



THE CIVIL WAR

A FILM BY KEN BURNS

LESSON

Grade Level: 7-12

Subject: History

Estimated Time of
Required:

1 class period for each of
the document analysis
activities outlined below
(photographs of Antietam;
Emancipation Proclamation).
8 class periods for all
activities, including Civil
War newspapers.

THE CIVIL WAR CLASSROOM MATERIALS

CONFLICTING NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS

OVERVIEW

In this lesson students write Civil War newspapers about the Battle of Antietam from the opposing perspectives of North and South. They begin by analyzing a series of photographs of the battlefield. After writing their newspapers, which encompass many topics about the military, political and economic aspects of the war, students analyze the consequences of the Battle of Antietam. The lesson ends with a set of documents about the Emancipation Proclamation, which Lincoln issued shortly after visiting the battlesite. The newspaper format outlined in the lesson can be adapted to focus on other Civil War events (see Extensions).

OBJECTIVES

- *To learn about the significance of a major Civil War battle.*
- *To understand the importance of point of view; “facts” can be interpreted differently by opposing sides.*
- *To understand the relationship of the Battle of Antietam to the changing goals of the war: Issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation.*
- *To learn to analyze primary documents*
- *To learn to write news articles and work in cooperative learning teams*

MATERIALS

- *The web addresses listed within the body of the lesson.*
- *Printers and copy machines for duplicating on-line resources and student newspapers*
- *A computer program that generates self published newspaper formats (optional)*
- *Episode 3 of THE CIVIL WAR series, highly recommended but not required.*

RELEVANT STANDARDS

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for History, National Center for History in the Schools located online at <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards/>

Era 5, Standard 2

- *The student understands how the resources of the Union and Confederacy affected the course of the war.*
- *Identify the turning points of the war and evaluate how political, military, and diplomatic leadership affected the outcome of the conflict.*
- *Evaluate provisions of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln's reasons for issuing it, and its significance.*

This lesson correlates to standards for Language Arts of the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning at <http://www.mcrel.org/>

- *Uses content, style and structure appropriate for particular audiences*
- *Uses strategies to generate ideas for written work*
- *Uses strategies to edit and publish written work*

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PROCEDURE

Activity I: Photographs of the Battle of Antietam

Divide the class into small groups so that each group can study one of the photographs listed below. Tell students that all of the photographs, taken by Alexander Gardner, concern the battle of Antietam (also known as Sharpsburg) fought on September 17th, 1862. Distribute to each group a print of the photo, and only later in the activity the bibliographical information which can be downloaded by clicking on a box above the photo.

Each group of students should then fill in a Photo Analysis Worksheet available from the National Archives for the photo they have been assigned to and/or a similar form available at American Memory.

Photo Analysis Forms:

http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/analysis_worksheets/photo.html

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/98/brady/photo.html>

The photographs to use are the following sampling, available at the Library of Congress, American Memory (<http://memory.loc.gov>). Copy and paste the following phrases into the collections search box (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html>)

1. Confederate dead by a fence on the Hagerstown Road
2. Another View of Antietam Bridge
3. Bodies of Confederate dead gathered for burial
4. Antietam on the day of the battle
5. Keedysville, Md. Smith's barn used as a hospital after the battle of Antietam.
6. President Lincoln and Gen. George McClellan in the general's tent.
7. Antietam, principal street
8. Confederate dead at Smith's barn with Dr. Heady and Indiana Volunteers in attendance.
9. A blacksmith shoeing horses
10. President Lincoln, Gen. George McClellan and a group of officers.

For more photographs like these put in "Antietam" and "Gardner" as keywords.

When all students have finished filling in their photo analysis sheets distribute the bibliographic information and ask students to add anything else they have learned from them to their worksheets. Then pose the following questions in class discussion. Ask each group to show their photo to the rest of the class as discussion ensues.

