

The Great Civil Divide (A Simulation)

Duration: to be a part of the entire Civil War unit.

This lesson is designed to motivate students to learn more about the Civil War. The basis of this lesson is to get the students **actively involved** in the issues that were critical to both sides in the war while using their classroom textbook and supplementary guided research.

MA Frameworks/Standards: USI.35, USI.37, USI.38, USI.39

Focus Questions:

What were the war aims of the North and the South?

Why did the North blockade southern ports? How effective was the blockade by the end of the war?

Where was the western front in the war, and why was it important?

What battles marked the turning point in the war? Why were they significant?

What were the consequences of the war?

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Compare the strengths and weaknesses of the Union and the Confederacy on the eve of war.
- Locate the early battles of the Civil War and analyze their impact on the course of the war.
- Explain how the Union gained the advantage in the war.
- Analyze the Union victory and the results of the Civil War.

Materials:

The social studies text and supplemental materials to support lesson. Allow time for internet research, a web list will be available when the unit begins.

Procedure:

- To begin a unit on the Civil war, divide the class into two groups each representing the Union and the Confederacy. To approximate the ratio of northern states (23) to southern states (11) at the beginning of the conflict, two-thirds of the class should be on the North while the remaining one-third represent the south.
- Physically separate the groups. Position desks so the two teams confront each other from across the room. The members may draw maps of the particular

states they represent and display them alongside their desks. This arrangement should remain each day for the duration of the Civil War study. The number discrepancy not only represents the advantage the Union had in population but for purposes of this activity will also serve to illustrate the heavy favor it had in financial backing, industrial strength and railroad networks.

- Various tasks will make up the class “divide.” Comprehension questions from the text, primary source documents, worksheet responses, map skill items, vocabulary, journal writing, casualty statistics, among other skills can serve as the basis for grading (rubrics to be developed as the lessons progress).
- Points can be awarded for each correct answer found on a team. For example, if a map worksheet pertaining to battles was assigned with five possible responses, and all Union members had perfect papers, that group of students would receive that total number of points for the North. Conversely, on the same assignment, if all Confederate members had perfect papers, they would score that multiple for the southern team.
- Keep track of the scores on daily assignments and place the tally on a chart where it can be easily seen by all students. Assumption - with ability levels equally represented on both sides, the **potential** for equitable collaboration on assignments for “the cause” will remain high.
- Each student will keep a daily reflection/log of their activities as the simulation progresses.

Follow-Up:

While numbers and scoring systems purposely correspond to the Union strengths entering the war, the Confederacy had an advantage in leadership on the battlefield. It is evident that the inclusion of several decisive “battles” during this activity would better align the scoring. Using Section Review questions following each text reading can help add to each team’s collective point total. A “Trivia Pursuit” format following the seating sequence can also benefit the South if there is a fair distribution of students with differing abilities (the South may have an advantage with a greater rotation between students with high and middle abilities). Strive for overall participation and motivation.

“The Great Civil Divide” is designed to keep students actively involved with the Civil War throughout an entire unit. Rewards can be determined by the teacher. In situations where the competition may be too divisive, consider setting a class goal. Determine in advance what tasks you would like to include in the scoring system. Along with students, set a class target based on the total score of both sides combined.

Always – Set aside discussion time toward the end of each days activities for reflection on what enabled the Union to outlast the Confederacy.

Evaluation:

Level of participation of individual students and contents of daily journal, criteria established at the beginning of the activity.

Suggested Web-links:

oswego.org/staff/cchamber/resources/civilwar.cfm (35 web-links and counting)

www.teacheroz.com/Civil_War_Documents.htm

www.kidinfo.com/American_History/Civil_War.html

- edtech.kennesaw.edu/web/civwar.html
- www.surfnetkids.com/civilwar.htm
- americancivilwar.com/civil.html
- www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/civilwar.htm
- cybersleuth-kids.com/sleuth/History/US_History/Civil_War/Documents_and_Letters/

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