

Lesson Plan Title: Drummer Boy: A Child's Place in the Civil War
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Grade Level: 5th Grade Social Studies

Overview of the Lesson: Students will analyze the role and experiences of young African American drummer boys during the Civil War.

Objectives:

TLW analyze a primary source to gain knowledge and understanding.

TLW discover how and why young African American boys participated in the Civil War.

TEKS: (5.4D)History. Describe the causes and effects of the Civil War.

Time Required: One class period

Materials Needed:

Background information

Li'l Dan the Drummer Boy by Romare Bearden

Paper

Pencil

Photograph of drummer boy (for each student)



http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/civilwar/cw060_4x.html

Procedures:

Ask students if, based on what they already know about the Civil War, they think that children had a role in the war. What could children have done to take part in the war?

Place students in groups of 4-5. Give each student a copy of the photograph of a drummer boy. (larger photo at end of lesson)

Each group should have a recorder to record their group responses to the following questions:

How old do you think this boy is?

What side of the war would he probably be serving on?

What are some possible feelings or challenges this boy could have?
What would be the use of a drummer boy in an army?
Do you think he experienced some scary situations for someone his age?
Why do you think he would choose to take part in the war?

Once the groups have answered the questions, share the responses in a class discussion. Share the historical background information with the class.

Read *Li'l Dan the Drummer Boy* (fiction) to the class. Discuss why Dan joined with the Union Army and what experiences he faced. Point out that Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation made him free, but he had no place to go.

Assessment:

Students are to pretend that they are a news reporter interviewing a drummer boy during the Civil War. They should write up their interview including the following questions:

What is your name?

How old are you?

Where are you from?

Where is your family?

What were you doing before you became a drummer boy?

What are some of your duties and experiences now that you have become a drummer boy?

Once the interview is written up, students should write a newspaper article based on the information.

TAKS Question:

By issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, President Lincoln changed the drive of the war to be a war fought to

- A. preserve the Union.
- B. end slavery.
- C. gain land.
- D. extend slavery.

Answer B

Works Cited

Bearden, Romare. *Li'l Dan the Drummer Boy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

Brooklyn in the Civil War. Brooklyn Public Library. 2004.
<http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/civilwar/cwdoc.html#>

Unknown Drummer Boy
http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/civilwar/cw060_4x.html

Drummer Boy Historical Background Information

After the Emancipation Proclamation, many African American boys that had been slaves did not have anywhere to go. President Lincoln was accepting African Americans into the army. Many boys as young as nine decided to join the war. Their duties were usually as messengers or musicians. These boys had to be reliable, on time, and able to follow orders. They had to call the troops to battle and set the pace for marching. Battles of the war were experienced by these boys first hand. Some of the boys were wounded, taken as prisoners, or killed.

