

“Slavery and the Civil War” Institute Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: The Human toll of the Civil War

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Grade/Subject: U.S. History/8th, 11th

Summary of Content: This lesson uses primary sources and comparative statistics to help students to personalize the effects of the Civil War.

Objectives: Students will

- Analyze primary sources to experience personal interpretations and impacts of Civil War casualties.
- Create an Excel chart to compare casualties in various wars as well as make comparisons with current U.S. population figures.

TEKS Objectives: 8.8B, 8.10A, US.24A, US.24B, US.24H, US.25C

Time Required: 1-2 50 minute class periods

Materials Needed:

- Computer lab with Internet Access and Microsoft Excel
- Civil War primary source documents and photographs (included)
- War statistics and population figures (some included)

Procedures:

Begin by showing students the photographs (included) of Dunker Church on the Antietam battlefield. The first picture was taken at the time of the battle, and the second one is a modern day photograph. Ask students what feelings the pictures evoke, and discuss as a class.

Next, share with the class some of the included statistics about casualties that occurred during the Civil War and other conflicts. Ask various students for their impressions.

Then put the students in groups and give each group a copy of each of the three included primary sources. Students should discuss these documents and their impressions of each. Ask students if their views about casualties in the Civil War changed at all from the time they saw/heard the statistics to the time that they read the personal accounts of people seeing the violence of the war firsthand. At this point, students should write a journal entry reflecting on how primary sources enable one to get a different, and perhaps better, perspective of an event than they can get by studying mere historical facts.

In the computer lab, students will create an Excel chart (sample included) in which they compare casualty counts in various wars with each other and with modern day U.S. population totals. Students will see how the same percentages in those conflicts would affect our population today. You will want to have students research census records to determine the U.S. population at the beginning of each war.

To sum up, you should discuss how comparative data can help to illuminate past events. Ask students how putting past wars in terms of present population figures can help to make history more relevant to them.

Assessment: Student journal entries, class discussions, completed Excel chart with an explanation of conclusions drawn from it

1860 Census

Total Population	31,183,582
Free Colored Persons	476,748
Total Free Population	27,233,198
Total Number of Slaves	3,950,528
Slaves as % of Population	13%
Total Number of Families	5,155,608
Total Number of Slaveholders	393,975
% of Families Owning Slaves	8%

<http://www.civil-war.net/census.asp?census=Total>

United States War Casualties^{1,2}

WAR	NUMBER SERVING	WOUNDED	BATTLE DEATHS
Revolutionary War	217,000 ³	6,188	4,435
War of 1812	286,730	4,505	2,260
Mexican War	78,718	4,152	1,733
Civil War (Both Sides)	3,213,363	354,805	191,963
Spanish American War	306,760	1,662	385
World War I	4,734,991	204,002	53,402
World War II	16,112,566	671,846	291,557
Korean Conflict	5,720,000	103,284	33,741
Vietnam Conflict	8,744,000	153,303	47,424
Persian Gulf War	2,225,000	467	147

http://www.americanfamilytraditions.com/war_casualties.htm

The Price in Blood! **Casualties in the Civil War**

At least 618,000 Americans died in the Civil War, and some experts say the toll reached 700,000. The number that is most often quoted is 620,000. At any rate, these casualties exceed the nation's loss in all its other wars, from the Revolution through Vietnam.

The Union armies had from 2,500,000 to 2,750,000 men. Their losses, by the best estimates:

Battle deaths:	110,070
Disease, etc.:	250,152
Total	360,222

The Confederate strength, known less accurately because of missing records, was from 750,000 to 1,250,000. Its estimated losses:

Battle deaths:	94,000
Disease, etc.:	164,000
Total	258,000

The leading authority on casualties of the war, Thomas L. Livermore, admitting the handicap of poor records in some cases, studied 48 of the war's battles and concluded:

Of every 1,000 Federals in battle, 112 were wounded.

Of every 1,000 Confederates, 150 were hit.

Mortality was greater among Confederate wounded, because of inferior medical service.

