

CIVIL WAR PERSPECTIVES
LESSON PLAN 16

1. Title

Class Discussion of “Total War”: Sherman’s March to the Sea

2. Overview

Introduce the concept of “Total War” and watch a video of Sherman’s March to the Sea. Discuss both the Union & Confederate perspective of Sherman’s March and the effect this event had on the South. After reading eyewitness accounts and viewing photographs of Sherman’s March, students formulate their own opinions and debate whether this event was necessary and/or ethical.

3. Goal

Students will summarize the Union & Confederate perspectives of Sherman’s March to the Sea & formulate their own opinion of this event based on analysis of primary sources.

4. Objectives

- Define “Total War”
- Summarize the Union & Confederate perspectives of Sherman’s March
- Analyze primary sources in order to formulate questions & opinions about Total War/Sherman’s March
- Debate whether Sherman’s March was necessary and/or ethical

5. Time Required (0-10)

1 class period (45 - 60 min)

6. Recommended Grade Range

Grades 7-8

7. Differentiated Instruction

- Use of video and photographs will provide support for struggling readers.
- Allow students adequate “think time” to synthesize information and formulate opinions. 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.)

8. Subject / Sub-Subject

Social Studies

Language Arts

9. Common Core Standards

- CC.6-8.R.H.2 – Key Ideas and Details: *Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.*
- CC.7.R.I.3 - Key Ideas and Details: *Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).*
- CC.6-8.WHST.9 – Research to Build and Present Knowledge: *Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.*

- CC.7.S.L.1 – Comprehension and Collaboration: *Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher- led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.*
- CC.6-8.WHST.1 – Text Types and Purposes: *Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.*

10. Credits

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PREPARATION

11. Materials Used

- LCD Projector & Computer
- “Evaluating Total War...” worksheet
- Eye-Witness Account of a Southern Civilian (Sherman’s March)
- Gallery Walk materials
 - Union’s Argument – 3 pictures w/ captions
 - Confederate’s Argument – 3 pictures w/ captions

12. Resources Used

See Appendix

PROCEDURE

13. Description of Procedure

- PREPARATION: Before the start of class, prepare the “Gallery Walk” by taping the Union pictures on one wall of the classroom & Confederate Pictures on another wall of the classroom.
- Write the words “Total War” on the board and ask students to share any ideas about what this term might mean.
- After allowing students to share their ideas, write the following definition under the term “Total War”: *A war that is unrestricted & those fighting it will do anything necessary to obtain victory.*
- Ask students if they know of any examples of Total War occurring in history.
 - Examples: *The Nuclear Bomb, Germany’s bombing of England in WWII.*
- Next, ask students why nations sometimes resort to implementing Total War & disregarding rules of war and/or safety of civilians.
 - Reasons may include: *quick victory/end to a war, minimizing casualties, economics (cost of fighting is too costly)*
- Pass out the “Evaluating Total War” worksheet to students.
- Say: *“In 1864, towards the end of the Civil War, William Tecumseh Sherman, a Union Army leader, implemented Total War as his army marched through the southern states. We are going to be thinking about his reasons for wreaking such havoc across the South & how this affected the civilians in Confederate states.”*
- Using an LCD Projector, show the History Channel video: “Sherman’s Terrifying Tactics”.
 - <http://www.history.com/topics/william-t-sherman/videos#shermans-terrifying-tactics>

- As students watch, have them identify Sherman’s reasons for attacking the South in this manner. Students should write their responses in the “Union Argument” column.
 - Responses should include the following: *Defeating Confederate soldiers on the battlefield was not enough. Sherman needed to intimidate civilians & end their support for the war. He wanted to defeat the South “psychologically”. He wanted to bring about a quick end to the Civil War.*
- Have students share their responses after watching the video. Ask: “*Why did Sherman choose to terrify the South like this? What do you think about this campaign? How do you think people in the South reacted to this?*”
- Next, read aloud the Eye-Witness Account of a Southern Civilian. As they listen, ask students to think about how Confederates probably viewed this event.
- After reading the eye-witness account aloud, ask students to make inferences about the Confederate opinion of Sherman’s March & write down their responses in the “Confederate Argument” column. (3-5 min)
 - Responses may include: *The soldiers were destroying civilian’s lives, these acts were a violation of people’s rights (property rights), these acts caused great suffering to innocent people (loss of homes, food, property), etc.*
- After 3-5 minutes of reflecting and writing, allow students to briefly share their thoughts & responses.
- Next, tell students they will be participating in a “Gallery Walk” around the classroom. They will be viewing images portraying Sherman’s March to the Sea. Ask students to think about both perspectives and consider their own opinion about this event. Was it necessary? Was it ethical?
- Ask students to *silently* circulate the room viewing photos & reading captions. (10 – 12 min)
- After completing the “Gallery Walk”, give students 5-10 minutes to silently write their opinions about this event in the bottom box of their worksheet. Prompt students to explain their reasoning based on the video & primary sources that they viewed today.
- After taking time to formulate their thoughts, allow students to discuss their opinions of Sherman’s March to the Sea.

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

- Small group & Class Discussion
- “Evaluating Total War” worksheet

