



Blue or Gray?

Perspectives in the Civil War



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Grade Level	8th Grade	Time Frame	3-5 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	180 minutes
Course	U.S. History		

Essential Question

Why do people fight? What is worth fighting for?

Summary

This lesson has students consider different perspectives in the Civil War. Students will participate in a role-playing activity to become familiar with the different motives and points of view of various key figures in the Civil War, then analyze these key figures in greater depth during a discussion. Students will also read and annotate a variety of primary source materials from the Civil War, then share the knowledge they acquired from the readings with their classmates. After learning about various perspectives, students will use a template to create a Two-Voice Poem that emphasizes the views of marginalized or traditionally underrepresented historical groups. At the end of the lesson, students will reconsider why people fight for different causes based on their perspectives. This lesson includes optional modifications for distance learning.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a Historical Mingle activity in which they assume the roles of key figures in the Civil War and discuss different historical points of view.

Explore

Students discuss their roles from the Historical Mingle and complete a graphic organizer summarizing each role's significance.

Explain

Students read and Why-Light primary source documents from the Civil War era then share their knowledge with each other in a Jigsaw activity.

Extend

Students write Two-Voice Poems using a template with a focus on traditionally underrepresented historical groups.

Evaluate

Students respond to the essential questions in an Exit Ticket.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages

CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages

IDT402: Identify a clear central idea or theme in somewhat challenging passages or their paragraphs

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

I&A 401: Understanding the task and writing with purpose. A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Generate a clear thesis that establishes a perspective on a contemporary issue -Engage with other perspectives on the issue

I&A 402: Analyzing critical elements of an issue and differing perspectives on it. A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Establish and employ a relevant context for analysis -Recognize implications, complexities and tensions, and/or underlying values and assumptions

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices (8th Grade))

8.11.3: Evaluate the impact and contributions of specific groups in the Civil War including free and enslaved African Americans, American Indians, women, and immigrants.

Attachments

- [Civil War Primary Source Packet—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Civil War Primary Source Packet—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Civil War Primary Source Packet—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Civil War Primary Source Packet—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Historical Mingle Activity Cards—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Historical Mingle Activity Cards—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Historical Mingle Activity Cards—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Historical Mingle Activity Cards—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Jigsaw Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Jigsaw Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Jigsaw Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Jigsaw Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Blue or Gray.pptx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Rubric—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Rubric—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Rubric—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Rubric—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Template—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Template—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Template—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Template—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Historical Mingle Activity Cards (attached; one or two sets per class)
- Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer handout (attached; one per student)
- Civil War Primary Source Packet handout (attached; one set per 22 students; staple)
- Jigsaw Graphic Organizer handout (attached; one per student)

- Two-Voice Poem Template handout (attached; one per student)
- Two-Voice Poem Rubric handout (attached; one per student; optional)
- Highlighters
- Notebook paper
- Pens or pencils

20 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

Prior to this portion of the lesson, print and cut out the attached **Historical Mingle Activity Cards**. Print enough cards so that each student receives one character card. Consider printing the cards in color on heavy paper or cardstock so they can be used again in the future.

Print one copy of the attached **Civil War Primary Source Packet**. One copy of the packet provides enough materials for 11 pairs of students. You may need to print additional copies for larger classes. Print the packet one-sided and staple together multi-page readings (Readings 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11). Print additional copies for a larger class.

Teacher's Note: Organizing the Historical Mingle

There are a total of eleven Historical Mingle Activity Cards. Consider dividing the class in half and duplicating the number of cards by printing another set on differently colored paper. Have students “mingle” with others that have cards of the same color.

Some cards have photos, but some do not. Invite students whose cards do not have a photo to imagine how their characters appeared during the Civil War.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Introduce the title using **slide 2**, then transition to **slide 3** and introduce the lesson’s essential questions, “Why do people fight? What is worth fighting for?” Ask students to think about these questions in relation to the U.S. Civil War over the course of the lesson. Encourage them to consider how these questions apply to the roles and motivations of various key figures in the conflict. Display **slide 4** and introduce the lesson objectives and your expectations for the lesson.

Display **slide 5** and introduce the [Historical Mingle](#) instructional strategy. Give each student a random **Historical Mingle Activity Card**. Have each student carefully read the description on their card and examine the image (if they have one on their card), and have them consider how they should assume the role of their characters. Allow 2–3 minutes for students to study their roles.

Teacher's Note: Role Playing

Remind students that they should assume their roles in non-confrontational and non-stereotypical ways. Encourage them to learn as much as possible about their partners without offending each other in any way.

Show **slide 6** and elaborate on the instructions for the activity. Tell students that they should “meet” other characters, introduce themselves as their assigned characters, and discuss their roles in the Civil War.

