

The Civil War: A Nation Divided: Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum Focus: U.S. History

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

Explore the social and economic forces that shaped the North's industrial cities and the South's plantations. See how the discord between pro-slavery and antislavery advocates erupted at Fort Sumter. Retrace the major events of the Civil War. And investigate the earlier, assassination attempts that Lincoln survived.

- Discord, Clash, and Conflict (5 min.)
 - North vs. South (4 min.)
 - A Nation Goes to War (4 min.)
 - The Plots Against the President (34 min.)
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Onscreen Questions

- What inventions affected the economies of the North and the South?
 - How did the South depend on labor from enslaved Africans?
 - How was the Civil War unlike any other previous war?
 - Why did the Confederate states want to remove Lincoln from office?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Discuss major differences between the North and South and how these differences led to the Civil War.
- Examine conflicting opinions about Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.
- Explore and analyze a famous speech or writing by Abraham Lincoln.

Materials

- *The Civil War: A Nation Divided* program
- Computer with Internet access
- Resources about the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln.

Procedures

1. After watching *The Civil War: A Nation Divided*, discuss how regional differences contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War. The following questions will help guide the conversation.
 - How did the economies of the North and South differ before the Civil War? (The North was industrialized; the South was agricultural.)
 - Why was slavery so important to the South? (Landowners depended on slaves to work in the fields; the South's economy was entirely dependent on slavery.)
 - How did the addition of new states to the Union create dispute? (Free states and slave states both worried about the other side having an advantage. The Missouri Compromise, for example, was designed to maintain a balance of power.)
2. Review some of the significant events that, from 1860 to 1861, led 11 Southern states to secede from the Union. For example:
 - Compromise of 1850
 - Fugitive Slave Act
 - Publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
 - Dred Scott Decision
 - Kansas-Nebraska Act
 - John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, Virginia
3. Discuss conflicting opinions of Abraham Lincoln during the war. Ask students: Did most Northerners and Southerners feel the same way about the President? What was the Emancipation Proclamation? How did it affect peoples' feelings towards Lincoln? How did it change the war? Help students understand that the Confederates were angered by this edict to abolish slavery, believing it would ruin the Southern economy. The Emancipation Proclamation also shifted the emphasis of the war from keeping the nation together to a struggle to free the slaves.
4. In the video, students learned about several assassination attempts on Lincoln's life. Ask: Why would people want to kill the president? (They believed that removing Lincoln from power would leave the Union weak and help the South win the war.)
5. Explain that students will read and analyze a famous speech or writing by Lincoln to better understand his views. Either assign or have them choose one of the following:
 - First Inaugural Address (March 4, 1861)

- Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863)
- The Gettysburg Address (November 19, 1863)
- Second Inaugural Address (March 4, 1865)

Students can find these online at:

<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/speech.htm> and
<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/writings.htm>.

6. To help students with historical context, remind them that the war began April 12, 1861, when Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter, South Carolina, and that it ended on April 9, 1865, when General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at the village of Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. For other important dates, direct them to this online Civil War Timeline: <http://www.historyplace.com/civilwar/index.html>.
7. Once students have read through their speech or writing, ask them to write a brief essay that addresses the following.
 - When did Lincoln make this speech or present this writing?
 - Briefly summarize Lincoln's message.
 - Describe the tone or language he used, giving at least one significant quote as an example.
 - How do you think most Northerners and most Southerners responded to the speech or writing. Why?
 - What reaction do you imagine Americans today would have to the speech or writing?
 - How do you think this speech or writing affected the Civil War?
8. During the next class period, give students an opportunity to share their essays. Then discuss their ideas and findings. Ask: What impact did the speeches and writings have on the Civil War? In what ways did the responses differ between the North and South? How do most Americans respond to Lincoln's words today?

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were active in class discussions; demonstrated a strong understanding of differences between the North and South, significant events leading to the Civil War, and conflicting opinions about Abraham Lincoln; wrote a thorough, engaging essay about Lincoln's speech or writing.
- 2 points: Students participated in class discussions; demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of differences between the North and South, significant events leading to the Civil War, and conflicting opinions about Abraham Lincoln; wrote a clear, complete essay about Lincoln's speech or writing.

- 1 point: Students did not participate in class discussions; demonstrated a weak understanding of differences between the North and South, significant events leading to the Civil War, and conflicting opinions about Abraham Lincoln; wrote a vague or inaccurate essay about Lincoln's speech or writing.

Vocabulary

abolitionist

Definition: Person who worked to end slavery during the 18th and 19th centuries

Context: Abolitionist John Brown had a bold plan to strike against slavery.

Confederate states

Definition: Southern states that that seceded from the U.S. to form their own nation, the Confederate States of America

Context: Lincoln's push to end slavery angered the Confederate states.

