: Students will be engaged in a discussion regarding war, which leads into our topic, the Civil War. Then, as a class, we will go over a time line with important dates, battles, and names. After reading about sectional issues, the students will be broken up into 4 groups – two focusing on the North and two focusing on the South. Each group will have to brainstorm the issues of why their side went to war, along with the advantages and disadvantages. Then we will come back together as a class and discuss each group’s outcomes.

Summary: Each student should have a basic understanding of issues leading to war from both the Northern and Southern sides. They should also become familiar with important dates and names.

Materials: Timeline, brainstorm webs.

2. Topic: Early reflections

Generalizations: A historian’s view of the past is influenced by the availability of evidence, his or her personal biases and purposes for writing, and the society and times in which he or she lives and writes.

Grade: 6th-8th grades

Time: One 45-minute period

Assessment of student performance: Each student’s knowledge of the previous lesson will be assessed by this reflection project. The reflection will be assessed by the student’s answers to specific questions and whether or not they transfer the knowledge from the previous lesson.

Key words: Cotton Gin, government (Union, Confederacy), secession, discrimination/prejudices, war. Dates: 1793, 11-6-1860, 2-9-1861, 4-12-1861, 7-21-1861, 9-17-1862, 7-1-1863, 11-15-1864, 4-9-1865, 12-6-1865.

Lesson development: Essential questions 1) If you could have chosen a side, which one would you have chosen and why? 2) If this war could have been avoided, what steps needed to be taken? 3) Do you think that we are a stronger nation for going through this turmoil and this war? 5) If so, why (government, family, God, etc)?

Interest building: Raise interesting questions/discussions at beginning of lesson – i.e. try to imagine yourself in the 1860s; if you had to choose a side, which one would you choose?

Lesson development: Students will be engaged in a reflection project regarding the Civil War. Then, as a class, we will go over each student's choice and reasons.

Summary: Each student should have a basic understanding of issues leading to war from both the Northern and Southern sides. They should also become familiar with important dates and names. They should also begin personalizing the war in their own way.

Materials: Reflection journals.

3. Topic: Antietam (in depth look into Antietam and the South)

Generalizations: Human society is characterized by change.

Whenever human beings have lived, conflicts between individuals, groups, and nations have arisen. Although conflicts have some negative effects on society, they are often the impetus for effective change.

A historian's view of the past is influenced by the availability of evidence, his or her personal biases and purposes for writing, and the society and times in which he or she lives and writes.

Leaders emerge when individuals are able to articulate and personify the wishes and goals of groups; leaders lose their power and influence when groups perceive their goals as different from those of the leaders.

Groups are often the victims of discrimination and prejudice because of age, sex, race, religion, or cultural differences.

Grade: 6th-8th grades

Time: One 45-minute period

Assessment of student performance: Assessment for this lesson will come at the end of the unit.

Key words: Government (Union, Confederacy), secession, discrimination/prejudices, war. Dates: 9-17-1862.

Lesson development: Essential questions 1) Could this battle have been fought differently to prevent casualties? 2) What could Lee have done differently to avoid this tremendous loss? 3) How did this hurt the South's morale and army?

Interest building: Raise interesting questions/discussions at beginning of lesson – i.e. imagine you live in South Carolina and these Northerners are trying to tell you how to live your life; how does that make you feel? Does the defeat at Antietam hurt your morale or make you worry about losing the war?

Lesson development: Students will recognize the Southern perspective and values.

Summary: Each student should have a basic understanding of issues being fought over in this war from both the Northern and Southern sides. They should also know important dates and names. They will also be personalizing the war in their own way.

Materials: Pictures of Confederate soldiers, their families, and battle scenes from Antietam.

4. Topic: Gettysburg (in depth look into Gettysburg and the North, accompanied by a trip to the battlefield)

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Grade: 6th-8th grades

Time: One 45-minute period, the next day visiting the battlefield.

Assessment of student performance: Assessment for this lesson will come at the end of the unit.

Key words: Government (Union, Confederacy), secession, discrimination/prejudices, war. Dates: 7-1-1863.

Lesson development: Essential questions 1) Could this battle have been fought differently to prevent casualties? 2) What could Lee have done differently to avoid this most important loss? 3) How did this hurt the South's morale and army?

Interest building: Raise interesting questions/discussions at beginning of lesson – i.e. imagine you live in Pennsylvania and your army has just stopped General Lee's advancement; how does that make you feel? Does the victory at Gettysburg improve your morale or make you think about you are going to win the war?

Lesson development: Students will recognize the Southern perspective and values.

Summary: Each student should have a basic understanding of issues being fought over in this war from both the Northern and Southern sides. They should also know important dates and names. They will also be personalizing the war in their own way.

Materials: Pictures of Union soldiers, their families, and battle scenes from Gettysburg, clip from the movie Remember the Titans.

5. Topic: Glory (watch and discuss the movie Glory)

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Grade: 6th-8th grades

Time: Two 45-minute periods.

Assessment of student performance: Assessment for this lesson will come at the end of the unit.

Key words: Government (Union, Confederacy), secession, discrimination/prejudices, war. Dates: 11-6-1860, 2-9-1861, 4-12-1861, 7-21-1861, 9-17-1862, 7-1-1863, 11-15-1864, 4-9-1865, and 12-6-1865.

