Civil War Lesson #7: Effects of the Civil War

Major Topics:
- Effects of the war on different populations
- Massive death and destruction caused by the war
- Long-term consequences of the war

How did the Civil War impact different groups of Americans?

This lesson addresses the effects of the Civil War on multiple populations. Students learn about the unprecedented scale of death and destruction, and what that meant for the country that needed to rebuild and heal at the end of the war. They also study the experiences of Americans who did not serve as soldiers. The varied roles of women, African Americans, and the people who cared for the wounded all provide students with an up-close and complex understanding of the meaning of war. Students also learn about longer-term consequences of the war, including Lincoln’s assassination, as well as the physical destruction of much of the south. Moreover, they will come away with a picture of how warfare, and the country in general would never look the same after 1865 as the federal government took a vast new size and shape.

This lesson also encourages students to understand the importance of perspective and complexity. It asks them to consider different people’s experiences and synthesize this information to make interpretations about the significance of the war. Specific literacy strategies help students make sense of multiple primary sources.
Procedures

Step 1: Perspectives in the Civil War (Class Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce the lesson focus question: How did the Civil War impact different groups of Americans? Tell students that different types of people have different experiences during war time. Ask students to discuss with a partner or small group the effect of war upon their Historical Figure. Did your historical figure gain or lose money or property? Were the rights of your figure affected? If so, in what ways did your figure change during the war? This brief discussion will help students understand that different people viewed the aftermath of war through very different eyes. Make sure that students understand that in general, the effects of losing the war were harsher for white southerners than on the winners, white northerners. However, on both sides, the war caused massive death and destruction.

Step 2: Images of the Civil War (Class Time: 50 minutes)

Tell students that they will learn about seven effects of the Civil War - how war affected women, freed slaves, the wounded and those who cared for the sick and the wounded, the destruction of property, new technology, death and the growth of the federal government. Students will learn about these effects through viewing multiple photographs and drawings. In Images and Descriptions of the Effects of the Civil War (CW7.1), each document comes with a description of the broader effect. The teacher can either make seven stations around the classroom to showcase images from each category, or distribute to students copies of all of the images and descriptions. Tell students to look at all of the documents, and read all the descriptions, but choose one specific image and description from each of the seven categories. They should answer questions on Questions for Images and Descriptions of the Effects of the Civil War (CW7.2), for this one specific image (one for each category for a total of seven.)

Step 3: Making Connections about the Effects of the Civil War (Class Time: 50 minutes)

Now that students have an understanding of the varied effects of the Civil War, they will move to making interpretations about the war’s impact. Distribute the Effects of the Civil War Chart (CW7.3) and tell them that they will be making interpretations or drawing conclusions about the war’s effects. Point out that they will make claims about many of the populations they studied in the previous step, and some ideas that were covered indirectly. Then explain that each population or place had multiple effects from the war (political, social, economic, and other). Their job is to infer – based on the images and descriptions – what the impact was.

Guide the class through the first row to highlight the mixed effects of the war. Students should be able to determine that African Americans gained political and social freedoms as a result of the war, but they might be uncertain about economic freedom. The images highlight the Freedmen’s Bureau, but they don’t directly mention economic benefits. Most often, free slaves received no economic compensation, which meant that they were now poor. In filling out this chart, be sure to emphasize for students that the concept of “winners” and “losers” is ultimately very complicated, especially in light of all of the death and destruction caused by the war.
Procedures (Continued)

Step 4: Effects on Freedom (Class Time: 20 minutes)

Once students complete this chart, finish the activity by returning to the Freedom Wall in your classroom. Ask students to volunteer information about the ways in which the effects of the Civil War advanced or restricted freedom. Be sure that students are able to make claims about the mixed effects on freedom on different populations. Make sure that they understand:

- The slaves were free after the war and the Freedman’s Bureau gave them schools and equal access to resources with whites, but the freed slaves did not receive any property. They owned nothing, and they were poor.

- Slave owners lost a huge amount of wealth and property when the slaves were freed. Most of them and southerners in general lost homes, farms, wealth, and businesses as the Confederacy was destroyed by the effects of war, such as Sherman’s March to the Sea. They lost freedom as they lost property.

- Southerners lost the battle for secession and states’ rights and had to rejoin the Union as losers of the war. They would have to obey the federal government. They felt all of this as a loss of freedom.

- Women were left alone and had to manage farms and businesses alone. For some, this was a stress, but others were inspired to seek equal rights. Women joined the Sanitary Commission, helped soldiers, sewed uniforms, served as nurses, and fought in disguise as soldiers. Many lost husbands and sons.