<http://www.civilwarhome.com/casualties.htm>

The Ten Costliest Battles of the Civil War

Based on total casualties (killed, wounded, missing, and captured)

#1

Battle of Gettysburg

Date: July 1-3, 1863

Location: Pennsylvania

Confederate Commander: Robert E. Lee

Union Commander: George G. Meade

Confederate Forces Engaged: 75,000

Union Forces Engaged: 82,289

Winner: Union

Casualties: 51,112 (23,049 Union and 28,063 Confederate)

#2

Battle of Chickamauga

Date: September 19-20, 1863

Location: Georgia

Confederate Commander: Braxton Bragg

Union Commander: William Rosecrans

Confederate Forces Engaged: 66,326

Union Forces Engaged: 58,222

Winner: Confederacy

Casualties: 34,624 (16,170 Union and 18,454 Confederate)

#3

Battle of Chancellorsville

Date: May 1-4, 1863

Location: Virginia

Confederate Commander: Robert E. Lee

Union Commander: Joseph Hooker

Confederate Forces Engaged: 60,892

Union Forces Engaged: 133,868

Winner: Confederacy

Casualties: 30,099 (17,278 Union and 12,821 Confederate)

#4

Battle of Spotsylvania

Date: May 8-19, 1864

Location: Virginia

Confederate Commander: Robert E. Lee

Union Commander: Ulysses S. Grant

Confederate Forces Engaged: 50,000

Union Forces Engaged: 83,000

Winner: Confederacy

Casualties: 27,399 (18,399 Union and 9,000 Confederate)

#5

Battle of Antietam

Date: September 17, 1862

Location: Maryland

Confederate Commander: Robert E. Lee

Union Commander: George B. McClellan

Confederate Forces Engaged: 51,844

Union Forces Engaged: 75,316

Winner: Inconclusive (Strategic Union Victory)

Casualties: 26,134 (12,410 Union and 13,724 Confederate)

#6

Battle of The Wilderness

Date: May 5-7, 1864

Location: Virginia
Confederate Commander: Robert E. Lee
Union Commander: Ulysses S. Grant
Confederate Forces Engaged: 61,025
Union Forces Engaged: 101,895
Winner: Inconclusive
Casualties: 25,416 (17,666 Union and 7,750 Confederate)

#7

[Battle of Second Manassas](#)

Date: August 29-30, 1862

Location: Virginia
Confederate Commander: Robert E. Lee
Union Commander: John Pope
Confederate Forces Engaged: 48,527
Union Forces Engaged: 75,696
Winner: Confederacy
Casualties: 25,251 (16,054 Union and 9,197 Confederate)

#8

[Battle of Stone's River](#)

Date: December 31, 1862

Location: Tennessee
Confederate Commander: Braxton Bragg
Union Commander: William S. Rosecrans
Confederate Forces Engaged: 37,739
Union Forces Engaged: 41,400
Winner: Union
Casualties: 24,645 (12,906 Union and 11,739 Confederate)

#9

[Battle of Shiloh](#)

Date: April 6-7, 1862

Location: Tennessee
Confederate Commander: Albert Sidney Johnston/ P. G. T. Beauregard
Union Commander: Ulysses S. Grant
Confederate Forces Engaged: 40,335
Union Forces Engaged: 62,682
Winner: Union
Casualties: 23,741 (13,047 Union and 10,694 Confederate)

#10

Battle of Fort Donelson

Date: February 13-16, 1862

Location: Tennessee

Confederate Commander: John B. Floyd/Simon B. Buckner

Union Commander: Ulysses S. Grant

Confederate Forces Engaged: 21,000

Union Forces Engaged: 27,000

Winner: Union

Casualties: 19,455 (2,832 Union and 16,623 Confederate)

<http://www.civilwarhome.com/Battles.htm>

Back in July 1776, there were about 2.5 million people living in the colonies.