Lesson development: Essential questions 1) Have your views on African Americans from this era changed? 2) Why or why not? 3) Did this movie give you a better idea of what the soldiers (from the North and South) had to go through and what those times were like? 4) What was a review in this movie and what new information have you gained?

Interest building: Raise interesting questions/discussions at beginning of lesson – i.e. Pick one of the soldiers from the beginning and imagine you are in the movie fighting this war. Keep track of your character and record what actions you like and what actions with which you disagree.

Lesson development: Students will recognize the African American perspective and values; along with learning more about the Northern and Southern armies.

Summary: Each student should have a good understanding of issues being fought over in this war from both the Northern and Southern sides. They will also now have a better understanding of the African American culture from this era.

Materials: Glory.

6. Topic: Poetry and music

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Grade: 6th-8th grades

Time: One 45-minute period.

Assessment of student performance: Assessment for this lesson will come at the end of the unit.

Key words: Discrimination/prejudices, culture.

Lesson development: Essential questions 1) Have your views on African Americans from this era changed? 2) Why or why not? 3) Did this lesson give you a better idea of what the African American people had to go through and what those times were like for them? 4) Did you get a better look at their culture and values during this era?

Interest building: Begin by playing "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and then ask the students where this song came from and why? Then give a brief description of a Negro Spiritual.

Lesson development: Students will develop an appreciation the African American perspective and values. Students will also gain appreciation for the rhythm and rhyme of the music of which came out of the Negro Spirituals and how it influenced their lives.

Summary: Each student should have a good understanding of issues being fought over in this war from both the Northern and Southern sides. They will also now have a better understanding of the African American culture from this era.

Materials: Cultural music and poetry from the Civil War era.

7. Topic: Sherman's march to the sea and Lee's surrender

Generalizations: Whenever human beings have lived, conflicts between individuals, groups, and nations have arisen. Although conflicts have some negative effects on society, they are often the impetus for effective change.

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Leaders emerge when individuals are able to articulate and personify the wishes and goals of groups; leaders lose their power and influence when groups perceive their goals as different from those of the leaders.

Grade: 6th-8th grades

Time: One 45-minute period.

Assessment of student performance: Assessment for this lesson will come at the end of the unit.

Key words: War, conflict, and strategy.

Lesson development: Essential questions 1) Do you agree that this was an appropriate way to attack the South? 2) Why or why not? 3) How did this effect the North and the South?

Interest building: Ask the students if they can imagine how large an area is with dimensions 300 miles by 60 miles. What can we compare that to in order to get an image of how large that really is? Then continue with the lesson explaining that this was the size of the destruction that Sherman in his march to the sea.

Lesson development: Students will take a close look at the North's strategies at this stage of the war. Students will also take a close look at the values of the North, South, and also at their own values and beliefs.

Summary: Students will know the North's strategies and strengths and how these strategies and strengths pushed them over the Southern army. The students will also see a destructive side of the North that might surprise them.

Materials: Visuals of the size of Sherman's path (maps and pictures)

8. Topic: Final Project – letter to friend on “the other side” convincing them why you chose your side.

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Grade: 6th-8th grades

Time: One 45-minute period.

Assessment of student performance: Students will be assessed on how well they integrate the information from the previous lessons into their letter. Their assessment will come mainly from how they answer these questions – Was your friend able to see and feel the same things you did when he/she read your letter? Did you include all of the information found? Were you able to identify the leaders of your battle (Gettysburg, a pre-selected battle by the teacher)?

Key words: War, conflict, strategy, battle, Confederate, Union, cause and effect.

Lesson development: Essential questions 1) Can the student relate to both the Northern and the Southern sides? 2) What are the Northern priorities and values by

the end of the war³) What are the Southern priorities and values by the end of the war?

Interest building: A letter from the United States Government explaining the war situation and explaining to the student they and their best friend have been called to off to battle on opposing sides.

Lesson development: Students will take a close look at the North's and South's strengths, resources, and values. Students will also take a close look at their own values and how they can relate to the Northern and/or Southern soldiers.

Summary: Students will know the North's and South's strategies and strengths and how these strategies and strengths led to either victory or defeat. The students will also have an understanding of what events caused the Civil War, what battles were important, when those battles took place, and what were the main reasons why the North won and the South lost.

Materials: www.stonewall.fayette.k12.ky.us/wq/cwwwebquest/cwintro.htm, writing material for the letters.

Evaluation of the unit

I will evaluate the success of the unit mostly by comparing the students' early reflections with their end of the unit letters. I would like to see that they use more factual information as the unit goes on and that they understand both sides of the war. Growing up the North, the students probably have had some prejudices going into the unit. But by the end, they should see and understand the South's culture, value, and strategies. If I can view this change in their attitudes and their writing, then I believe that the unit was worth it.

I will physically assess the unit with the letter project from the last lesson. Grading on the factual information they provide as well as their persuasive writing. Depending on which side of the war the students are on will depend on how I grade their letters. It will depend on the factual information from either the North or the South. This project will count as the end of the unit test.

Biography/Resources

www.stonewall.fayette.k12.ky.us

www.historyplace.com

www.smplanet.com

www.yale.edu