

CIVIL WAR PERSPECTIVES
LESSON PLAN 17

1. Title

Surrender at Appomattox: *Writing a Post-War Diary Reflection*

2. Overview

Students will reflect on a time in their own lives when they failed at something they had worked hard for. They will then read about Lee's surrender at Appomattox and compare their own experience to that of Confederate soldiers. The class will discuss the emotional climate at Appomattox for both the Union and Confederacy, read from the diary of a Confederate soldier, and finally, write their own post-war diary reflections.

3. Goal

Students will understand the perspectives of both sides during the surrender at Appomattox and write a post-war diary reflection reflecting the emotional climate at this historical event.

4. Objectives

- Make connections between personal experiences of failure & the experience of the Confederate soldiers at Appomattox.
- Read personal accounts of Lee's surrender from multiple perspectives and make inferences about the sentiments felt on both sides during this event.
- Compose a post-war diary reflection from the perspective of a Civil War soldier or nurse

5. Time Required (0-10)

1-2 class periods (45 - 60 min)

6. Recommended Grade Range

Grades 7-8

7. Differentiated Instruction

- The teacher may choose to read the text in a guided reading setting with small groups of students if necessary & help them respond the reading before discussing the reading as a class.
- While writing their post-war reflections, the teacher may work in small groups with struggling writers to assist students with their planning and composing a rough draft. The teacher may have struggling writers write their diary entries in list or web format first, writing out details that they want to include in their diary entry. The teacher may then have students add thoughts & feelings their character may have experienced as a result of the events included in the entry.

8. Subject / Sub-Subject

Social Studies

Reading/Language Arts

9. Common Core Standards

- CC.6-8.R.H.6 – Craft and Structure: *Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).*

- CC.6-8.WHST.4 – Production and Distribution of Writing: *Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.*
- CC.7.W.3 – Text Types and Purposes: *Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.*

10. Credits

Aubrey Smith

Daniel Wilk

PREPARATION

11. Materials Used

- “Surrender at Appomattox Court House” reading & worksheet
- Grant’s Memoirs: Appomattox – transparency
- Diary of a Confederate Soldier – Lesson 17 (*Read-Aloud*)
- KWL chart (*continued from Lesson 1*)
- “Writing a Post-War Reflection: Things to think about...” - transparency

12. Resources Used

See Appendix

PROCEDURE

13. Description of Procedure

- Pass out the “Surrender at Appomattox Court House” reading & worksheet.
- Ask students to look at the section titled, “Share Your Experience...”.
- Read the writing prompt aloud and asks students to take 10 - 12 minutes to silently reflect & write about a time in their lives when they worked hard for something they really cared about and failed.
 - Students may need prompting to help spur their thinking. Provide students with examples: *working hard at a sport, working on a project or assignment for school, auditioning for something, etc.*
- After 10-12 minutes, allow students to share their personal experiences of failure. Prompt them to describe their own thoughts and feelings about these events.
- Next, tell students that the Confederates had to cope with an extremely disappointing failure on April 9, 1865 when they were finally forced to surrender to the Union after desperately fighting for a cause they believed in.
- In partners or small groups, ask students to read, “Surrender at Appomattox Court House” and complete the “Read & Respond” portion of their worksheet.
 - The teacher should circulate the room during this time helping struggling readers and guiding student responses. Prompt students to look to the text to make inferences about the emotional climate of this event.
- After most groups have completed reading & responding, re-read the quote from Lee at the beginning of the text: *"It would be useless and therefore cruel to provoke the further effusion of blood, and I have arranged to meet with General Grant with a view to surrender."*

- Ask students: “*What do you think General Lee meant by this? Why did he choose to surrender? How do you think the Confederates felt about this? Why? How do you think the Union may have felt? Why?*”
- Allow students time to reflect on these questions & share their ideas.
- Next, put up the transparency of the excerpt from Grant’s Memoirs on the overhead projector & read it aloud as students follow along. As you read, ask students to notice how Grant describes the event. What are his feelings on this day? What are his feelings towards Lee?
 - After reading, ask students to look at the last paragraph and share what they noticed. Prompt students to realize that, although this was an enormous victory for the Union, it was not an entirely joyful day for Grant. For many, this victory came with mixed feelings.
 - Ask students: “*Why do you think General Grant may have felt “sad and depressed”? Does his response to Lee’s surrender surprise you at all?*”
- Return to the ongoing class KWL chart and review the “W-Want to Know” column. Ask students to share what they’ve learned throughout the unit & add this to the “L-Learned” column of the chart.
- Finally, read-aloud the “Diary of a Confederate Soldier – Lesson 17” entry and, as a class, discuss the emotions expressed in this entry.
- Ask students to take out a blank sheet of paper. Tell students that they will be writing a post-war reflection as the final page of their diary for this project. Ask them to review all that they’ve learned throughout this unit & think about how their character might react to Lee’s surrender and the final conclusion of the war.
- Place the “Writing a Post-War Reflection: Things to think about…” transparency on the overhead projector and read the questions aloud to the class.
- Have students reflect on these questions & begin individually drafting their post-war reflections. This will be the final entry for their Civil War diaries.
 - *Note: Once again, if the teacher has the luxury of time, he/she may want to ask students to take these diary entries through the writing process before completing a final draft (prewrite, rough draft, revising, editing, final draft).*

