



GOAL 5 | LESSON PLAN | MIDDLE SCHOOL

Turning Point: 1863

Grades: Middle School

Approximate Length of Time: 3 hours (Time includes writing the final essay.)

Goal: Students will be able to argue how certain events in 1863 changed the trajectory of the war.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to complete a graphic organizer, finding key information within primary and secondary sources.
2. Students will be able to address a question about a historic event, providing evidence to support their answer from primary and secondary sources.

Common Core:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2](#)

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.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4](#)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7](#)

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1](#)

Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7](#)

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated

question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

NCSS STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES:

- 1—Culture
- 2—Time, Continuity, and Change
- 3—People, Places, and Environment
- 5—Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Description: This is an inquiry lesson where students will do research to answer the inquiry question about a major turning point in the American Civil War. Students will develop a hypothesis, search for evidence in multiple primary and secondary sources, and complete a graphic organizer. Through this process students will develop a strong answer to the inquiry question posed at the beginning.

Inquiry Question: Why is July 1863 a major turning point of the American Civil War?

Material:

- Vocabulary
- Primary Source Documents Packet
- Secondary Source Documents Packet
- Graphic Organizer
- National Archives Document Analysis Form (4 copies for each student)
- Final Essay
- Highlighters

Procedure:

Part I

1. Hand out the Vocabulary and Graphic Organizer.
2. Have students begin with a hypothesis to answer the inquiry question.

Part II

3. Hand out the Secondary and Primary Source document packets.
4. For the Primary Source Packet, students will need to do an Analysis form for each document; therefore, be sure to provide at least 4 copies of the form to each student.
5. Begin with the first secondary source, the video titled “The Entire Civil War Animated Map” starting at minute 11:03. There are two videos the students will need to watch as they go through the Secondary Source packet; either have the videos cued up at the front or give students access through computers or devices.

6. After students watch the first video they can go through the packets as they wish.

Conclusion:

Students will answer the inquiry question either orally or in essay form. They should use evidence from their primary and secondary sources. They can use the documents, their notes, and their graphic organizers. Students can do additional research to bolster their argument.

Students can share their responses with the class.

Assessment in this Lesson:

1. A completed graphic organizer
2. Notes taken on graphic organizer, documents, or other notes sheets
3. A complete answer to the inquiry question with quotes from the provided documents



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.



Vocabulary

Siege – When a location is surrounded by the enemy or trapped. No one can get supplies such as food, water, or medicine in.

Campaign – Military actions that include multiple battles with a certain goal (examples of goals might include capturing a certain city or stretch of land).

General – The person who is the commander of an army.

Blockade – Can be done by land or sea, but either way it blocks the sale or trade of goods from one country to another.

-Your own vocabulary list can be created below -



Name: _____

Date: _____

Primary Sources Turning Point: 1863

- The following documents may have been excerpted, if so, you can find the full texts using the citation below the document.
- Certain parts have been bolded and highlighted to draw attention to words or parts of the text, this has been done for our purposes, and are not in the original document.
- Circle look-up, and define the words you need to know in order to understand the document.
- Underline names of people mentioned that you find significant, if necessary you can do a quick search, and write down a very brief note about them on the document.
- Double underline places that are mentioned and find them on a map. Note their location. Do a search on battlefields.org to see if there was a battle at this location on or around the dates that are given.
- When doing research, you do not need to write in full sentences or paragraphs, brief notes and bullet points can be enough.
- For each document, complete the *National Archives Document Analysis* form.

Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War By David Dixon Porter

“See,” said Mr. Lincoln, pointing to the map, “what a lot of land these fellow hold, of which Vicksburg is the key. Here is Red River, which will supply the Confederates with cattle and corn to feed their armies. There are the Arkansas and White Rivers, which can supply cattle and hogs by the thousands. From Vicksburg these supplies can be distributed by rail all over the Confederacy. Then there is that great depot of supplies on the Yazoo. Let us get Vicksburg and all that country is ours. The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket. I am acquainted with that region and know what I am talking about, and, valuable as New Orleans will be to us, Vicksburg will be more so. We may take all the northern ports of the Confederacy, and they will defy us from Vicksburg. It means hog and hominy without limit, fresh troops from all the States of the far South, and a cotton country where they can raise the staple without interference.”

Admiral David Dixon Porter. *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1886), 95-96. <https://books.google.com/books?id=JcJN3RcTKesC&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

In the document above, Lincoln lists why Vicksburg is so important. In your own words, make a list below of the reasons.