- When were these photographs taken: before, after or during the battle? What is your evidence?
- What were the limitations placed on photographers given the state of photographic technology during the 1860's? Why would this make action photography very rare? For information go to <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphhtml/cwtake.html>
- Were these photos taken by the Union side or the Confederates? What is your evidence?
- Did the battle of Antietam, Maryland take place on Union or Confederate territory? How far is it from Washington, D.C.? (Ask students to look at maps in their texts for this purpose.) Why do they think Lincoln visited Antietam? Did he do so before or after the battle? As president, what was his role in conducting the war? What might he be discussing with McClellan?
- If you wish to further speculate with students about the battle you can download a variety of maps about the battle from the Civil War map collection at American Memory <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/cwmhtml/cwmhome.html>

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- What may have been important about this battle, based on what we can gather from the photographs? What did the “battlefield” consist of?
 - Imagine you are standing within the frame of one of these photos in 1862. What would you be feeling or thinking?
 - If you were living elsewhere in 1862, how would you have learned about this battle? Not only was there no TV or radio, but photographs such as these could not be mass produced for newspapers (although lithographs could be).
 - If you were living in 1862, what would you want to know about the events, leaders, fighting men, aftermath and consequences of this battle?
 - Would Northerners tell the same story about the battle as Southerners? How might their accounts differ? Why?
 - Now ask the class to decide in which order they think the photographs may have been taken. Post them on a bulletin board in that order. Leave these up for the duration of the lesson.
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Activity 2: What Was at Stake at Antietam?

Show the introduction to Episode 3 of *The Civil War*, which lasts approximately 7 minutes, or cover similar material by having students read their texts. After viewing the video segment elicit information from students under the following headings written on the blackboard:

- General Lee vs General McClellan
- Union vs Confederate progress up until September, 1862.

Then ask:

- Why was Lee invading the North, and especially a border state at this time? What were his goals?
- Why was it especially critical for the Union to have a victory at this time?

Make certain that students understand these two points:

- England was on the verge of recognizing the Confederacy as a separate nation. Thus far the South had successfully defended itself.
- Lincoln, who was moving closer towards declaring the Emancipation of the slaves in the Confederacy, needed a clear victory before he could do so. Europe would have a harder time supporting a Confederacy under siege if the mission of the Civil War were to end slavery in the South (which up until this time had not been the case).

Continue by showing a segment of “Saving the Union” beginning at approximately 27 minutes and stopping into “Antietam” just before the battle is described at approximately 42 minutes. Focus on the following statement by Lincoln, quoted in the video segment. It was written to Horace Greeley on August 22, 1862 less than a month before the battle of Antietam.

“My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.”

Take each of the three possibilities Lincoln offers and discuss them separately with the class. What might be the consequences of each option? Why are the border states (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri) of critical importance to the survival of the Union? Ask students if they know which option Lincoln finally chose. Ask them if they agree with his priorities, and if so why or why not.

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Activity 3: Multiple Perspectives of the Battle of Antietam

Tell the class that they are now going to learn about the Battle of Antietam itself. As they do so they will become reporters for either a Southern or Northern newspaper. Remind students that no one knew at this time who would win the Civil War.

Make it clear to students that as reporters they are role playing, and therefore they are not necessarily expressing their personal views.

Now continue to watch the video segment “Antietam” beginning with the Battle of Antietam itself approximately 34 minutes into the video, and ending when you reach “The Higher Ground.” Students should now recognize many of the scenes from the photos they analyzed. After the viewing ask students to look at the way they sequenced the Gardner photographs. Do they wish to rearrange them, and if so how?

Students should take notes as they watch from the perspective of their assigned viewpoint. Explain that in the 1860's newspaper reporters were unabashedly partisan. Therefore students should feel free to glorify their cause and slant the news.

After viewing the segment hold a discussion.

Ask members of each team to describe the “news” of what happened at Antietam. How would each side view the role of their generals? The fighting men? The causes for which they are fighting? The goals they accomplished or the ones frustrated by the opposition?

[If you do not have the video, ask students to read about Antietam in their texts, and with them walk slowly through the events.]

Activity 4: Newspaper Assignments

Divide the class into the number of newspaper teams you desire. For example in a class of 32 students you could have only one Northern and one Southern newspaper, with each student assigned to write one article from the list below. Or you could have 2 or 3 Northern and 2 or 3 Southern papers with each student assigned to write 2 or 3 articles from the same list. Newspapers can be generated using a computer program or typed and “cut and pasted” by hand, in which case final copies can be photocopied.

Newspaper teams should begin by deciding on the city from which they are publishing, a name and masthead. The newspaper should be issued on September 23, 1862 one week after the battle.

Interesting variations would be to have one Northern newspaper be published by free blacks and abolitionists, another published from the border state of Maryland itself where most residents sympathized with the Confederacy.

