

# Advancing All Units: How Strengths and Weaknesses Shaped Civil War Strategy

## Civil War Strengths, Weaknesses, and Strategies

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| **Grade Level** | 8th Grade | **Time Frame** | 85 minutes |
| **Subject** | Social Studies | **Duration** | 2-3 class periods |
| **Course** | U.S. History | | |

## Essential Question

What were the key strengths and weaknesses of the Union and the Confederacy during the American Civil War? How did those strengths and weaknesses shape the strategies each side used?

## Summary

In this lesson, students examine the strategies used by the Union and Confederacy during the U.S. Civil War. Students first use their prior knowledge of the Civil War era to identify similarities and differences between the Union and Confederacy. Next, students will work together to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Union and Confederacy. Students will then read and annotate an article discussing key strategies used by both sides to accomplish their military and political goals during the Civil War. To extend their learning, students will create a trifold to showcase their understanding of the key strategies that shaped the outcome of this conflict. Finally, students will conclude the lesson by discussing the essential question with a partner before constructing their own individual written response to demonstrate what they have learned.

## Snapshot

### Engage

Students begin by identifying similarities and differences between the Union and Confederacy.

### Explore

Students work together in small groups to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Union and Confederacy.

### Explain

Students read and annotate an article overviewing key strategies used by both sides to accomplish their goals during the Civil War.

### Extend

Students create a trifold that shows their understanding of the key strategies that shaped the outcome of the conflict.

### Evaluate

Students discuss the essential question with a partner before writing an individual response that demonstrates what they have learned.

## Standards

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

**IDT403:** Summarize key supporting ideas and details in somewhat challenging passages
**REL402:** Identify clear comparative relationships in somewhat challenging passages

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

**D&S 401:** Building and strengthening the argument. A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Make use of clear reasoning and examples to arrive at an understanding of the issue and differing perspectives on it -Adequately convey reasons why the argument is worth considering -Extend ideas and analysis by considering factors that complicate the writer's own perspective -Anticipate objections by qualifying the argument

*Oklahoma Academic Standards SOCIAL STUDIES (Grade 8)*

**8.C.12.2:** Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the Union and the Confederacy.
**8.C.12.2.A:** Compare natural resources, population, and industrialization.
**8.C.12.2.B:** Describe the significance of military leadership and experience (e.g., Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant).
**8.C.12.3:** Identify the key strategies used during the war and evaluate their effectiveness in determining the war's outcome.
**8.C.12.3.A:** Compare the goal of the Union's Anaconda Plan to blockade and surround Confederate forces to the intent of Sherman's total war strategy.
**8.C.12.3.B:** Describe how the Southern military strategy focused on holding Confederate territory in hopes the North would eventually abandon the war effort.

## Attachments

- Card Sort Cards—Advancing All Units - Spanish.docx
- Card Sort Cards—Advancing All Units - Spanish.pdf
- Card Sort Cards—Advancing All Units.docx
- Card Sort Cards—Advancing All Units.pdf
- Civil War Strategy Article—Advancing All Units - Spanish.docx
- Civil War Strategy Article—Advancing All Units - Spanish.pdf
- Civil War Strategy Article—Advancing All Units.docx
- Civil War Strategy Article—Advancing All Units.pdf
- Double Bubble Map—Advancing All Units - Spanish.docx
- Double Bubble Map—Advancing All Units - Spanish.pdf
- Double Bubble Map—Advancing All Units.docx
- Double Bubble Map—Advancing All Units.pdf
- History in Three Panels—Advancing All Units - Spanish.docx
- History in Three Panels—Advancing All Units - Spanish.pdf
- History in Three Panels—Advancing All Units.docx
- History in Three Panels—Advancing All Units.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Advancing All Units.pptx

## Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Double Bubble Map (attached; one per pair)
- Card Sort Cards (attached; one per group)
- Civil War Strategy article (attached; one per student)
- Trifold (attached; one per student)
- Notebook paper
- Pencils or pens

15 minutes

# Engage

### Teacher's Note: Prior Knowledge

Before participating in this lesson, students should be familiar with Civil War-era events and vocabulary. Some of the information they should know includes the following:

- Union
- Confederacy
- Secession
- Slavery
- Causes of the Civil War
- Sectionalism
- States' Rights

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide your lesson. Display **slide 2** to introduce your lesson. Move through **slides 3**–**4** to review the essential questions and learning objectives with students.