- The federal government grew in power during and after the Civil War. It took over many powers that previously had belonged to the state governments or individuals.

Modifications / Support for Student Literacy

Images of the Civil War (CW 7.1)

If students struggle to understand the images and descriptions in CW 7.1, have them slow down and examine the sentences in the descriptions. You may direct them to read only 3 descriptions instead of all of them, and while reading, tell students to circle the “who” (the actor), and tell them to underline the “experience or effect.” This strategy of deconstructing the sentences will help struggling students understand that the descriptions and images are meant to explain that each person or groups of people had different unique experiences during the war.
Directions: Below are seven different categories that highlight the Civil War’s effects. Look at all of the images and read the descriptions. When you are finished with each category, select one image and description and answer questions about it.

Category 1: WOMEN

Image 1A: “Southern women feeling the effects of the rebellion [the Civil War], and creating bread riots.”

During the war, there was not enough food in many areas of the Confederacy, and people at home began to starve. Some women in the Confederate south rioted and stole food to feed their families. Many historians have looked at these “bread riots” and argued that it was a sign of women’s desperation [hopeless feelings] and also their activism in the war. As a result of the rioting, women convinced many of their husbands, sons and brothers to return from fighting so that their families would have less of a chance of starving.

Image 1B: “Unidentified woman holding a cased photograph of an unidentified soldier in Confederate uniform.”

In the midst of war, women were most often left alone on the home front. There were emotional, economic, political, and social consequences to being left alone. In the Confederacy, women often had to tend to family farms or oversee slaves, jobs that they had not been trained to do. In the Union, women had to run businesses, farms, and money matters, which was often stressful for family relations.
Image 1C: Frances L. Clalin 4 mo. heavy artillery Co. I, 13 mo. Calvary Co. A. 22 months.” Although it certainly was not the norm for women to dress up in military uniforms and fight for either the Union or Confederacy, many women did. Since the military barred [did not allow] women from joining, women would dress up as men and fight in disguise to serve their cause.

http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010648636/

Image 1D: “The Influence of Woman.” Women showed their patriotism for the war effort by volunteering to help soldiers. They joined organizations like the United States Sanitary Commission in the North to help with medical needs. They worked on the home front to sew uniforms, wind bandages, and collect rations of food.

Illus. in: Harper’s weekly, 1862 Sept. 6, pp. 568-569. Source: Library of Congress,
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/91705457/
Category 1: WOMEN (continued)

**Image 1E:** “Great meeting of the ladies of New York at the Cooper Institute, on Monday, April 29, 1861, to organize a society to be called “Women’s Central Association of Relief,” to make clothes, lint bandages, and to furnish nurses for the soldiers of the Northern Army.”

Women also started regional groups to gather supplies to be sent to soldiers. These groups were very successful and sometimes inspired women to seek equal rights with men. After the war ended, the women’s rights movement became more popular and widespread.

Great meeting of the ladies of New York at the Cooper Institute, on Monday, April 29, 1861, to organize a society to be called “Women’s Central Association of Relief,” to make clothes, lint bandages, and to furnish nurses for the soldiers of the Northern Army. Reproduction from a wooden engraving. 1958 May 10, [from an engraving done in 1861]. Source: Library of Congress, http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002719631/
Image 2A: “Glimpses at the Freedmen’s Bureau. Issuing rations to the old and sick.”

Before the war even ended, President Lincoln ordered the establishment of an agency called the Freedmen’s Bureau, which would be in charge of helping people in the south after the war. One of the ways they did this was by providing food, housing, and farming supplies to southerners that needed it. As an important sign that the north had won the war and slavery was over, blacks and whites received rations equally.

After they lost the war, many white southerners worried that freeing slaves would destroy their society. For example, white southerners feared that free African Americans would rise up against their former masters in a violent way. One of the purposes of the Freedmen’s Bureau was to make sure that white’s and black’s rights were equally protected. Although they did not give property freely to newly freed slaves, the bureau tried to give out resources equally among blacks and whites.

Image 2B: “The Freedmen’s Bureau.”

Freedmen’s Bureaus tried to provide opportunities to freed slaves that they had been denied for centuries. One of the first things that newly freed slaves sought was an education. Freedmen’s Bureaus established some of the first schools for African American children and adults. Learning to read was a luxury and a skill that all wanted to acquire. This Bureau was also one of the first times that the federal government got directly involved in the social aspects of Americans’ lives.