Robert E. Lee
Official Records
1863-1864

In May of 1863 Lee visits Richmond, where it is believed that he argued for the invasion of the north. Though the Union Army has suffered many losses, Lee can see that the Union Army still has the advantage. He is also aware that the US blockade is working and the Confederate States are unable to trade and bring in more resources. While Lee is in Richmond making his argument, General Grant's Army is holding Vicksburg under siege and soon the Mississippi River will be under the control of the US. However, there is a chance of hope for Lee – the election of 1864 is coming and the Democratic Party plans to run on a platform seeking a peace agreement with the Confederacy.

Following the Gettysburg Campaign Robert E. Lee records his explanation as to why he invaded the North in the summer of 1863.

The position occupied by the enemy opposite Fredericksburg being one in which he could not be attacked to advantage, it was determined to draw him from it. The execution of this purpose embraced the relief of the Shenandoah Valley from the troops that had occupied the lower part of it during the winter and spring, and, if practicable, the transfer of the scene of hostilities north of the Potomac. It was thought that the corresponding movements on the part of the enemy to which those contemplated by us would probably give rise, might offer a fair opportunity to strike a blow at the army then commanded by General Hooker, and that in any event that army would be compelled to leave Virginia, and, possibly, to draw to its support troops designed to operate against other parts of the country. In this way it was supposed that the enemy's plan of campaign for the summer would be broken up, and part of the season of active operations be consumed in the formation of new combinations, and the preparations that they would require. In addition to these advantages, it was hoped that other valuable results might be attained by military success.

U.S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), Series 1, 27(3):305.

List the reasons Lee provides for the invasion:

What does Lee hope might happen?

Lincoln's Unsent Letter to General George Meade

Shortly after the Battle of Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln wrote a letter to General George Meade in which he expressed profound disappointment in Meade's inability to follow and destroy Robert E. Lee's army. Lincoln did not send the letter--writing letters like this one and storing them away was a favorite coping mechanism of his.

Executive Mansion,

Washington, July 14, 1863.

Major General Meade

I have just seen your despatch to Gen. Halleck, asking to be relieved of your command, because of a supposed censure of mine-- I am very -- very -- grateful to you for the magnificent success you gave the cause of the country at Gettysburg; and I am sorry now to be the author of the slightest pain to you-- But I was in such deep distress myself that I could not restrain some expression of it-- I had been oppressed nearly ever since the battles at Gettysburg, by what appeared to be evidences that your self, and Gen. Couch, and Gen. Smith, were not seeking a collision with the enemy, but were trying to get him across the river without another battle. What these evidences were, if you please, I hope to tell you at some time, when we shall both feel better. The case, summarily stated is this. You fought and beat the enemy at Gettysburg; and, of course, to say the least, his loss was as great as yours-- He retreated; and you did not; as it seemed to me, pressingly pursue him; but a flood in the river detained him, till, by slow degrees, you were again upon him. You had at least twenty thousand veteran troops directly with you, and as many more raw ones within supporting distance, all in addition to those who fought with you at Gettysburg; while it was not possible that he had received a single recruit; and yet you stood and let the flood run down, bridges be built, and the enemy move away at his leisure, without attacking him. And Couch and Smith! The latter left Carlisle in time, upon all ordinary calculation, to have aided you in the last battle at Gettysburg; but he did not arrive-- More At the end of more than ten days, I believe twelve, under constant urging, he reached Hagerstown from Carlisle, which is not an inch over fifty-five miles, if so much. And Couch's movement was very little different--

Again, my dear general, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape-- He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with the our other late successes, have ended the war-- As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack Lee last Monday, how can you possibly do so South of the river, when you can take with you very few more then two thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect, and I do not expect you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it--

I beg you will not consider this a prosecution, or persecution of yourself-- As you had learned that I was dissatisfied, I have thought it best to kindly tell you why.

[Endorsed on Envelope by Lincoln:]

To Gen. Meade, never sent, or signed.

Abraham Lincoln to Major General George Meade, July 14, 1863, <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/primary-sources/lincolns-unsent-letter-george-meade>

What battle is Lincoln discussing in this letter?

Who won the battle?

Why is Lincoln upset? What happened following the battle?

Reminiscence of Peace and War By Sara Agnes Rice Pryor

Excerpt

In July, General Lee fought and lost the great battle of Gettysburg, which plunged our state into mourning and lamentation. Never can the world read with dry eyes of the charge of Pickett's brigade and the manner in which it was met.... General Lee bore the disaster magnificently. An officer, attempting to place on other shoulders some portion of the blame, General Less said solemnly, '*All this has been my fault* – it is *I* that have lost this fight, and you must all help me out of it in the best way you can.'