Transition to **slide 5** and organize students into pairs. Distribute the attached **Double Bubble Map** to each pair. Explain that students should work together to record what they already know about the Union and the Confederacy. Direct students to write differences in the outside circles and similarities in the middle circles.

### Teacher's Note: Guiding Questions

To help students have a better understanding of what information to write down, consider encouraging students to think about the following topics:

- What were the goals of both sides?
- Who are the people fighting for both sides?
- What does each side have working in its favor?
- What challenges is each side facing during the war?
- Do these two groups have anything in common? What are the differences?

Encourage students to take a few minutes to discuss with their partner and complete their handout. Once all students are done, ask pairs to share some of their responses with the class. Make sure to acknowledge their responses and provide follow-up comments.

15 minutes

# Explore

Display **slide 6** and divide students up into groups of 2–3 students. Pass out the attached **Card Sort Cards** to each group. Review the Card Sort instructional strategy with students. Explain to them that they will be working as a group to organize the cards under one of the category cards: *Union Strengths, Union Weaknesses, Confederacy Strengths, Confederacy Weaknesses*. Give students about 10 minutes to organize their cards.

Once groups have completed their card sort, ask members from different groups to share their answers and reasoning for the placement of their cards.

25 minutes

# Explain

Display **slide 7** and pass out the attached **Civil War Strategy article** and a highlighter to each student. Review the Why-Lighting instructional strategy with students. Explain to students that they will read the article individually and as they read, they should highlight any part of the text that helps them answer the following questions:

- "What strengths and weaknesses did the Union and Confederacy have?"
- "How did those strengths and weaknesses influence the strategies both sides used?"

Move to **slide 8** and ask students to reflect with the person next to them and discuss the information they highlighted and how it answers the prompts.

20 minutes

# Extend

Move to **slide 9** and pass out the attached **History in Three Panels** handout to each student. Thinking back on what they have learned so far, tell students that they will choose one strategy or tactic used by the Union or the Confederacy that they believe was one of the most effective.

Introduce the History in Three Panels instructional strategy. Review the trifold template and each of the questions on it with students. Tell them that each section of their trifold should include the following:

- 2–3 drawings or symbols that relate to the questions asked
- 2–4 sentences as a response to the questions asked

Encourage students to make this trifold look like a brochure that is colorful and engaging. Others should be able to review their trifold and know the most important details about the strategy or tactic. Pass out markers and any other materials students may need to create their trifold. Allow students time to work individually.

### Teacher's Note: Providing an Example

There are a couple of examples you can show students to help them understand the assignment more clearly.

First, consider showing students examples of real brochures for different businesses or products. This can help them understand the level of engagement and creativity they should put into their own.

Additionally, create your own trifold that is colorful, engaging, and clearly explains a strategy used by either the Union or Confederacy. Show students this example to give them something to model theirs after.

Once students have completed their trifold, move to **slide 10** and have students move into pairs. Tell students to spend a few minutes showing their partners their trifold and discussing the following prompt:

- "Explain the decisions you made regarding what to include in the brochure. Why do you feel these things were most relevant?"

10 minutes

# Evaluate

Display **slide 11** and review the Friends Without Pens instructional strategy.

Tell students to find a partner. Play the 4-minute timer and ask students to spend that time discussing the following prompt:

- "In what ways did the strengths and weaknesses of the Union and Confederacy influence their military strategies?"

Once time is up, ask students to take out a piece of notebook paper. Play the 4-minute timer again and instruct students to write down their own response to the same prompt.

## Resources


- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card sort. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/147
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Double bubble map. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/3035
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Friends without pens. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/4438
- K20 Center. (n.d.). History in three panels. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/5767
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-lighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). *K20 Center 4 minute timer* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpCsfuvzQeY
- Rafuse, E. S. (Ed.). (2005). *The American Civil War*. Ashgate.