

## 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 to 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

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## 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

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## 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
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