

CIVIL WAR PERSPECTIVES
LESSON PLAN 14

1. Title

Technological Advances during the Civil War

2. Overview

The class will view images from the battlefield at Antietam and make predictions about why casualty rates were so high during the Civil War. Students will then learn about how the Minie Ball, along with various other technological advances, changed warfare & increased the amount of casualties during combat. Finally, students will begin researching weaponry & battle experiences of Civil War nurses & soldiers in order to write a diary entry.

3. Goal

Students will make predictions about reasons for the high casualty rates during the Civil War & draw conclusions about how various new technologies impacted warfare.

4. Objectives

- Make predictions about why casualty rates might have been so high during the Civil War
- Compare pictures of the Minie Ball with a traditional musket ball & draw conclusions about how the invention of this bullet may have changed combat
- Draw conclusions about how various technologies impacted warfare
- Research technologies used by Civil War nurses & soldiers

5. Time Required (0-10)

2 - 3 class periods (90 - 120 min)

6. Recommended Grade Range

Grades 7-8

7. Differentiated Instruction

- Visuals (photographs and drawings) are used to assist struggling readers.
- Allow students adequate “think time” to synthesize information and formulate predictions. You may ask students to briefly talk about their ideas with a partner before sharing with the class. The teacher should circulate the room & help guide students who seem to be struggling (asking leading questions, encouraging critical thinking, reviewing important information, etc.)
- The teacher may research websites that he/she deems appropriate for various reading levels & provide students with a list of various websites that match student reading levels. The teacher may also make leveled trade books available for students to conduct their research.

8. Subject / Sub-Subject

Social Studies

Reading/Language Arts

9. Common Core Standards

- CC.7.SL.2 – Comprehension and Collaboration: *Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.*

- CC.6-8.R.H.1 – Key Ideas and Details: *Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.*
- CC.6-8.R.H.7 – Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: *Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.*
- CC.7.W.7 – Research to Build and Present Knowledge: *Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.*

10. Credits

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PREPARATION

11. Materials Used

- LCD projector
- “Make a Prediction...” overhead transparency
- “Make a Comparison...” overhead transparency
- Minie ball diagram overhead transparency
- “Civil War Technology” worksheet
- Research Guide: Battle (*these will vary for nurses, soldiers & POWs*)

12. Resources Used

See Appendix

PROCEDURE

13. Description of Procedure

PART 1 -

- Put the “Make a Prediction...” transparency on the overhead projector for students to view.
- Read the question on the transparency aloud: *“The Battle of Antietam was the single bloodiest day in American history with 23,000 casualties. Why do you think the casualty rate during the Civil War was so much greater than all previous American battles?”*
- Give students 5-7 minutes to silently write their predictions in a notebook or on a loose-leaf sheet of paper.
 - The teacher may want to circulate the room helping guide student thinking by asking questions or quietly prompting students who seem to be having difficulty understanding or responding to the question.
- After giving students time to think and write, have students share their predictions with the class. (During this time, guide students to think about weaponry & advancements in technology.)
- Next, put up the “Make a Comparison...” overhead transparency for students to view.
- Tell students that changing technology largely contributed to the increase in casualties during the Civil War. In fact, advances in technology completely changed the way wars were fought.
- Read the question on the transparency aloud: *“The Minie ball changed warfare forever. For the first time, a soldier could aim at a target a fair distance away and have a chance of hitting it. Comparing the musket ball to the Minie ball, why do you think the Minie ball dramatically improved accuracy?”*

- In partners or small groups, give students 5-10 minutes to analyze the photos, discuss the question & write down a response to share with the class.
 - Once again, the teacher may want to circulate the room & help guide discussions.
- After students have discussed in small groups, briefly have students share their thoughts and discuss the question as a class.
- Put up the Minie ball diagram overhead transparency for students to view & pass out the “Civil War Technology” worksheet.
- Discuss the effects of the Minie ball & have students write the information in the “Effects of this Technology” column on their worksheets.
- Next, tell students that the Minie ball was only one example of many new technologies that were emerging during the Civil War.
- Using an LCD projector, play the History Channel video, “Civil War Tech”, for students. <http://www.history.com/topics/civil-war-technology/videos#civil-war-tech>
 - As students watch this video, ask them to write down each new piece of technology that is mentioned in the video, and the effects that this technology had on warfare.
 - Students should write down the following technologies:
 1. Long rifle w/ Minie ball → *easier to load, improved accuracy, ability to shoot longer distances*
 2. Railroads → *ability to transport large numbers of soldiers in a short time*
 3. Telegraph → *faster communication*
 4. Iron clad naval ships → *Much more resilient material, led to submarines & development of steel*

PART 2 -

- Pass out Battle Research Guides according to the “character” that each student has chosen. (Make sure those who chose to be nurses receive “Nurse” research guides, and the same for soldiers and POWs.)
- Tell students that they will be researching various technologies (weapons, medicinal tools, etc.) used by their character. They will also be researching in order to find out more about experiences in battle. This research will be used to write their next two diary entries for their project.
- Give students time to begin researching and answering questions on the Battle Research Guide. This research may be done using internet resources or trade books & text books.

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

- Research Guide: Battle
 - “Civil War Technology” worksheet
 - Small group & class discussion
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