

# Civil War Overview Lesson Plan

ELEMENTARY

*BY CHERYLE HODGES*

**Approximate Length of Time:** Three 50 minute classes

## **Goals:**

1. Students will be able to describe the state of the nation and sequence the first events of the war.
2. Students will be able to discuss the effects of the battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, paying particular attention to the Gettysburg Address.
3. Students will be able to list and discuss the sequence of events leading to the end of the Civil War.

## **Objectives:**

1. Students will listen to and present their reaction to the Sullivan Ballou letter.
2. Students will summarize and place in chronological order events of the Civil War.
4. Students will engage in a group discussion concerning the meaning and significance of the Gettysburg Address.
5. Students will present facts about a particular battle and how individuals involved may have reacted by creating an interview that could have taken place post-battle.
6. Students will summarize the end of the Civil War from the perspective of either a Union or Confederate soldier.

## **Materials:**

- Sullivan Ballou Letter (Primary Document)
- Battle / Event Cards
- Battle/ Event Summary Clue Sheet

- Battle/ Event Trading Cards (Timeline activity)
- Movie Maker Civil War Battles/ Events
- Gettysburg Address (Primary Document)
- Civil War Radio Handout
- Computer or recording device

## **Anticipatory Set/ Hook:**

1. Imagine you are 16 years old and you want to sign up to join the army. They will not take you unless you are over 18.
2. Take out a small piece of scrap paper. Write the number 18 on the paper.
3. Take off your right shoe. Place the paper in your shoe and put it back on. Be sure the paper is under your foot.
4. Now, stand up and raise your right hand. Repeat after me: I do solemnly swear that I am over 18. You now are all new recruits in the army and you did not lie about your age! Yes, this did happen.

## **Procedure:**

### **Activity 1**

1. Teacher reads the letter from Sullivan Ballou to the class. This is a primary document written one week before he was killed at the Battle of Bull Run. Using the discussion questions, give children time to discuss their feelings after the reading.
2. Pass out a set of Battle/Event Cards to each group of between 3 and 5 students. Have them read the cards orally to their group.
3. Pass out the Battle/Event Summary Clue sheets to each group. Still working with their group, write a paragraph to create a summary of each battle or event of the Civil War. The clues will guide the thoughts of the paragraph. Students should take turns writing their group summary, handing in one summary paragraph per battle or event.

### **Activity 2**

4. Pass out the Battle/Event Trading Cards to each student. Have students cut out the cards and place them in chronological order by the dates on the cards. Glue them either on construction paper or into interactive notebook.
5. Show video from Movie Maker on the Battles and Events for children to check their chronological order.
6. Pass out copies of the "Gettysburg Address" to each child. Read over it individually and

then orally. The oral reading can be done by children, the teacher, or watch the Gettysburg Address video. Have children write down two or three thoughts about the address. Then have an oral discussion with the children giving their ideas on the meaning and significance of the speech.

### **Activity 3**

7. Students will create an imaginary Civil War Radio News Show. In this show students will announce the major battles and events of the Civil War.
8. Place students into groups of 3-5. Each group will have one event or battle. Some groups may have to write two scripts if you do not have 8 groups.
9. Pass out the Civil War Radio Show direction packets to each group and review the directions.
9. After the scripts are complete, call each group up in chronological order to read and record their portion of the show. Record into the computer or another recording device.
10. Play back the show as a review of the Battles and Events of the Civil War.

### **Closure:**

Children will choose to be a soldier from the North, or a soldier from the South. The time is after the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse. Write a paragraph telling how you feel and why you feel that way. The paragraph should be at least 5 sentences long and contain a reference to at least one of the eight battles or events we have been studying.

### **Assessment:**

1. Summary Sheet completed from information cards.
2. Trading Cards placed in chronological order.
3. Informal assessment through class discussion of Gettysburg Address.
4. Radio Show presentations.
5. Paragraph written from view of a soldier after the war.

### **Extension:**

1. The radio show can also be turned into a play with costumes and props.
2. Using Movie Maker program, have children create a movie to review people and or events of the Civil War.

