

Document-Based Activities

U.S. History

Book 2

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR • AMERICA IN WORLD WAR II • CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

Implementing CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2

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Background Information

For many years, a dispute existed between the Northern and Southern states over the issue of slavery. When debate and compromise failed, the states drifted further apart and eleven Southern states seceded from the Union. The North insisted that these states had no right to secede and that the Union must be preserved. In April 1861, civil war began between the North and the South. Americans fought Americans during four years of bloody battles.

The Abolitionist Movement—Abolitionists hoped to eliminate the practice of slavery in America and used various means to accomplish their goals. This antislavery movement had its roots back in the colonial days when groups such as the Quakers voiced their opposition to slavery. At the start of the Civil War, the abolitionists gave their support to the Union cause.

The War Begins—The first battle of the Civil War took place when Confederate forces attacked United States troops at Fort Sumter in Charleston, SC. Union troops were forced to surrender.

Dorothea Dix: Civil War Nurse—Although never formally trained as a nurse herself, Dorothea Dix became the Union Superintendent of Nurses during the Civil War. Her no-nonsense attitude and high standards sometimes discouraged women volunteers; however, her tireless commitment to her job won the appreciation and recognition of the government.

Recruitment Poster—These colorful posters were a popular way of attracting would-be soldiers to enlist in the Civil War. Pertinent information on them included where to sign up, the amount of salary paid to soldiers, and the length of service.

A Civil War Christmas—Thomas Nast, editorial cartoonist during the American Civil War, designed illustrations for *Harper's Weekly*. In the print pictured in this section, life on the home-front during the Civil War is poignantly contrasted with life on the battlefield.

The Battle of the Ironclads—In 1862 two ironclad ships, the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, battled each other in a Virginia harbor for almost three hours. This was the first American naval battle between two ironclad vessels.

The Congressional Medal of Honor—The Medal of Honor is the highest recognition of a soldier's bravery and valor.

The Siege of Vicksburg—The city of Vicksburg, Mississippi, was a strategic Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. Controlling this city was vital to both sides in the war. After a two-month siege, the city surrendered to Union general Ulysses S. Grant.

Sherman's March to the Sea—After winning the Battle of Atlanta, General Sherman's forces continued east through Georgia all the way to Savannah on the coast. During the march to the sea, Sherman's forces destroyed much that was in their way. Following a short siege, the city of Savannah surrendered to General Sherman.

The Diary of a Confederate Girl—During the siege of Atlanta in 1864, a ten-year-old girl named Carrie Berry kept a diary of her life in the battered city. Her thoughts, hopes, and fears are apparent and provide a firsthand account of the family's struggles.

The True Issue or "That's What's the Matter"—An 1864 cartoon illustration pictured Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis trying symbolically to split the country and General George McClellan trying to preserve it.

The Emancipation Proclamation—In this famous 1863 document, President Lincoln declared that all slaves in states fighting against the Union were to be freed.

The Gettysburg Address—President Lincoln was invited to give remarks at the dedication of a national cemetery for those who died at the Battle of Gettysburg. Although very short, this is one of the most famous speeches in American history.

Surrender at Appomattox Court House—The Civil War finally ended on April 9, 1865, when General Robert E. Lee formally surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at a private home in Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

Abraham Lincoln—As president, Abraham Lincoln was sworn to protect the Union and the Constitution of the United States. When Southern states formed their own government and seceded from the United States, the Civil War began. Shortly after the war ended, President Lincoln was assassinated.

Robert E. Lee—Robert E. Lee was a graduate of the United States Military Academy and had served in the United States Army before the Civil War began. When the war started, he resigned from the United States Army and served in the Army of the Confederacy, rising to the rank of general.



General Lee surrenders to General Grant at the McLean House

Recruitment Poster

At the outset of the war, recruiting posters like the one pictured below appeared all over the North. These posters pointed out the urgent need for volunteers and warned, "Don't wait to be drafted!"

In the illustration at the top of the poster, the citizen on the left is saying, "We will come. We know our country's need and will respond to her call . . ."

The soldier on the right is saying, "Americans! Your country calls. Your cherished institutions and your Noble Flag are threatened by rebels and traitors . . ."

Transcript of excerpt:

This fine Regiment, one of the best in the Army of the Potomac, has been an active participant in the engagements on the Peninsula, and particularly distinguished itself during the "SEVEN DAYS' FIGHTING," having captured the Colors of the 14th North Carolina Regiment at the Battle of Malvern Hill. The term of enlistment of this Regiment will be out in **NINE MONTHS. DON'T WAIT TO BE DRAFTED!**

A GREAT RUSH

Cost what it may,
The Nation must be Saved!

36TH REGIMENT
NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS,
Commanded by **COLONEL W. H. BROWN.**

This fine Regiment, one of the best in the Army of the Potomac, has been an active participant in the engagements on the Peninsula, and particularly distinguished itself during the "SEVEN DAYS' FIGHTING," having captured the Colors of the 14th North Carolina Regiment at the Battle of Malvern Hill. The term of enlistment of this Regiment will be out in

NINE MONTHS.
DON'T WAIT TO BE DRAFTED!
THE USUAL BOUNTY GIVEN.
Recruiting Office, No. 17 CENTRE STREET,
BETWEEN CLAMBERS AND HUND FIFTEEN.
Lieut. G. H. MOORE, Recruiting Office.

PULLER & GODWIN, Printers, Printing-House Square, Opposite City Hall, New York.

Name _____ Date _____

Questions

1. Where was the regiment located?

2. What was the length of the term of enlistment?

3. Would the soldiers be paid?

4. What American symbols appear on the poster?

5. In your opinion, would the poster be effective in attracting volunteers? Give reasons.