The Federal loss in this battle, killed, wounded, and captured, was 23,003, the Confederate 20,451 – making a total of 43,454 good and true men lost, in one battle, to their country. The emblem of mourning hung at many a door among our friends in Richmond and Petersburg. Close upon this disaster came news of the fall of Vicksburg.

...

I had taken my young family to a watering place in the county of Amelia, and there a few homeless women like myself were spending the months of July and August. Everything was so sad there was no heart in any one for gayety of any kind; but one evening the proprietor proposed that the ball room be lighted and a solitary fiddler, "Bozeman," – who was also the barber, - be installed in the musicians' seat and show us what he could do. Young feet cannot resist a good waltz or polka, and the floor was soon filled with care-forgetting maidens – there were no men except the proprietor and the fiddler. Presently a telegram was received by the former. We all huddled together under the chandelier to read it. Vicksburg had fallen! The gallant General Pemberton had been starved into submission. Surely and swiftly the coil was tightening around us. Surely and swiftly should we, too, be starved into submission.

Sara Agnes Rice Pryor, *Reminiscence of Peace and War* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), 248-250.
<https://books.google.com/books?id=W4EhAAAAMAAJ&vq=vicksburg&pg=PA248#v=onepage&q=vicksburg&f=false>

Where does Sara seem to be from? Can you research which state she is from?

Why might she be homeless? What does this tell you about the conditions of where she lived?

What does this show about the morale of the people with Sara after Gettysburg and Vicksburg?



Name: _____

Date: _____

Secondary Sources Turning Point: 1863

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- Circle, look-up, and define the words you need to know in order to understand the document.
- Underline names of people mentioned that you find significant, if necessary you can do a quick search, and write down a very brief note about them on the document.
- Double underline places that are mentioned and find them on a map. Note their location. Do a search on battlefields.org to see if there was a battle at this location on or around the dates that are given.
- While doing research, you do not need to write in full sentences or paragraphs, brief notes and bullet points can be enough.

The Entire Civil War Animated Map

Watch the video from 11:03 to 16:42 on [civilwar.org](https://www.civilwar.org/learn/maps/entire-civil-war-animated-map). <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/maps/entire-civil-war-animated-map>

What does the victory at Vicksburg essentially do to the Confederate territory?

Where is Gettysburg located? In which state? Why is this important?

Who can now fight for the Union Army? Why is this important to this group of people? Why might this be important to the Union?

Notes: _____

The Battle of Gettysburg National Park Service

Fought over the first three days of July 1863, the Battle of Gettysburg was one of the most crucial battles of the Civil War. The fate of the nation literally hung in the balance that summer of 1863 when General Robert E. Lee, commanding the "Army of Northern Virginia," led his army north into Maryland and Pennsylvania, bringing the war directly into northern territory. The Union "Army of the Potomac", commanded by Major General George Gordon Meade, met the Confederate invasion near the Pennsylvania crossroads town of Gettysburg, and what began as a chance encounter quickly turned into a desperate, ferocious battle. Despite initial Confederate successes, the battle turned against Lee on July 3rd, and with few options remaining, he ordered his army to return to Virginia. The Union victory at the Battle of Gettysburg, sometimes referred to as the "High Water Mark of the Rebellion" resulted not only in Lee's retreat to Virginia, but an end to the hopes of the Confederate States of America for independence.

"History & Culture" National Park Service, Date accessed April 2018,
<https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/historyculture/index.htm>

What is a 'high water mark'? How can this battle be compared to a high water mark?

Notes: _____

Vicksburg Campaign: Unvexing the Father of Waters

By Terrence J. Winschel

Excerpt

Upon the secession of the Southern states — and in particular Louisiana and Mississippi — the [Mississippi] river was closed to unfettered navigation, which threatened to strangle Northern commercial interests. With the advent of civil war, President Abraham Lincoln gathered his civil and military leaders to discuss strategy for opening the Mississippi River and ending what he termed a "rebellion" in the southern states. Examining a map of the nation, Lincoln made a wide sweeping gesture with his hand then placed his finger on the map and said, "See what a lot of land these fellows hold, of which Vicksburg is the key. The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket." It was the president's contention that, "We can take all the northern ports of the Confederacy, and they can defy us from Vicksburg. It means hog and hominy without limit, fresh troops from all the states of the far South, and a cotton country where they can raise the staple without interference." Lincoln assured his listeners that, "I am acquainted with that region and know what I am talking about, and, as valuable as New Orleans will be to us, Vicksburg will be more so."