All pictures and primary source documents came from the following sources:

1. Library of Congress

2. National Archives

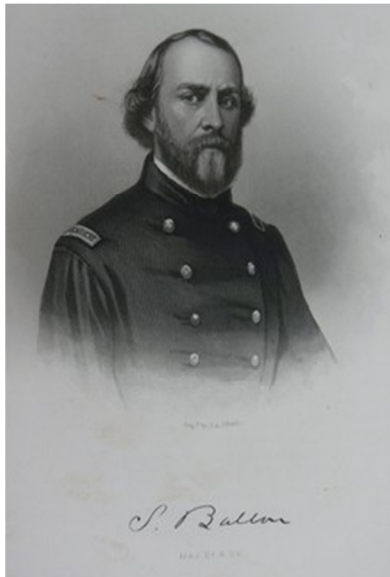
3. Civil War Trust

## Sullivan Ballou Letter

July 14, 1861

*Maj. Sullivan Ballou*

*The following is a letter written by Maj. Sullivan Ballou to his wife Sarah (née Shumway) at home in Rhode Island.*



Camp Clark, Washington

My very dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days - perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write you again, I feel impelled to write lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more.

Our movement may be one of a few days duration and full of pleasure - and it may be one of severe conflict and death to me. Not my will, but thine O God, be done. If it is necessary that I should fall on the battlefield for my country, I am ready. I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American Civilization now leans upon the triumph of the Government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution. And I am willing - perfectly willing - to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government, and to pay that debt.

But, my dear wife, when I know that with my own joys I lay down nearly all of yours, and replace them in this life with cares and sorrows - when, after having eaten for long years the bitter fruit of orphanage myself, I must offer it as their only sustenance to my dear little children - is it weak or dishonorable, while the banner of my purpose floats calmly and proudly in the breeze, that my unbounded love for you, my darling wife and children, should struggle in fierce, though useless, contest with my love of country?

I cannot describe to you my feelings on this calm summer night, when two thousand men are sleeping around me, many of them enjoying the last, perhaps, before that of death -- and I, suspicious that Death is creeping behind me with his fatal dart, am communing with God, my country, and thee.

I have sought most closely and diligently, and often in my breast, for a wrong motive in thus hazarding the happiness of those I loved and I could not find one. A pure love of my country and of the principles have often advocated before the people and "the name of honor that I love more than I fear death" have called upon me, and I have obeyed.

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me to you with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly on with all these chains to the battlefield.

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when God willing, we might still have lived and loved together and seen our sons grow up to honorable manhood around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me - perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar -- that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name.

Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have oftentimes been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness, and struggle with all the misfortune of this world, to shield you and my children from harm. But I cannot. I must watch you from the spirit land and hover near you, while you buffet the storms with your precious little freight, and wait with sad patience till we meet to part no more.

But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the garish day and in the darkest night -- amidst your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours - always, always; and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath; or the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by.

Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.

As for my little boys, they will grow as I have done, and never know a father's love and care. Little Willie is too young to remember me long, and my blue eyed Edgar will keep my frolics with him among the dimmest memories of his childhood. Sarah, I have unlimited confidence in your maternal care and your development of their characters. Tell my two mothers his and hers I call God's blessing upon them. O Sarah, I wait for you there! Come to me, and lead thither my children.

--Sullivan

*Ballou died a week later, at the First Battle of Bull Run. He was 32.*

## **Discussion Questions:**

Who is Sullivan Ballou writing to?

What is he discussing in this letter?

Why do you think he wrote this letter?

Do you think other soldiers wrote letters like this? Why or why not?

How do you think Sarah felt upon reading this letter? How do you feel?

### **Fort Sumter**

Fort Sumter was fired on by Confederate troops on April 12, 1861. It was located in Charleston Harbor, Charleston, SC. General P. G. T. Beauregard commanded the Confederate troops. Robert Anderson, a United States officer, was in command of the fort at the time. South Carolina wanted the Union troops out of the fort. Lincoln sent supply ships that were not permitted to dock at the fort. The Union troops surrendered. The battle lasted 34 hours. The Civil War had begun.

### **Battle of Fredericksburg**

The Battle of Fredericksburg took place from December 11-15, 1862. Fredericksburg, VA is half way between the two capitals of Washington, D.C. and Richmond, VA. General Robert E. Lee was in command of the Confederate troops and General Ambrose E. Burnside was in command of the Union forces. The battle was a Confederate victory with Union casualties numbering 12,653 and Confederate casualties at 5,377.

### **Battle of First Manassas / Bull Run**

The first major battle of the war took place on July 28, 1861. The battle lasted one day. It took place in Manassas, VA, a town in northern Virginia. General P. G. T. Beauregard was in charge of the Confederate forces and General Irwin McDowell commanded the Union troops. Civilians from Washington, D.C. rode in carriages to watch the battle. General Thomas Jackson earned the nickname "Stonewall" during the battle. With this Confederate victory, both sides knew that the war would not end quickly after the battle.

### **Emancipation Proclamation**

On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in the Confederate states and made the issue of slavery the new focus of the war. The spirit of the Union was renewed and many slaves joined the army.



### **Siege of Vicksburg**

This siege took place from May 18, 1863 through the fall of the fort on July 3. Vicksburg was important because whoever controlled the port controlled the Mississippi River and the supply routes. General John Pemberton was in charge of the Confederate forces and General Ulysses S. Grant commanded the Union troops. Grant took over the fort and control of the Mississippi supply routes, splitting the Confederacy in half, on July 3, 1863.

### **Gettysburg Address**

President Abraham Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address during the dedication of the cemetery for Union soldiers who fought and died in the Battle of Gettysburg. In the address he encourages Americans to remember the sacrifices made by these soldiers. "...we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

### **Battle of Gettysburg**

The Battle of Gettysburg was the bloodiest of the war. It took place in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania beginning on July 1, 1863 and ending on July 3 after three days of fighting. General Robert E. Lee commanded the Confederate troops and General George Meade had just taken control of the Union forces. Union troops had and held the high ground. This was a Union victory and was the turning point of war. The Confederates would never again invade the North and would be fighting a defensive war for the next two years.

### **Appomattox Courthouse**

As the Union troops continued to be victorious on the battlefield following Vicksburg and Gettysburg, the condition of the Confederate army deteriorated. Lee's troops were starving, ragged, and steadily deserting. Finally, in April of 1865, Grant's forces trapped Lee's men at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. Unable to fight back, Lee arranged to meet with Grant to surrender. Lee's surrender to Grant on April 9, 1865 marked the end of the Civil War.

Use the clues to write summaries of the Battle / Event Cards. Each team member should take a turn as recorder to write the summaries. Include all groups member names on the finished summaries.

1. The Confederacy wanted Fort Sumter:

So they:

Then Major Anderson:

This was the:

2. In the Battle of First Manassas everyone wanted to:

Civilians:

Thomas Jackson:

Victory but:

3. In the Battle of Fredericksburg the Union wanted to:

But the Confederates:

4. On January 1, 1863:

This gave the Union armies a new:

Many slaves:

5. Vicksburg was important because:

Grant wanted:

On July 3, 1863:

The Confederacy was:

6. The Battle of Gettysburg took place on:

Where:

High ground:

Turning point:

Never again:

7. The Gettysburg Address was given by:

Because:

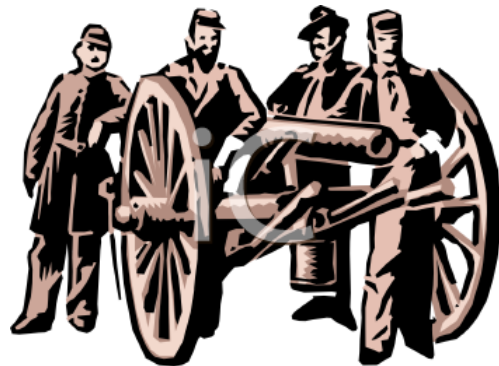
It said:

8. Appomattox Courthouse is important:

Lee felt:

So he:

Marked the end:





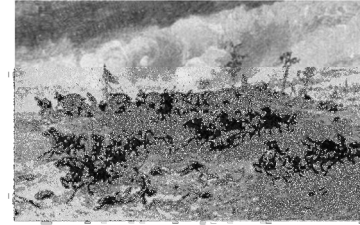
Appomattox Courthouse  
April 9, 1865



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Battle of First Manassas / Bull Run  
July 28, 1861



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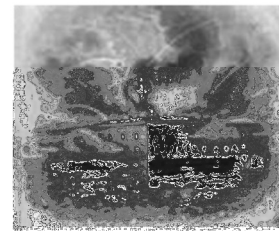
Emancipation Proclamation  
January 1, 1863



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Fort Sumter  
April 12,  
1861



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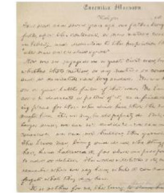
**Battle of Fredericksburg**  
December 11-15, 1862



Fredericksburg, VA is halfway between the two capitals, Washington, DC and Richmond, VA. Robert E. Lee, commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, and his Confederate troops held off the Union army led by General Ambrose E. Burnside in this attempt to move south to Richmond. The battle was a Confederate victory with Union casualties numbering 12,653 and Confederate casualties at 5,377.



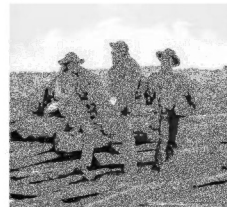
**Gettysburg Address**  
November 19, 1863



President Abraham Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address during the dedication of the cemetery for Union soldiers who fought and died in the Battle of Gettysburg. In the address he encourages Americans to remember the sacrifices made by these soldiers. "...we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."



**Battle of Gettysburg**  
July 1, 2, 3, 1863



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**Siege of Vicksburg**  
May 18 - July 3, 1863



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# The Gettysburg Address

NOVEMBER 19, 1863

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Following the Battle of Gettysburg Abraham Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address during the dedication of the cemetery for Union soldiers who fought and died in the battle. In the address Lincoln expressed the great need for Americans to remember the sacrifice made by these soldiers.*

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal."

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow, this ground—The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us —that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

## Civil War Radio

Using information from your Battle/ Event Cards, write a radio script to go along with your assigned topic. Each group member must have a speaking part and the script can be no longer than 3 minutes. The lead announcer must read the provided script that goes along with your topic.

Here is the beginning script. Use it as a model to write the remaining broadcasts.

**Main Announcer:** Good Morning. This is \_\_\_\_\_ reporting live from Charleston, South Carolina. It has just been announced that Abraham Lincoln has been elected the next president of the United States.

Excuse me, sir. What do you think about the new president?

**Man on street:** Well sir, I think the South is doomed. This man will ruin everything!

Main Announcer: Thank you for your comment.

Miss, what is your opinion of the new United States President?

**Lady on street:** Dreadful news! Our Southern way of life is in danger!

**Main Announcer:** Wait, wait. There is a news flash coming through...South Carolina has seceded from the Union!

It was said that since we freely joined the Union, we could freely leave it too!

Thank you for listening to WCWT radio.

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_ Role in Civil War Radio

Good morning. This is Walter Williams, your connection to the news of the day. These are troubled times we are experiencing and this station will be the first to bring you the latest updates and news. With the election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States and the secession of South Carolina and several other Southern States we will be on the air frequently with breaking news.

Fort Sumter:

We have just received news of shots being fired in Charleston Harbor. I will switch you now live to our reporter on the scene,

\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Who was involved in this battle? Who won?
2. What happened?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. How and why?

## Battle of First Manassas / Bull Run

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been three months since Fort Sumter and now we are in Northern Virginia near the home of Wilbur McLean. Anticipation is high of the coming conflict. Breaking news is coming in! We now switch you over to our on the scene reporter \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Who was involved in this battle? Who won?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. How and why?



## Battle of Fredericksburg

It is December and the weather is turning cold. Union troops have been camped on the Stafford side of the Rappahannock River in Virginia, and are expected to cross any time now to take control of Fredericksburg. Fredericksburg is located half way between the two capitals of Washington D.C. and Richmond. Here is our reporter from Fredericksburg, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

1. Who was involved in this battle? Who won?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. Why and how?

## Emancipation Proclamation

We are reporting live from the White House this morning. President Abraham Lincoln is about to issue something that will change the focus of the war. Turning you over to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ live from the White House in Washington D.C.

1. Who
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. How and why?

## Siege of Vicksburg

Union forces have been attacking Vicksburg for months. We hear through reliable sources that the Union forces are about to take the fort at Vicksburg. Control of the mighty Mississippi River is about to switch to the Union. Here now is our reporter near Vicksburg, Mississippi, \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Who was involved in this battle? Who won?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. How and Why?

## Battle of Gettysburg

Our reporters are being spread thin these days! Now we have heard that Confederate forces have invaded Pennsylvania and there is about to be a huge battle there! This is at the same time as Vicksburg is falling to the Union! We are now going live to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania with \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Who was involved in this battle? Who won?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. Why and how?

## Gettysburg Address

It has been months since the battle at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. People are gathering there this November to dedicate a new national cemetery to honor the dead Union soldiers. We have a reporter there to hear the President's speech. Going now live to \_\_\_\_\_ where the President is about to speak.

1. Who?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. How and why?

## Appomattox Courthouse

History is about to be made in a small town in Virginia. Wilbur McLean, who owned the land near Bull Run Creek, Manassas, has been asked to host a meeting between General Ulysses S. Grant and General Robert E. Lee. We take you there now live with \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Who won the war?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. How and why?

History has been made these past four years. We here at Civil War Radio hope that we have given you insight and information as the war lingered on. Thank you for being dedicated listeners. Good night and happy futures to you all!