**CW7.1– Images and Descriptions of the Civil War (page 7 of 23)**

**Category 2: FREED SLAVES (continued)**

**Image 2D: “A Negro family coming into the Union lines”**

As the war began, slaves started to escape from their masters and flee to Union lines. Once President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation and slaves heard about the new calls for their freedom, they left in even greater numbers. They would frequently have to sneak out in the middle of the night without anyone knowing to avoid capture and punishment from their masters or Confederate forces.


**Image 2E: “A group of “contrabands””**

With their newly acquired freedom, one of the first things freed slaves did was to look for their relatives. For centuries parents had been forcibly separated from their children, husbands taken from wives, brothers sold far away from sisters. One of the first effects of their war was that freed slaves roamed the south trying to locate loved ones that they had not been able to see for most of their lives.

Category 2: FREED SLAVES (continued)

**Image 2F:** “Stampede of slaves from Hampton to Fortress Monroe”

Sometimes slaves escaped together and fled to Union lines in masses. Northern artists drew scenes of chaos and desperation to make the Union cause seem more important.

Category 3: PEOPLE WHO CARED FOR THE WOUNDED

**Image 3A:** “Fredericksburg, Va. Nurses and officers of the U.S. Sanitary Commission”

Through the Sanitary Commission, women worked as nurses during the war. Altogether about 3,200 women served the Union and Confederacy. Based on the ideas and organization of the Sanitary Commission, one of the nurses – Clara Barton – went on to found the American Red Cross in 1881. The Commission depended on volunteers working in their local communities to collect needed items and distribute them to the Union troops.

Category 3: PEOPLE WHO CARED FOR THE WOUNDED (continued)

**Image 3B: “The floating hospital on the Mississippi”**

The medical industry had to grow a lot during the war to tend to all of the wounded and disease-ridden soldiers. Some state-of-the-art hospitals emerged to treat the wounded.

During the war, female nurses worked alongside male nurses and doctors to tend to the wounded. Supplies were often limited, and nurses had to get creative about how they treated the ill. For example, when army surgeons ran out of bandages, nurses stepped in and convinced them to use lint to cover wounds instead of corn husks.

Image 3C: “Hospital scene”

Hospital wards were intended to take care of the wounded as well as the sick. During the war, for every one soldier that lost his life on the battlefield, two soldiers died of disease. Even inside hospitals, arm and leg wounds from the battlefield could often lead to gangrene or tetanus, deadly infectious diseases.

Image 3D: “A Ward in Armory Square Hospital, Washington, D.C.”


Category 3: PEOPLE WHO CARED FOR THE WOUNDED (continued)

Image 3E: “Citizens Volunteer Hospital Philadelphia”

As a brutal final strategy of battle, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman embarked on a famous path of destruction in which he and his troops marched through the state of Georgia seizing and destroying everything in their paths. It was one of the first practices of “total war,” in which the army attacked not just the enemy military, but civilians, homes, towns, and infrastructure also. In this photograph, Sherman’s men worked to pull up the railroad in Georgia so that goods, resources, and people could not be transported.

Source: “Sherman’s men destroying railroad. Marching through Georgia. “So we made a thoroughfare for Freedom and her train, sixty miles in latitude, three hundred to the main.”” George Barnard, Photographer. 1864. Source: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011648001/
Everywhere Sherman and his men went, they seized what was in their paths. They took all ammunition that was held by the Confederacy, but they also captured weapons that were held in private homes. Moreover, in an attempt to destroy the will power and spirit of the Confederacy, Sherman directed his soldiers to burn most things in their paths, including homes and farms.

Image 4C: “Sherman’s march to the sea”

The brutality of Sherman’s march has a permanent place in American history and the history of war. Although it came at the end of the war, some scholars argue that this last show of power from the Union did in fact play a significant role crushing the will of the Confederacy. At the same time, the campaign literally destroyed the south, meaning that at the end of the war, entire states and regions needed to be rebuilt from the ground up. People lost homes, farms, businesses, infrastructure, wealth, and many of their male relatives.

Source: “Sherman’s march to the sea” drawn by F.O.C. Darley, c. 1883.
Image 5A: “Artillery captured from the rebels.”

Mobile cannons and other artillery, and more accurate and deadly rifles and pistols were made in the early factories. The improved technology of these weapons meant that it was easier to kill larger numbers of soldiers more quickly.

