

CIVIL WAR PERSPECTIVES
LESSON PLAN 1

1. Title

Primary Source Analysis: *Causes of the Civil War*

2. Overview

Students will identify & differentiate between primary & secondary sources in order to understand their importance in understanding history. The class will then analyze various packets of primary source documents in order to formulate hypotheses about the causes of the Civil War and what elements may have contributed to the conflict. Students will share and discuss their thoughts & observations as a class in order to generate questions to guide learning throughout the unit.

3. Goal

Students will analyze primary sources in order to make predictions about the causes of the Civil War.

4. Objectives

- Identify & differentiate between primary & secondary sources.
- Analyze primary source documents & draw conclusions about the causes of the Civil War.
- Discuss predictions & generate questions to guide inquiry.

5. Investigative Question – On the completion of the lesson students will be able to answer this question:

- What were the major causes of the Civil War?

6. Time Required (0-10)

2-3 class periods (90 - 120 min)

7. Recommended Grade Range

Grades 7-8

7a. Differentiated Instruction

- The use of visual aids (photographs & drawings) will aid struggling readers in their understanding of the content.
- Use of the “Think, Pair, Share” method will allow students time to process information on their own and develop their thinking before sharing with their peers and the class as a whole. In this way, most students will be prepared to contribute to the class discussion with well-formulated thoughts & predictions.

8. Subject / Sub-Subject

Social Studies

9. Common Core Standards

CC. 6-8.R.H.1 – Key Ideas and Details: *Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.*

10. Credits

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PREPARATION

11. Materials Used

Primary or Secondary Source? worksheet

“Mission Possible” manila envelopes (1 envelope for every 2-3 students)

- 2 Abraham Lincoln packets
- 2 John Brown packets
- 2 Antebellum America packets
- 2 State Rights packets

“Mission Possible” Primary Source Analysis Worksheet

KWL chart (butcher paper)

12. Resources Used

See Appendix

PROCEDURE

13. Description of Procedure

PART 1-

- Ask students: *How do we learn about the past? How do we learn about historical figures? Wars? Ancient Civilizations?* (Encourage students to think about where the information from expository articles and textbooks comes from.)
- Write student responses on the board. (Possible responses: textbooks, pictures, interviews, paintings, letters, recordings, etc.)
- Introduce vocabulary by writing *Primary Source & Secondary Source* on the board.
 - Tell students that a “Primary Source” is a first-hand account of an event.
 - A “Secondary Source” is a document that was created later, by someone who was not there.
- Pass out “Primary or Secondary Source?” worksheet.
- Have students work individually or in small groups identifying whether each example is a primary or secondary source.
- As a class, have students share their responses. As students share, discuss why they chose each answer. *What makes this a primary source/secondary source? Could this be both, depending on the context?*

PART 2-

- Create a KWL (*Know, Want to Know, Learned*) chart on a large piece of butcher paper at the front of the classroom.
- Say: *“Today we will be beginning our Civil War Unit. You will be looking at a collection of different primary sources in order to try to identify the major causes of this war.”*
- Ask students to share their existing knowledge about the Civil War. Write their responses under the “K” column of your KWL chart.
- Pass out “Mission Possible” manila envelopes to groups of 2-3 students.
- Pass out a “Mission Possible Primary Source Analysis Worksheet” to each student.
- Ask students to take out the primary sources within the envelope & spread them out.
- Say: *“As you look through your set of documents, see if you can start piecing together clues. What is the setting? When were these documents created? Who is pictured? What details do you notice in the text and pictures?”*

- Think, Pair, Share: Give students 10 – 15 minutes to silently look through the primary sources individually and write down their observations on their worksheets. (*As students are examining the documents, the teacher may want to circulate the room asking leading questions in order to guide student analysis.*)
- Next, give students 5-10 minutes to share their observations with their small group. As they share, encourage students to write down any new observations or questions on their worksheet.
- Finally, bring the class together to share their observations. Because each group will have analyzed different documents, ask groups to briefly present their packet & share their observations (If possible, make overhead transparencies of documents for the class to observe while each group is sharing.)
- As each group shares, ask students to identify the cause that is being highlighted in their packets. *What do you think was going on? What events are being depicted? How might this have contributed to the conflict?*
- Guide students towards the following big ideas: the election of Lincoln, slavery, state rights vs. federal power.

PART 3-

- As a class, return to the KWL chart that was constructed at the beginning of the lesson. Ask students to share any questions that have developed as a result of this activity. Encourage them to share anything they are curious or confused about. These questions will help to build motivation & guide inquiry throughout the unit.

The Inquiry Cycle:

Connect - Students connect new insights to self or previous knowledge; gain background and context; observe, experience

Wonder - Students develop questions and create hypotheses or predictions

Investigate - Find and evaluate information to answer questions; test hypotheses; think about information to illuminate new questions and hypotheses

Construct - Construct new understandings connected to previous knowledge; draw conclusions about questions and hypotheses

Express - Apply understandings to a new context, new situation; express new ideas to share learning with others

Reflect - Reflect on own learning; ask new questions

EVALUATION

14. Evaluation

- Primary or Secondary Source? worksheet
- “Mission Possible” Primary Source Analysis Worksheet
- Small group & class discussion
- KWL chart