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

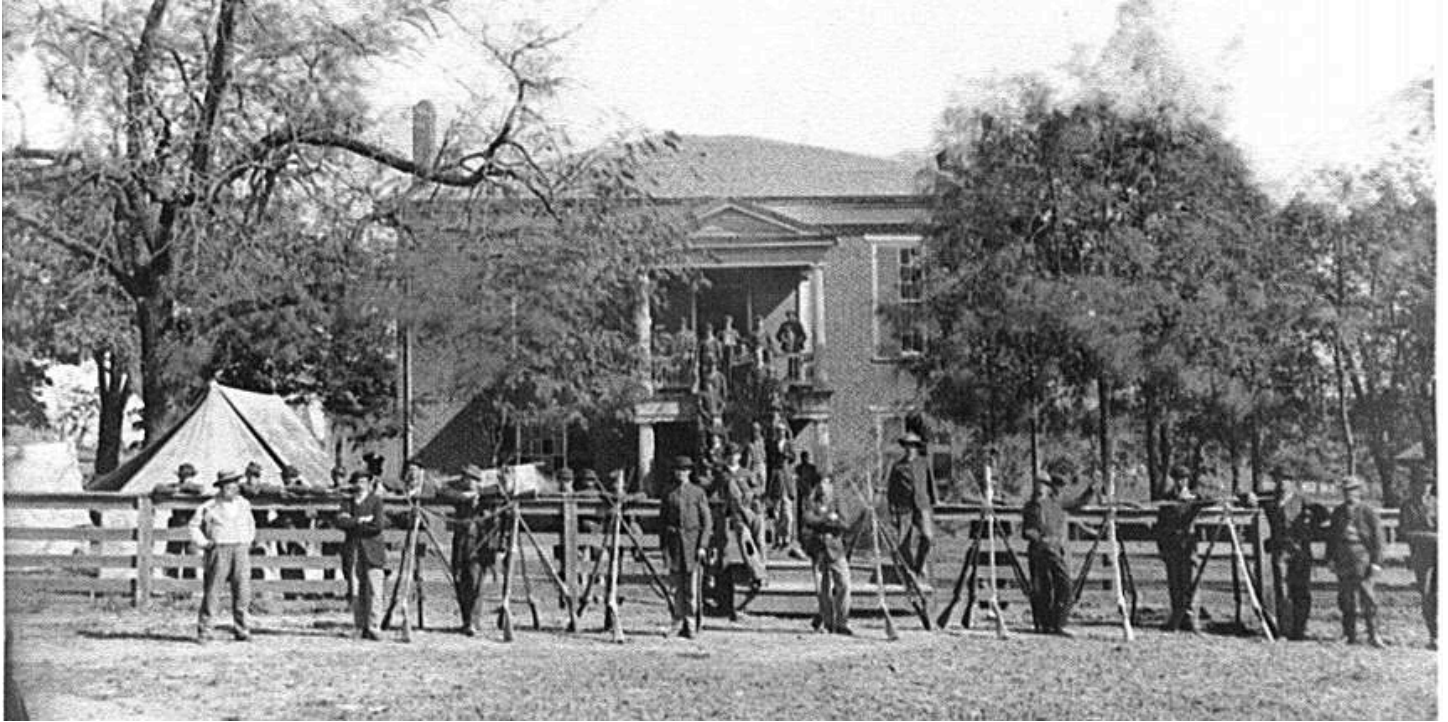
Reflect - Reflect on own learning; ask new questions

EVALUATION

14. Evaluation

- Small group & Class Discussion
 - “Surrender at Appomattox Court House” worksheet
 - KWL chart
 - Post-War Reflection
-

Surrender at Appomattox Court House



"It would be useless and therefore cruel," Robert E. Lee remarked on the morning of April 9, 1865, "to provoke the further effusion of blood, and I have arranged to meet with General Grant with a view to surrender."

The two generals met shortly after noon on April 9, 1865, at the home of Wilmer McLean in the village of Appomattox Court House, Virginia. Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant, general-in-chief of all United States forces, hastened the conclusion of the Civil War.

In the weeks following, other Confederate forces surrendered, and Confederate President Jefferson Davis was captured. On April 14, 1865, just over four years after the bombardment of Fort Sumter that triggered the fighting, President Abraham Lincoln became one of the more than 1 million Civil War casualties (including more than 600,000 dead), and the bloody fighting that began in the corn fields of Manassas, Virginia in July 1861 finally came to a close.