These powerful statements from the sixteenth president were no exaggeration. Confederate cannon mounted along the bluffs commanding the Mississippi River at Vicksburg were trained on the river, denying that important avenue of commerce to Northern shipping. It is important to further note that Vicksburg was also the connecting link between the eastern and western parts of the Confederacy, what Jefferson Davis referred to as "the nailhead that held the South's two halves together." In addition, the city sat astride a major Confederate supply route over which the armies of Braxton Bragg and Robert E. Lee received much-needed food, clothing, medicine, and ammunition, as well as fresh troops.

It was imperative for the administration in Washington to regain control of the lower Mississippi River, thereby reopening that avenue of commerce. It would also split the Confederacy in two, sever that vital supply route, achieve a major objective of the Anaconda Plan (the Union's overall strategic plan for the defeat of the Confederacy), and effectively seal the doom of Richmond.

Prominent military men of the time understood the significance of the Mississippi River, and Vicksburg in particular. William T. Sherman, a man destined to play a vital role in the military operations that centered on Vicksburg, wrote, "The Mississippi, source and mouth, must be controlled by one government." So firm was his belief that Sherman stated, "To secure the safety of the navigation of the Mississippi River I would slay millions. On that point I am not only insane, but mad." General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck wrote in similar, albeit less eloquent terms, "In my opinion, the opening of the Mississippi River will be to us of more advantage than the capture of forty Richmonds." And finally, Confederate President Jefferson Davis, in writing

to Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton after the fall of Vicksburg, stated his view, "I thought and still think you did right to risk an army for the purpose of keeping command of even a section of the Mississippi River. Had you succeeded, none would have blamed, had you not made the attempt few would have defended your course."

...

On the morning of July 4, 1863, white flags fluttered in the breeze above the fortifications of Vicksburg. Marching out from their works, Confederate soldiers furled their flags, stacked their arms, and turned over their accouterments. A victorious Union army marched in and took possession of Vicksburg — the fortress city on the Mississippi River that had eluded them for so long.

Grant rode into the city along the Jackson Road and down to the Warren County Courthouse where he watched the Stars and Stripes raised above the building. He then rode down to the waterfront where he personally thanked and congratulated Admiral Porter for the assistance rendered by the United States Navy during the operations for Vicksburg. Almost as an afterthought, he sent a message to Washington informing President Lincoln of the city's surrender. It took several days for the message to reach the capital during which time the only remaining Confederate bastion on the Mississippi River — Port Hudson, Louisiana — fell into Union hands. Upon receipt of Grant's message, Lincoln sighed, "Thank God," and declared "The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea."

Terrence J. Winschel "Vicksburg Campaign: Unvexing the Father of Waters" Civil War Trust, Date accessed April, 2018, <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/articles/vicksburg-campaign-unvexing-father-waters>.

Notes: _____

The Gettysburg Address In4 Video

Watch the video at <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/videos/gettysburg-address>

What did Lincoln do following the battle of Gettysburg?

Why do you think he did this?

How was this part of the turning point of 1863?

Why does this hold importance today?

Graphic Organizer

Turning Point: 1863

Use this page to organize your ideas and information from the primary and secondary source documents. Use this completed page to answer the inquiry question - Why is July 1863 a major turning point of the American Civil War?

Hypothesis:

Event (notes on the event – Date, location, victor, other things of note)

Event

Major Players, their Actions/Thoughts

Major Players, their Actions/Thoughts

Gettysburg

Vicksburg

Outcomes

Considered a Turning Point –

When (In 1863 or afterward) –

Why -

Considered a Turning Point –

When –

Why -

Outcomes

Analyze a Written Document

Meet the document.

Type (check all that apply):

- | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech | <input type="checkbox"/> Patent | <input type="checkbox"/> Telegram | <input type="checkbox"/> Court document |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chart | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement | <input type="checkbox"/> Press Release | <input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Identification document | | <input type="checkbox"/> Presidential document |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congressional document | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | |

Describe it as if you were explaining to someone who can't see it.

Think about: Is it handwritten or typed? Is it all by the same person? Are there stamps or other marks? What else do you see on it?

Observe its parts.

Who wrote it?

Who read/received it?

When is it from?

Where is it from?

Try to make sense of it.

What is it talking about?

Write one sentence summarizing this document.

Why did the author write it?

Quote evidence from the document that tells you this.

What was happening at the time in history this document was created?

Use it as historical evidence.

What did you find out from this document that you might not learn anywhere else?

What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?





Name: _____

Date: _____

Essay

Why is July 1863 a major turning point of the American Civil War?

Be sure to:

- Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s),
- Establish the significance of the claim(s) with evidence – using quotes from primary and secondary source material
- Create an organization that logically sequences the claim(s)
- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, and between reasons and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented.