

# Experiencing the Battle of Franklin

## LESSON FOR 7TH TO 9TH GRADE

*CIVIL WAR TRUST*

**Approximate Length of Time:** 1 class period of approximately 50 minutes

## Goal:

Students will gain a historical knowledge of the November 30, 1864 Battle of Franklin by using maps and by reading primary sources related to the battle.

## Objectives:

- 1.) Students will watch an animated map of the battle following which they will be able to appropriately answer a set of questions related to the battle as well as participate in classroom discussion;
- 2.) Given primary source documents, students will be able to complete a pre-writing strategy to generate and organize ideas related to the primary source document;
- 3.) After reviewing a map and reading primary sources Students will be able to illustrate the experience of participating in a Civil War battle, using adjectives related to at least three senses.

## Materials:

Located on the right side of this page

*Co Aytch* - "The Death Angel Gathers Its Last Harvest"  
"Experiencing the Battle" Worksheet and Teacher Guide  
Animated Map Worksheet and Teacher Guide  
Harvest of Carnage video (4:41 min)  
Action in front yard at Carter House video (10:37 min)  
Franklin Animated Map  
Image of Sam Watkins  
Journal Rubric  
Battlefield Preservation Presentation (*Optional*)

## Vocabulary:

Supply Lines – routes that armies use to transport food, supplies and ammunition

Entrenched – “dug in”; to be dug into the ground possibly using trenches, fortifications or the land itself so that soldiers couldn't be dislodged easily

Abatis - A line of trees, chopped down and placed with their branches facing the enemy, used to strengthen fortifications

Works - fortified structures designed to strengthen a position in battle; includes earthworks, fieldworks, entrenchments, siege lines...

Reinforce - make a military force stronger by sending more soldiers

## Anticipatory Set:

Explain that today the students are going to learn about the soldiers' experiences at the November 30, 1864 Battle of Franklin, TN.

Why would we learn about this battle? Do you think this is important to us?

Do you know what a battle looked like during the Civil War? Was it in black and white? How do you picture it in your head?

Do you think that learning about one battle will help us understand the war?

## Procedure:

### Introduction:

Ask the students, do you know what was happening in the South in November 1864? Do you know when the war ended?

\* Teachers - By November 1864, the Confederacy was struggling economically and many men had been killed. The southern population's morale was extremely low and another battle loss would be tremendously difficult for most Southerners and possibly the Confederacy as a whole to bear.

Explain the above information and put it in terms that your students will understand. Compare it to their family, neighborhood, or current events.

As a class watch one of the videos, either "Harvest of Carnage" or "Action in Front of the Carter House". You will want to preview these clips before you show them to your students. Elicit student reactions.

### Activity 1: Animated Map

Watch the Animated Map of the Battle of Franklin. Have student complete the Animated Map Worksheet that accompanies the presentation.

\* Note the play and pause buttons at the bottom of the animated map and the timeline at the top. using the timeline you can pause, rewind and fast forward.

### Activity 2: *Co. Aytch*

Show the picture of Sam Watkins, a member of the First Tennessee Regiment.

Explain to your students that, "Sam and his fellow soldiers fought in many terrible battles including Shiloh, Corinth, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge and the struggle for Atlanta. His regiment suffered horrendous losses – out of about 120 men who enlisted in 1861, Watkins was one of seven men present when the regiment surrendered in 1865. Long after the war, Watkins wrote about his Civil War experiences in *Co. Aytch*. Sam Watkins describes his participation in the Battle of Franklin in a chapter entitled "The Death Angel Gathers its Last Harvest." This is what they will be reading today."

Give each student a copy of "The Death Angel Gathers its Last Harvest" to read independently.

Place students in small groups of 2-4 people.

Give each student a copy of the "Experiencing the Battle" worksheet.

Tell the students that they are to discuss what the battle experience was like for these participants and then on their worksheets they will give examples of the sight, sound, smell and feel of the battle.

### Activity 3: Journaling

Hand out journals and have students write about what it was like to be a soldier fighting in the Battle of Franklin. Students will use adjectives, adverbs and descriptive writing to discuss what they see, touch, smell or hear.

Journal Question: Imagine you are at the Battle of Franklin. What is the battle like? What do you see, smell and hear? What does it feel like?

**Teaching Civics through Preservation:  
The Battlefield Today (Optional)**

Use this lesson in conjunction with the Teaching Civics Through Preservation program.

Ask students if they would like to see the place where the battle took place? Do they think that the battlefield today looks like it did during the battle, nearly 150 years ago?

Watch the teacher-created [Battlefield Preservation Presentation](#).

Then, visit Flickr and show students the rows of headstones at the cemetery, bullet holes and blood stains at the Carter House, the location of the cotton gin, and parts of the battlefield which have been developed.

Elicit student reactions. Are they surprised to see a strip mall at the site of bloody fighting? Are they surprised to learn that a Pizza Hut used to be located on the battlefield? How do the students feel about this? Why do you think the community developed this land? What are your thoughts on preserving or developing this battlefield? What types of land should be preserved? Why? Is a battlefield a local or a national resource? Why?

If your students really enjoyed learning about Franklin and find the battle fascinating, they might be interested to know that are still parts of this battlefield to be saved.

## **Assessment:**

Students will complete and provide appropriate responses to the Animated Map Worksheet and the “Experiencing the Battle” worksheet.

The journal entry should describe the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings of the battle of Franklin. This should be similar to what Sam Watkins wrote. Score using the Journal Rubric.

## **Adaptation Ideas:**

Use the primary sources as inductive vocabulary lessons;

Have students paraphrase their documents for understanding;

Download additional primary sources: John Shellenberger, 64th OH and John Copley, 49th TN. Using the CWPT map of Franklin, have students research the battlefield location of each primary source author. Where did Shellenberger, Copley and Watkins fight?