Source: Stereograph showing two soldiers standing amid the cannons and caissons captured by the Union near Rocketts in Richmond, Virginia. The artillery is to be shipped North. Source: Library of Congress, http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011660455/
The Union and the Confederates used new technologies during the war, such as hot air balloons for reconnaissance (spying), submarines, and minie ball bullets (grooved for greater accuracy). They also used the expanding railroad and telegraph systems to move soldiers, supplies, and information. These new technologies helped make the war more deadly and destructive.

Image 5B: Thaddeus Lowe replenishing balloon INTREPID from balloon CONSTITUTION
Source: Thaddeus Lowe replenishing balloon INTREPID from balloon CONSTITUTION, Fair Oaks, VA. Photo from http://www.civilwar-pictures.com/g/technology/balloon_intrepid

Image 5C: A wrecked Confederate train in Manassas, after the Second Battle of Bull Run.

Union soldiers retreating from the battle destroyed trains and railroad tracks.

Source: Photo Credit: CORBIS
http://www.history.com/photos/civil-war-battles-of-bull-run/photo7
Image 6A: “Lincoln’s coffin in the City Hall, Chicago”

On April 14, 1865, five days after Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant, ending the Civil War, President Lincoln was assassinated. John Wilkes Booth, a well-known southern actor, carried out the assassination in an attempt to rally the Confederacy to continue fighting. It did not work, but it did bring the entire country to a halt and devastated northerners, who had just learned that the war was over.

President Lincoln was the first president in American history to be killed in office. Following his assassination, there were reports all over the country of Booth’s supporters being attacked. After Lincoln’s body lay in state in Washington DC, it went on a 1,500 mile funeral procession to New York and then to Springfield, Illinois. Along the way, thousands of people showed up to pay respects to the train that carried his body and to mourn the loss of their president. The death of President Lincoln also meant that his newly-elected vice president, Andrew Johnson, was now in charge of the country.
No war in American history had come close to the death and destruction of the Civil War. On the battlefields, in camps, hospitals, and in between, soldiers died in huge numbers. Overall, more than 600,000 Americans were killed during the war. This is many times more than the number of Americans killed in any other war.

Some battlefields were virtual killing fields. Photographers took pictures of astounding numbers of dead soldiers. At the Battle of Gettysburg alone, approximately 51,000 soldiers died. In part, the high number of casualties resulted from the fact that all of the soldiers were considered Americans.

Image 6D: “A harvest of death, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania”

A harvest of death, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania / negative by T.H. O’Sullivan; positive by A. Gardner. 1863.

Image 6E: “Soldiers’ graves near the General Hospital, City Point, Va.”

More than half of the soldiers who died during the war did not die on the battlefield, but instead they died from disease; hospitals and medical camps became deadly places. Rough burial grounds were often constructed next to battlegrounds and outside hospitals.

“Burying Union dead at hospital in Fredericksburg, Va.”

During and after the Civil War, the power of the federal government grew larger and larger. The federal government extended control into many political, economic and social areas that people had before seen as belonging to the state governments, or to individuals. For example, 1863 Conscription Act was the first time that the United States government drafted men into the army, instead of waiting for volunteers. Another example was the National Currency Act of 1863, which made just one national currency (money.) Before this, states could issue paper money, but after the Civil War, only the federal government had that power. The paper bills issued during the Civil War were called “greenbacks.”
**CW7.2– Questions for “Images and Descriptions of the Civil War”**

*Directions:* After you have chosen one image from each of the seven categories about the effects of the Civil War, answer the questions on the chart for each image. For each row of the chart, you will fill in the blanks for just one image from the category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number and title of image</th>
<th>Provide a brief description of the image. What does it show?</th>
<th>What does this image suggest about the perspective or point of view of the photographer or artist? Can you detect any bias (supporting one side or the other)? If so, explain.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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<td>Freed Slaves</td>
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<td>Growth of Federal Government</td>
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**CW7.3– Effects of the Civil War Chart**

*Directions:* Based on the Civil War images and your answers to the questions from the images, fill out the chart below. Be sure to pay close attention to the fact that although one group may have gained certain freedoms, it may have lost others as an effect of the war. You may use the same effect for more than one group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on…</th>
<th>Political Effects</th>
<th>Social Effects</th>
<th>Economic Effects</th>
<th>Other Effects</th>
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<td>African Americans</td>
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<td>Slave holders</td>
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<td>People in states where the war was fought</td>
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<td>Women</td>
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<td>The American population as a whole</td>
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