http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/004772.html



<http://rockhay.tripod.com/peace/dunkerchurch/pics/dunkerchurch.jpg>



Photo taken by T. Erwin 06/06/2006

Conflict	Total U.S. Population at the time	Total # of Deaths	Deaths as % of Total Population	Equivalent of U.S. Population today
Civil War	31,183,582	191,963	0.62%	1,834,458
Revolutionary War	2,500,000	4,435	0.18%	528,652
World War I	99,111,000	53,402	0.05%	160,565

After the retreat of Lee, I rode over the ground and surveyed the field from every point. The dead were thickly strewn. A Confederate battery bad [sic] occupied the ground around the Dunker church, a small brick building on the turnpike, a mile south of Poffenberg's. At its door-step lay a major, a captain, and eleven men, all dead. A wounded horse, unable to lie down, was standing near a dismantled caisson. Almost human was the beseeching look of the dumb creature. I rode along the sunken road, where the Confederate dead were lying as they had fallen.

I judged from a little counting that a thousand of the enemy's dead were in the road and the adjoining field. A shell had thrown seven into one heap, some on their faces, some on their backs, fallen, as a handful of straws would fall when dropped upon the ground. But not they alone suffered. The bloody tide which had surged through all the morning between the ridges above, along the right, had flowed over the hill at this noontide hour. The yellow soil became crimson; the russet corn-leaves turned to red, as if autumn had put on in a moment her richest glory.

Charles Carleton Coffin: Eyewitness to Antietam, pp. 18-19.
Reprinted from *The Boys of 1861 or Four Years of Fighting*,
by Charles Carleton Coffin, Boston, Dana Estes & Company Publishers, 1896.

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Fort Wagner being only a mile from our camp, I went there two or three times a week, and would go up on the ramparts to watch the gunners send their shells into Charleston (which they did every fifteen minutes), and had a full view of the city from that point. Outside of the fort were many skulls lying about; I have often moved them one side out of the path. The comrades and I would have quite a debate as to which side the men fought on. Some thought they were the skulls of our boys; others thought they were the enemy's; but as there was no definite way to know, it was never decided which could lay claim to them. They were a gruesome sight, those fleshless heads and grinning jaws, but by this time I had become accustomed to worse things and did not feel as I might have earlier in my camp life.

It seems strange how our aversion to seeing suffering is overcome in war, --- how we are able to see the most sickening sights, such as men with their limbs blown off and mangled by the deadly shells, without a shudder; and instead of turning away, how we hurry to assist in alleviating their pain, bind up their wounds, and press the cool water to their parched lips, with feelings only of sympathy and pity.

Susie King Taylor- Reminiscences of My Life In Camp: An African American Woman's Civil War Memoir

The University of Georgia Press, 2006.
pp. 31-32.

The sun went down, the cannon grew cool. However, there would be no rest among the doctors and among the many farmers in the Valley of the Antietam. Almost every existing building became a hospital. The Hagerstown paper said the area was “one vast hospital.” A member of the Christian Commission writes, “Nearly every farmhouse and barn was mad a hospital.”

What was a hospital like in the Valley of the Antietam? Primarily it was some type of bedding, generally straw on the floor with blankets on top. Men lie around in various states of dress and undress. In some instances, part of their uniforms have been cut away. Hospital attendants walk among the makeshift beds giving cool water, bathing a fevered brow, and perhaps holding the hand of a lad who is dying.

Tables, doors ripped from their hinges or window shutters served as examining tables, and also as operating tables. Water was heated to wash the makeshift table after each operation. However, after a while, the water becomes cool, and there is no time to heat more. The aprons of the surgeons are bloody, as well as their instruments. Daylight, a lantern, or candles, often stuck in the ends of weapons provided illumination for the work of the physician. And there is very little to alleviate pain.

A doctor from the Sanitary Commission stated:

“Indeed there is not a barn, or farmhouse, or store or church, or schoolhouse, between Boonesville, and Sharpsburg, ...and Smoketown, that is not gorged with wounded – Rebel and Union. Even the corn-cribs, and in many instances the cow stable, and in one place the mangers were filled. Several thousands lie in open air upon straw, and all are receiving the kind services of the farmers’ families and the surgeons.”

Antietam Hospitals

Antietam Publications, 1996

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