Dred Scott Decision

Definition: Supreme Court decision that stated Congress had no power to ban slavery anywhere, including the territories

Context: While the fighting went on in Kansas, the Supreme Court issued the controversial Dred Scott Decision, named after a slave.

Emancipation Proclamation

Definition: An edict issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863, making slavery illegal in the Confederate states

Context: The Emancipation Proclamation made slavery illegal in the 11 rebelling southern states, but it left slavery in place in the states which had stayed loyal to the Union.

Fugitive Slave Act

Definition: A law passed by Congress in 1850 that required the return of runaway slaves

Context: Northerners protested the Fugitive Slave Act.

Kansas-Nebraska Act

Definition: A law passed in 1854 that allowed the majority of settlers in each territory to decide whether or not they would allow slavery in the area

Context: The Kansas-Nebraska Act was proposed by Illinois senator Stephen Douglas.

popular sovereignty

Definition: The pre-Civil War doctrine asserting that settlers within each territory should decide whether or not to allow slavery

Context: The Kansas-Nebraska Act proposed the idea of popular sovereignty.



secede

Definition: To withdraw from the nation

Context: In late 1860 and early 1861, seven Southern states seceded from the United States and formed the Confederate States of America.

Union states

Definition: Northern states that remained loyal to the federal government during the Civil War

Context: President Abraham Lincoln asked Union states to send troops to put down the rebellion in the Confederate states.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- U.S. History: Era 5 – Understands the causes of the Civil War; Understands the course and character of the Civil War and its effects on the American people

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to

<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
 - Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
 - Power, Authority, and Governance
 - Production, Distribution, and Consumption
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How to Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into four segments (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. Discord, Clash, and Conflict (5 min.)

Industrialization and increased immigration in the United States in the 1800s created economic and societal changes. See how advancements in technology and transportation affected a growing nation.

II. North vs. South (4 min.)

A key component of the Southern economy, slavery became a hotly debated issue as the Civil War drew closer. Examine how tensions over slavery contributed to the outbreak of war."

III. A Nation Goes to War (4 min.)

The world's first industrial war, the U.S. Civil War took a terrible toll on a young nation. Explore its origins, outcome, and consequences.

IV. The Plots Against the President (34 min.)

Now revered as one of the greatest U.S. presidents in history, Abraham Lincoln was not so warmly received during his time. Investigate some of the plots to kill the president.

Curriculum Units

1. The Industrialization of America

Pre-viewing question

Q: How have advancements in transportation technology affected the modern world?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: If the Erie Canal had not been built, how might the United States be different today?

A: Answers will vary.

2. Economies of the North and South

Pre-viewing question

Q: What are reasons that people emigrate?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How might U.S. history have been different if Irish immigrants had settled in the South?

A: Answers will vary.

3. The Debate Over Slavery

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you know about the abolitionist movement in the United States?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Should the Southern states have been allowed to secede peacefully from the Union?

A: Answers will vary.

4. The Civil War

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do you think the Civil War could have been avoided?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What were the costs of the Civil War?

A: Although the Civil War ended in victory for the Union, the win came at a huge cost. Much of the South lay in ruins. Countless families had lost their homes and more than 600,000 soldiers had died – more than the American losses in World War I and II, Korea, and Vietnam combined.

5. Abraham Lincoln: A Marked Man

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why would someone want to kill the leader of a country?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Why did Lincoln's presidency provoke a series of assassination attempts?

A: Answers will vary.

6. Alleged Plots and Threats

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever felt threatened by someone's words or actions?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How do you think history would have changed if Lincoln had been killed before the Civil War ended?

A: Answers will vary.

7. Random Shot or Assassination Attempt?

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever done something dangerous despite the known risks?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Do you think Confederate sharpshooters were aiming for Lincoln?

A: Answers will vary.

8. Re-creating an Assassination Attempt

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do you think an assassin could accurately hit a target 800 yards away?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Was Lincoln foolish or brave for having visited the battlegrounds at Fort Stevens?

A: Answers will vary.

9. Anger and Politics

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever disagreed with an authority figure?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Do any modern political situations mirror the anger the Confederates felt for Lincoln?

A: Answers will vary.

10. The Wooden-Box Bomb

Pre-viewing question

Q: Was attacking the White House a practical plot?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Why wasn't the wooden-box bomb's blast force as strong as anticipated?

A: The box blew apart very quickly, which allowed the blast force to dissipate.

11. The Torpedo Bomb

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do you think the White House is secure from bombs and other acts of violence?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Do you think the blast from the second bomb would have been enough to kill Lincoln?

A: Answers will vary.

12. Bombing the White House: Possible Impact

Pre-viewing question

Q: Did the Confederates have any justification in attempting to assassinate the president?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What might have happened if the Confederate bombers had not been captured?

A: Answers will vary.

13. A Confederate Conspiracy?

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you know about Lincoln's assassination?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Do you think John Wilkes Booth was working for the Confederates?

A: Answers will vary.