After the surrender, former soldiers slowly returned home. One young Southerner despaired of seeing her husband again, when he turned up in Richmond ragged, but recognizable. Remembering the difficult years during and after the war she summed up her experience:

We had nothing on which to begin life over again, but we were young and strong, and began it cheerily enough. We are prosperous now, ...little grandchildren cluster about us and listen with interest to grandpapa's and grandmamma's tales of the days when they "fought and bled and died together." They can't understand how such nice people as the Yankees and ourselves ever could have fought each other. "It doesn't seem reasonable," says Nellie...who is engaged to a gentleman from Boston, where we sent her to cultivate her musical talents, but where she applied herself to other matters, 'it doesn't seem reasonable, grandmamma, when you could just as easily have settled it all comfortably without any fighting. How glad I am I wasn't living then! How thankful I am that 'Old Glory' floats alike over North and South, now!'

And so am I, my darling, so am I!

Share your Experience...

Writing Prompt: Has there ever been a time when you worked hard for something you really cared about and failed? Describe this experience. How did this make you feel?

Read & Respond...

Directions: *In small groups read, "Surrender at Appomattox Court House". Then discuss the following questions and write down your thoughts in the space provided.*

1. What does it mean to "surrender"?
2. How do you think the Confederates felt? Why?
3. How do you think the Union felt when Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House? Why?
4. In what ways are the feelings of the Confederates be similar to your own? (Review your response to the writing prompt...)

Grant's Memoir: *Appomattox*

When I had left camp that morning I had not expected so soon the result that was then taking place, and consequently was in rough garb. I was without a sword, as I usually was when on horseback on the field, and wore a soldier's blouse for a coat, with the shoulder straps of my rank to indicate to the army who I was. When I went into the house I found General Lee. We greeted each other, and after shaking hands took our seats. I had my staff with me, a good portion of whom were in the room during the whole of the interview.

What General Lee's feelings were I do not know. As he was a man of much dignity, with an impassible face, it was impossible to say whether he felt inwardly glad that the end had finally come, or felt sad over the result, and was too manly to show it. Whatever his feelings, they were entirely concealed from my observation; but my own feelings, which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of his letter, were sad and depressed. I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly, and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought, and one for which there was the least excuse. I do not question, however, the sincerity of the great mass of those who were opposed to us.

Diary of a Tar Heel Soldier: Lesson 17

April - I suppose the end is near, for there is no more hope for the South to gain her independence. On the 10th of this month we were told by an officer that all those who wished to get out of prison by taking the oath of allegiance to the United States could do so in a very few days. There was quite a consultation among the prisoners. On the morning of the 12th we heard that Lee had surrendered on the 9th, and about 400, myself with them, took the cursed oath and were given transportation to wherever we wanted to go. I took mine to New York City to my parents, whom I have not seen since 1858. Our cause is lost; our comrades who have given their lives for the independence of the South have died in vain; that is, the cause for which they gave their lives is lost, but they positively did not give their lives in vain. They gave it for a most righteous cause, even if the Cause was lost. Those that remain to see the end for which they fought - what have we left? Our sufferings and privations would be nothing had the end been otherwise, for we have suffered hunger, been without sufficient clothing, barefooted, lousy, and have suffered more than any one can believe, except soldiers of the Southern Confederacy. And the end of all is a desolated home to go to. When I commenced this diary of my life as a Confederate soldier I was full of hope for the speedy termination of the war, and our independence. I was not quite nineteen years old. I am now twenty-three. The four years that I have given to my country I do not regret, nor am I sorry for one day that I have given - my only regret is that we have lost that for which we fought. Nor do I for one moment think that we lost it by any other way than by being outnumbered at least five if not ten to one. The world was open to the enemy, but shut out to us. I shall now close this diary in sorrow, but to the last I will say that, although but a private, I still say our Cause was just, nor do I regret one thing that I have done to cripple the North.

Writing a Post-War Reflection: Things to think about...

- Are you at the Appomattox Court House at the time of Lee's surrender? If not, where are you? How did you find out?
- How do you feel about the war ending?
- How do you feel toward the Confederate soldiers?
- How have your experiences in this war changed you? How are different now than when the war first began?
- What will you do with your life now?
- Do you think your country can be repaired? Do you think the North & South can work together again?

Resource Citations: Lesson 17

Surrender at Appomattox Court House Worksheet

"Today in History: April 9." *American Memory*. The Library of Congress. Web. 29 July 2011. <Loc.gov>.

Title:

Appomattox Court House, Va. Federal soldiers at the courthouse

URL:

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cwar:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(cwp+4a40023\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cwar:@field(NUMBER+@band(cwp+4a40023)))

Creator:

O'Sullivan, Timothy H., 1840-1882, photographer.

Date:

1865 April.

Grants Memoirs

Grant, Ulysses Simpson. "CHAPTER LXVII." *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*. Champaign, Ill: Project Gutenberg, 1995. Print.

Diary of a Tar Heel Soldier: Lesson 17

Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate Soldier / Leon, Louis. Library of Congress. Web. 18 July 2011. <[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/uncall:@filreq\(@field\(DOCID+@lit\(AWQ-6414\)\)+@field\(COLLID+fpnas\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/uncall:@filreq(@field(DOCID+@lit(AWQ-6414))+@field(COLLID+fpnas)))>.