

## The Civil War Unit 9 Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

### **Driving Concept 6: The Civil War**

*Through this driving concept, students will understand how the unresolved issue of slavery and debates over its expansion divided the American public into geographic and political factions that eventually resulted in the Civil War. Students will study the role of significant leaders during the Civil War, including the leadership of Abraham Lincoln. Finally, students will investigate the short- and long-term impact of the Civil War on different factions of American society.*

#### **Essential Question**

*To what extent did the Civil War redefine the role of government, freedom, and national identity in the United States?*

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## **About This Unit**

**Unit 9: The Civil War** explores how long standing tensions over slavery and national identity erupted into a violent and transformative conflict. The unit begins by analyzing secession documents and the variety of perspectives held by Northerners to understand how competing ideologies fractured the nation. Students then compare Union and Confederate strategies, resources, and goals to evaluate how these differences shaped the war's progression and outcome. Through a range of primary sources, students examine the evolving role of political leaders like Abraham Lincoln, as well as the contributions of women, free Black Americans, Indigenous people, and religious minorities. The unit culminates with an investigation into the meaning of freedom through a Curated Research Paper. Throughout the end of the unit, students consider how the Civil War redefined the role of government, freedom, and national identity in the United States.

*Use the Best Practices Repository for information on implementing every strategy and lesson activity!*

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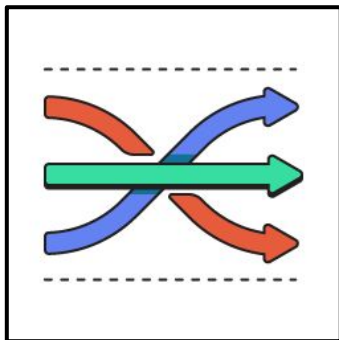
Priority Standards	
7.40	Evaluate the reasons for the creation of the Bill of Rights, and determine the extent to which the fundamental liberties ensured by the Bill of Rights were equitably and fairly applied to people within the United States.
7.47	Analyze the social and political changes during the Jacksonian era, including the expansion of voting rights, from multiple perspectives and evaluate the legacy of these changes.
7.58	Evaluate the growth and international context of the Abolitionist movement, including the effectiveness of various tactics and leaders by analyzing primary and secondary sources — including the perspectives of abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Freeman, Henry Highland Garnet and Frederick Douglass.
7.64	Use primary sources to evaluate the reasons for the start of the Civil War, including the decision of Southern states to secede from the United States to protect the institution of slavery.
7.66	Compare the Union and Confederate approaches to the war, including how strategy, resources, technology and international support shaped its course and outcome.
7.68	Use context to assess the reasons for Abraham Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, evaluating its short- and long-term impact.
7.71	Evaluate the impact of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments on the lived experiences of Black Americans, including the extent to which each amendment expanded freedom and constitutional protections for Black Americans.

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<b>Additional Standards</b>	
7.61	Compare gender rights and roles in different geographic regions and communities within the United States, and evaluate the goals and tactics of the women's suffrage movement.
7.65	Use primary sources to analyze the Union rationale for the Civil War, including the perspectives of Frederick Douglass, abolitionists, and Northerners who were not pro-abolition.
7.67	Evaluate the role of women, civilians, free Black Americans, religious minorities and Indigenous Nations in the Civil War.
7.69	Analyze the methods of abolition and emancipation undertaken by enslaved people during the Civil War.

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<b>Unit Preview</b>		
<b><i>Subtopic(s)</i></b>	<b><i>Compelling Question</i></b>	<b><i>Standard(s)</i></b>
A Nation Divided	To what extent was the Civil War a conflict over slavery or national unity?	7.64, 7.65
A Nation at War	How did the purpose, participation, and experiences of the Civil War evolve from 1861 to 1865?	7.66, 7.67, 7.68, 7.69
Assessment: Curated Research Paper		7.40, 7.47, 7.58, 7.61, 7.71



### **Unit Focus Skill: Continuity & Change Over Time**

Thinking historically means identifying and exploring the reasons behind both what has changed and what has stayed the same within a given time period or around a specific historical event.

## A Nation Divided: Topic Overview

	<u><a href="#">LESSON 1 (90 MINS)</a></u>	<u><a href="#">LESSON 2 (90 MINS)</a></u>
<b>SUPPORTING QUESTION</b>	How did Southern leaders justify secession in their own words?	How do differing Northern perspectives of the Civil War explain the challenges in creating a unified war effort?
<b>STANDARD(S)</b>	7.64	7.65
<b>FOCUS SKILL(S)</b>	Evaluating Arguments Comparison Continuity and Change Over Time	Perspective Comparison
<b>DO FIRST</b>	Frayer: Secession Vocabulary Matching	Frayer: Union Scenario Response
<b>ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH</b>	Inquiry Journal Topic 1: Supporting Questions	Expand It! - Frederick Douglass Document Analysis
<b>ACTIVITY 2 - PRACTICE</b>	Secession Declarations Jigsaw Inside/Outside Circle	Expand It! - Douglass and Vollandigham Comparison
<b>ACTIVITY 3 - EXHIBIT</b>	+Form Assessment - Cornerstone Speech - CCOT	Expand It! - Silent Discussion + Elaboration
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	Exit Ticket: Think, Pair, Share	Unit 9 Inquiry Journal Topic 1: Compelling Question