Display **slide 7** and introduce a list of questions students can ask of each other’s characters. Encourage students to ask any other questions they may think of.

Have students stand up from their seats and mingle around the room until they meet a partner. Begin the [2-minute timer](#) on the slide and allow students time to ask questions of their partners. When time is up, have them walk around until they find a new partner. Allow another 2 minutes for them to question their new partners. Repeat this process until students have mingled with three or four partners.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

For online or distance learning, consider downloading all attachments to use this lesson in your LMS or [Google Classroom](#).

25 minutes

Explore

Distribute one copy of the attached **Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer** handout to each student. Display **slide 8** and introduce the guidelines for the discussion. Tell students that when they see the characters they played on the upcoming slides, they should respond to the given questions.

Show **slide 9** and introduce the photo of Abraham Lincoln and the questions. Invite students who played Abraham Lincoln to respond to the questions. Encourage class discussion, and have students complete their graphic organizers using their classmates' responses.

Repeat this process with each historical figure on **slides 10–19**.

Teacher's Note: Strategies For Brainstorming

As students are filling out their graphic organizers, encourage students to circle, highlight, or underline any words or trends that jump out to them. These annotations will help students in the next activities.

After all of the roles have been discussed, move to **slide 20**. Ask students to analyze their graphic organizers and identify any trends they notice. Have them use the guiding questions on the slide to make note of any connections they find and identify reasons as to why each character would fight for one side or the other.

Display **slide 21**. Invite students to share their thoughts about each historical figures' significance and motivation. Consider using the space provided on the slide, or similar whiteboard space, to take note of important student observations and ideas.

25 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note: Reading Level and Authentic Language

Many of the primary sources used in this phase of the lesson are original to the Civil War and are unedited. The reading levels and lengths of the sources vary, and some of the language may be unusual or difficult for students to follow. Consider scanning the sources prior to this activity and assigning the longer or more difficult readings to students with higher level reading skills, or scaffolding the reading by partnering students.

Organize students into groups of two and give each pair one reading from the attached **Civil War Primary Source Packet** and one highlighter.

Explain to students that most of their assigned readings are primary sources or pieces based on primary sources. Tell students that primary source documents are first-person historical or eyewitness accounts, or things like pamphlets, speeches, posters, and other historical records that are original to a particular time or event. Explain that each document represents an account from the Civil War era.

Display **slide 22** and introduce the [Why-Lighting](#) instructional strategy. Tell students that as they read, they should highlight important facts in their assigned documents, make notes in the document margins, and write a brief explanation of why they chose to highlight those particular facts. Encourage each student to focus on whether the author of their document was pro-Union or pro-Confederacy and why. Allow ample time for students to read and annotate their documents.

After students finish their annotations, assign students to two groups, a Group A and a Group B. Ensure that each group includes only one representative of each reading. Your class may only have two large groups, or additional groups depending on your class size.

Move to **slide 23** and give each student one copy of the attached **Jigsaw Graphic Organizer** handout. Introduce the [jigsaw](#) instructional strategy to the class. Explain that students should become the expert on their assigned reading then share their acquired knowledge to their classmates. This activity helps students share responsibility for each other's learning while developing group communication and close-reading skills.

Have students in both Group A and Group B teach their assigned group what they learned about their readings. Start with students who read Reading #1 and have students take turns numerically. Have other group members fill out their graphic organizers with notes as each reading is discussed.

20 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 23** and introduce the [Two-Voice Poem](#) instructional strategy. Give each student one copy of the **Two-Voice Poem Template** handout. Tell students that they should use this template to create poems that convey the perspectives of two different groups during the Civil War.

Optional Scaffolding

If you have students who enjoy writing, consider having them write their poems without the use of the template. If you have students who struggle with writing, consider pairing them with another student and having them collaboratively write a poem.

Have students choose one group that is not traditionally represented in discussions about the Civil War for their poems. This group could include women, immigrants, African Americans (free or enslaved), or Native Americans.

Encourage students to refer to their Jigsaw Graphic Organizers to find inspiration for the content of their Two-Voice Poems.

Teacher's Note: Activity Rubric

The **Two Voice Poem Rubric** is included with this lesson to help assess student poems. Consider sharing this rubric with students in advance to illustrate the expectations for an exemplary assignment.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Show **slide 24** and have students take out a piece of paper. Have students complete an [Exit Ticket](#) by responding to the following questions on the slide:

- Why do people fight?
- What is worth fighting for?

Collect student responses as they leave the classroom. Use these responses to assess what students know and what you still need to review regarding this topic.

Teacher's Note: Assessment

Consider having students turn in their Jigsaw Graphic Organizers or Two-Voice Poems to serve as formative assessments for this lesson.

Resources

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