Can’t We All Just Get Along?

WebQuest Description: A look at the America Civil War  
Grade Level: 9-12  
Curriculum: Social Studies  
Keywords: 
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Introduction

The American Civil War 
Also known as the "War Between the States," was started when arguments between the North and South grew intense.

Tasks

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

analyze pictures that show the faces of the American Civil War

discuss some of the reasons the Confederate and Union soldiers fought

explain the motives behind moves made by both the U.S. and the C.S.A.

Activity 1: Off to War
Ask students when they last wrote a hand written letter. What prompted them to write their letters? Now ask them when they last sent an email, and what occasioned their writing it. Did any of these communications contain important news? If students had something highly important to convey, what means of communication would they use? Why?

Now ask students how important they think letter writing may have been in 19th century America. With telegraphs, but no telephones, and relatively slow means of transportation, people were often separated from one another without any other way to communicate except by letter. Ask students to imagine they are living during the Civil War. They themselves, or one of their family members, has just enlisted and gone off to fight. How important would it be to receive a letter in this situation? What would those left at home hope to hear about? What would those gone off to fight yearn to know?

Now show a segment from the first video of the PBS series The Civil War. Begin with "Traitors and Patriots" at 53:18 and stop at the end of "Gun Men" at 113:05. This portion of the video describes the signing on of volunteers for the Union and Confederate armies during the opening months of the war. Ask students as they watch it to pay special attention to any quotations from letter (or diary) writers. After viewing the segment hold a discussion of the following:

• Did the men who signed on envision a long or short war? What important choices did men have to make in these early days of the war? Why do you think men from each side enlisted? (If you have not covered events leading up to the Civil War, you can show the first 50 minutes of the video.)

• For example why might Sam Watkins from Tennessee (who owned no slaves) have enlisted to fight for the Confederacy? Why did Lee reject the offer to be general of the Union forces, and instead choose the Confederacy? What did this decision portend for the future of the Civil War?

• Were African Americans at first allowed to fight? What happened to fugitive slaves who fled to the North?

• The program describes what Grant, Lee, Sherman (and other soon-to-be important players in the Civil War) did in these early days. But the program also quotes men like Elisha Hunt Rhodes from Rhode Island, and Sam Watkins from Tennessee, men whose names were never destined to be remembered in textbooks. What of importance can we learn about the war based on what these men may have written?

• If you were a man living during 1861, would you have enlisted? If you were a woman, would you have wanted your brothers, husbands and fathers to sign up?

Civil War Letters Analysis Worksheet

• What can we infer about the letter writer at the time the Civil War started, his or her home, family members, work, level of education? How do you know?

• Can we tell which side the author of this letter supported, the Union or Confederacy? If so, how do we know? Give specifics.

• What is happening during the Civil War at the time the letters were written? (Students can check their texts and/or internet sources)

• If the author is a man, why do you think he has enlisted? Does he say anything about the views or attitudes he holds that have led him to make the commitment to fight, or can we infer them in any way?

• If the author is a woman, does she say anything that enables us to know which side of the conflict she supports and why?

• If either the author or recipient is a woman, what can we learn about the lives of women during the Civil War from the letters? How did women make sacrifices for or contributions to the war effort, even though they themselves could not fight or hold political power?

Civil War Letters Analysis Worksheet

- Franklin County, Pennsylvania: David
Demus to Mary Jane Demus, November 8, 1863 and February 23, 1864.http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browsemod?id=F3060http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=F309• Franklin County, Pennsylvania: Letters of E. and Fannie Hunt, December 1, 1861http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=F0647http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/civwarlett-browse?id=F0648AssessmentStudents can be assessed (either by the teacher or fellow students) on the letters they wrote, according to the following rubric:• Did the student create a believable character and consistently write and respond to events as that character?• Did the student cover the topics in all three rounds in depth, thereby reflecting a solid understanding of Civil War events?• Were the letters well written, detailed, and carefully proofread?• Did the student include the enclosures with each letter, and was care taken to make them seem authentic?• Were envelopes labeled properly? Was an effort made to make the letters appear authentically old?• Did the student respond effectively to the letters he or she was sent?Credits Schur, J. B. (n.d.). The Civil War . In the Classroom . Classroom Activities . Lesson Plan | PBS. PBS: Public Broadcasting Service. Retrieved March 29, 2011, from http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/classroom

**Evaluation**

Let's see how you did....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>Does not meet</th>
<th>Needs improvement</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worksheet</td>
<td>No questions are answered.</td>
<td>Most questions are answered completely, and some of these are answered correctly.</td>
<td>All questions are answered completely, and most are answered correctly.</td>
<td>All questions are answered completely and correctly.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work</td>
<td>One person is left to do the assignment without any assistance.</td>
<td>An obvious inequality in the workload can be seen.</td>
<td>Group members agree upon and divide the work, but slight differences in fairness are evident.</td>
<td>Group members agree upon and share equal amounts of the work, looking to one another for assistance.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neatness and attractiveness</td>
<td>Messy and difficult to read.</td>
<td>Not messy, but plain. Appears as if little effort was put into the assignment.</td>
<td>Neat. Appears as if effort was put into the assignment.</td>
<td>Neat and attractive!</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Score 12

**Conclusion**

This concludes our lesson on the American Civil War. I hope you enjoyed the lesson while learning about American History!

**Teacher Page**

I hope this webquest can help you in learning about the American Civil War. This lesson is geared towards secondary grade level students and can be altered as needed.

Sunshine State Standards included in this lesson:SS.7.C.2.10: Examine the impact of media, individuals, and interest groups on monitoring and influencing government. SS.7.C.2.11: Analyze media and political communications (bias, symbolism, propaganda). SS.7.C.3.6: Evaluate Constitutional rights and their impact on individuals and society.SS.7.C.3.7: Analyze the impact of the 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th amendments on participation of minority groups in the American political process.

**Standards**

**Credits**

**Other**