## A Nation at War: Topic Overview

	<u><a href="#">LESSON 3 (90 MINS)</a></u>	<u><a href="#">LESSON 4 (180 MINS)</a></u>	<u><a href="#">LESSON 5 (90 MINS)</a></u>
<b>SUPPORTING QUESTION</b>	How did differences in strategy, resources, and goals shape the Union and Confederate approaches to the Civil War?	In what ways did political leaders, soldiers, and civilians contribute to and experience the Civil War over time?	In what ways did Lincoln's position on slavery evolve over time and how has that affected his legacy?
<b>STANDARD(S)</b>	7.66	7.67, 7.68, 7.69	7.68
<b>FOCUS SKILL(S)</b>	Contextualization Comparison Quantitative Analysis	Causation Continuity & Change Over Time Evaluating Evidence	Evaluating Evidence Continuity & Change Over Time
<b>DO FIRST</b>	Frayer: Confederacy Quote Analysis	Frayer: Civil War Notice, Wonder, Think	Frayer: Abraham Lincoln Quickwrite
<b>ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH</b>	Inquiry Journal Topic 2: Supporting Questions	Introduction to Road to Revolution Project	Classroom Mingle  Continuity and Change Over Time Graphic Organizer
<b>ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE</b>	"What is the Context?" - The Union & Confederacy	Project Research	Document Analysis - "Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address"
<b>ACTIVITY 3 - EXHIBIT</b>	Civil War Data Stations	Timeline Creation	Image Analysis - "Uncle Abe's Valentine"
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	Quantitative Analysis Graphic Organizer	+Form Assessment - Northern Women - EVI	Unit 9 Inquiry Journal Topic 2: Compelling Question

## Assessment: Topic Overview

	LESSON 6 (60 MINS)	<u>+LESSON 7 (210 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 8 (60 MINS)</u>
<b>SUPPORTING QUESTION</b>	<b><i>Place-Based Lesson Extension</i></b>  <i>See page 9 for lesson options and view Best Practice Repository for additional information about implementation</i>	How did the meaning of freedom develop in America from its founding through the Civil War?	How can reflection and revision improve the clarity and effectiveness of a historical argument?
<b>STANDARD(S)</b>		7.40, 7.47, 7.58, 7.61, 7.71	7.40, 7.47, 7.58, 7.61, 7.71
<b>FOCUS SKILL(S)</b>		Contextualization Continuity & Change Over Time	Evaluating Arguments Evaluating Evidence
<b>DO FIRST</b>		Freedom in American History CRP Introduction	Frayer: Reflection Video Reflection
<b>ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH</b>		Contextualization and Relevance of Freedom in American History	Classwide Data Review
<b>ACTIVITY 2 - PRACTICE</b>		Document Analysis & Essay Outline	Essay Reflection Graphic Organizer
<b>ACTIVITY 3 - EXHIBIT</b>		Essay Creation	Essay Revision and Resubmission
<b>CONCLUSION</b>		CRP Self-Assessment and Essay Submission	Exit Ticket: Quickwrite





## Place Based Lesson Extension

	LESSON 6 (60 MINS)
<b>SUPPORTING QUESTION</b>	
<b>STANDARD(S)</b>	
<b>FOCUS SKILL(S)</b>	
<b>DO FIRST</b>	
<b>OPTION 1 - PODCAST</b>	
<b>OPTION 2 - SYNCHRONOUS PRESENTATION</b>	
<b>OPTION 3 - FIELD TRIP</b>	
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	Unit 9 Inquiry Journal Essential Question



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### **Unit Commentary:**

Unit 9: The Civil War challenges students to investigate how the United States was transformed by internal conflict during one of the most defining periods in its history. The unit applies the historical thinking skill of continuity and change over time to analyze how issues of slavery, national identity, and government authority culminated in the Civil War and reshaped the nation.

Topic 1: A Nation Divided begins by exploring the root causes of the Civil War through the lens of arguments for secession. Students analyze Southern declarations of secession and a range of Northern perspectives, including abolitionist, moderate, and antiwar voices, to understand how divergent beliefs over slavery and union fractured the country. Using primary sources and comparative tools, students evaluate how regional ideologies shaped the outbreak of war and complicated efforts toward unity.

Topic 2: A Nation at War turns to the evolution of the conflict itself. Students examine how the Union and Confederacy developed different strategies based on their resources, goals, and political circumstances. Through political speeches, quantitative data, and personal narratives, students trace how participation in the war expanded to include civilians, women, free Black Americans, and enslaved people seeking freedom. Particular attention is given to how President Lincoln's evolving views on slavery, from preserving the Union to issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, impacted the purpose and legacy of the war. Students apply contextualization and evidence evaluation to better understand how wartime experiences and decisions reshaped the meaning of freedom in America.

The culminating assessment, a Curated Research Paper (CRP), asks students to trace the evolution of the meaning of freedom in American history. Through structured writing support, reflection, and revision, students craft an evidence-based historical argument that demonstrates the continuities and changes in the nation's history.

Throughout the unit, students engage in a wide range of learning routines that promote historical thinking—especially evaluating arguments, identifying continuity and change, and considering multiple perspectives. As students work through debates, speeches, images, and timelines, they gain a deeper understanding of how the Civil War was experienced by different groups and why its consequences continue to shape the United States today.

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## **Suggested Readings and Helpful Resources:**

For information on:

## **Unit Pedagogical Resources:**

- What is Continuity & Change Over Time? Guide
- What is Continuity & Change Over Time? Video
- ["What Happens When Students Get Feedback on Their Writing?" - Natalie Wexler Blog](#)

## **Museum Component:**

- Optional Field Trip: Ford's Theatre