

CIVIL WAR PERSPECTIVES
LESSON PLAN 9

1. Title

Analyzing Primary Sources: Identifying Advantages & Disadvantages

2. Overview

Based on what they've already learned, the class will brainstorm a list of each side's possible advantages and disadvantages in fighting the Civil War. Then, individually & in small groups, students will analyze primary source documents in order to find clues about possible advantages & disadvantages for both the Union & the Confederacy. Students will then share their observations & conclusions as a class, at which time the teacher will correct any misconceptions & help students construct a solid understanding of both side's strengths & weaknesses. Students will then reflect on what they've learned and write about who seemed to be the stronger opponent at the beginning of the Civil War.

3. Goal

Students will use background knowledge to make predictions about strengths and weaknesses of the Union & Confederacy. They will then analyze primary source documents in order to draw conclusions about possible advantages & disadvantages of both sides in fighting the Civil War.

4. Objectives

- Use background knowledge to make predictions
- Analyze primary sources and draw conclusions about advantages & disadvantages of the Union & the Confederacy in fighting the Civil War.
- Summarize why certain elements may work as an advantage or disadvantage in war.

5. Time Required (0-10)

1-2 class period (45 - 60 min)

6. Recommended Grade Range

Grades 7-8

7. Differentiated Instruction

While students are analyzing the primary sources individually & in small groups, the teacher should circulate the room, asking guiding questions & helping to direct the observations of students who seem to be struggling.

8. Subject / Sub-Subject

Social Studies

Language Arts

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.*
- CC.7.W.9 – Research to Build and Present Knowledge: *Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.*

10. Credits

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PREPARATION

11. Materials Used

- “Primary Source Analysis: Advantages & Disadvantages” worksheet
- Primary Source Packet: Advantages & Disadvantages
- Diary of a Tar Heel Soldier – Lesson 9

12. Resources Used

See Appendix

PROCEDURE

13. Description of Procedure

- Write “advantages” on the board & ask students if they know what this word means and help them to come up with a working definition. (*Advantage: Something that helps you!*)
- Write “disadvantages” on the board & complete this same procedure. (*Disadvantage: Something that hinders you!*)
- Make a T-Chart on the board & label one side “Union” and the other side “Confederacy”.
- Based on what they already know about the North & the South, ask students to share advantages that each side might have. What strengths does each side have? What might one side have that the other doesn’t?...
 - Encourage students to share their predictions freely. Let students know that they are simply brainstorming & making predictions, which we will build on later. Say: *“It’s okay to guess! I just want you to think about what you’ve learned & throw ideas out! What might have helped & hurt each side?”*
 - Write student responses on the T-Chart
- After brainstorming together as a class, put students in pairs or small groups & pass out Primary Source Packets to each pair or group.
- Pass out a “Primary Source Analysis: Advantages & Disadvantages” worksheet to each student.
- Tell students that they will be examining these primary source documents to try and learn more about the strengths & weaknesses of each side at the start of the Civil War. They will be recording their observations, reactions & conclusions on the worksheet as they observe the primary source documents.
- Give students 10 - 12 minutes to silently observe the primary source documents individually, recording their observations & responses on their worksheet.
 - Students will probably need support & direction as they get started. The teacher should circulate throughout the room during this time prompting the students with guiding questions: *“Write down everything you see. What do you notice about...? Who do you think that person might be? What questions do you have about what you see? How might this have helped/hurt the Union or the Confederacy?”*
- After students have observed the documents individually, ask them to share their thoughts & observations with their partners or small groups. As they discuss with their peers, encourage students to continue adding observations, reflections & conclusions to their worksheets. (10 – 12 minutes)

- The teacher should continue to circulate throughout the room asking guiding questions & directing student observations.
- Next, come together as a class and ask students to discuss their observations, reactions & conclusions. Ask students to focus on the 3rd column (Draw Conclusions) & share any possible advantages or disadvantages represented in these documents.
- As students share, ask them to add any new information to the 3rd column of their worksheet. Also add their responses to the T-Chart on the board at the front of the class. Help direct their responses & guide them toward the following advantages/disadvantages:
 - Union Advantages:
 - Greater population; higher number of soldiers (*see population census*)
 - Control of the railroads: transporting food, weapons, soldiers (*see railroad photo*)
 - Confederate Advantages:
 - Passion & Ideology ("*God Save the South*" poster)
 - Strong Leadership (*Robert E. Lee photograph*)
- Watch History Channel videos (from the History.com website)
 - Video 1 - Confederate vs. Union Soldiers: <http://www.history.com/topics/civil-war-technology/videos#confederate-vs-union-soldiers>
 - Video 2 – Lincoln’ War Machine: <http://www.history.com/topics/civil-war-technology/videos#lincolns-war-machine>
 - After watching each clip, stop & ask students to share any advantages they observe in the video & add these to the class T-Chart.
- After watching these videos & recording the strengths & weaknesses of both sides, read-aloud the “Diary of a Tar Heel Soldier – Lesson 9”.
 - As they listen, ask students to point out any of the advantages & disadvantages mentioned within the diary entry
 - *Union Advantages: large army & abundance of supplies*
 - *Confederate Advantages: great generals & dedicated soldiers*
- Finally, review the advantages & disadvantages that have been added to the list for the Union & Confederacy. Ask: “*Who do you think was expected to win this war? Why?*” (*The Union expected a quick victory: larger population, economic strength, and control of rail & water traffic*)
- Ask students to write their responses on the back of their “Primary Source Analysis: Advantages & Disadvantages” worksheet.

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

- Character biography worksheet
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