Working as cooperative teams, newspapers can assign tasks to group members such as:

- *Editor-in-chief*
- *Editors of various bureaus, (battlefront, politics, home front, etc)*
- *Copy editors*
- *Layout and visuals (students can incorporate pictures of Lincoln, the battle itself and so forth, downloaded from the web.*

Before students start to write, ask them to look at examples of 19th century journalism on line. The following sites are useful:

The Valley of the Shadow: The War Years. Go to “Newspapers”

<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/vshadow2/cwnewspapers.html>

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(There are actual accounts of the Battle of Antietam in *The Valley Spirit*

Search “Nineteenth Century Periodicals”

(<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlcoop/moahtml/ncphome.html>) at American Memory

Run a search for “Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper” using Google or similar search engine.

“The Civil War: A Newspaper Perspective” at University of Virginia

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/civilwar.html>

Writing Assignments:

Battlefront

Events of the battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862

N: Lee forced to retreat after losing

1/3 of his men.

S: Lee attacks the North and inflicts worst casualties yet.

Robert E. Lee

N: Traitor to his country

S: Greatest military genius of the age.

George B. McClellan

N: Beloved by his men, organizational genius

S: Slow moving bungler

The War elsewhere

N: Union blockade of South takes its toll

Progress in the West

S: Brave blockade runners.

Counterattack in the West.

Politics

Lincoln Issues Preliminary Emancipation

Proclamation

on September 22 (see Activity 5)

N: A war to end slavery. Negroes ready to enlist.

S: Lincoln breeds insurrection among loyal slaves as a cynical war tactic.

Foreign Affairs

N: On strength of Antietam and Emancipation

Proclamation, England veering away from recognizing the Confederacy

S: England will never do without our cotton.

Abraham Lincoln, a biographical portrait and/or interview

N: Savior of the Union

S: Aggressor in an unnecessary war.

Jefferson Davis, a biographical portrait and/or interview

N: Ineffective leader of a weak government

S: Brave leader of a new democracy

Homefront

Casualty lists and portraits of fallen heroes

(These can be fictional on both sides)

Homefront and Our Women

Work in hospitals, field and factories, charities, relief societies on both sides.

War Industries

N: Industrial strength of our factories and railroads will help us win the war.

S: Effect of blockade, inflation taking its toll.

African Americans in the war

N: Southern slaves desert plantations. Interview with Frederick Douglass. Struggle to win right to fight for the Union bearing fruit.

S: Slaves work in factories to aid the war effort.

Entertainment and Advertisements

Reviews of books, latest songs, fundraising events, concerts on both sides.

Serialized story in the sentimental style of the day for both sides

Advertisements such as fashion, new inventions, medical cures, etc.

Editorials

Significance of the battle

N: England backs down from recognizing the Confederacy Emancipation Proclamation soon to be issued. Lee’s army nearly destroyed

S: Lee inflicts heavy casualties in a daring attack on North; he will return. Another show of Northern ineptitude and lack of will.

Why we must keep fighting

N: The Union and democracy must be saved

S: The right to form our own government

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For student research into some of these topics suggest they use the following collections of American Memory (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>):

- *Frederick Douglass Papers*
- *Abraham Lincoln Papers*
- *Nineteenth Century Periodicals*
- *Slave narratives*
- *Civil War Images*
- *Civil War Maps*
- *Civil War Brady Studios*
- *Sunday School Books*
- *Advertising*
- *Sheet Music (1850-1920)*
- *Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War and Sheet Music*

For suggestions about how to write news articles go to “How to Write a News article” at “The Brady Bunch” (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/98/brady/home.html>) site of American Memory. Note however, that the 19th century did not adhere to our standards of objectivity. Quite the contrary, florid rhetoric and overt partisanship were the norms. (See the opening page of the Civil War newspaper section of *In the Valley of the Shadow*) However students should be careful not to alter the facts, only the light in which they present them. For example, the North suffered greater casualties than the South at Antietam. But Lee lost one quarter of his army, percentage wise a much greater loss than the North suffered. How the facts are presented alters our perceptions of events.

Activity 5: The Significance of Antietam in Relation to the Emancipation Proclamation

Once the newspapers are completed generate copies of them for each class member. Assign the class to read all newspapers for class discussion and then ask the following questions:

- *Do you think the ultimate significance of the Battle of Antietam was or could be understood in 1862?*
- *How might the course of history have changed had Lee successfully invaded the North at Antietam?*
- *What might have happened had McClellan successfully pursued Lee's army after the battle?*
- *What might it have been like to have lived through these times had you been a soldier, woman, slave or freed person?*
- *What effect might the battle have had on the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation?*

To answer this final question you will need to access the following documents from the Abraham Lincoln papers at American Memory (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html>):

“Lincoln's July 12, 1862 Address to Border State Representatives Draft”

“July 22, 1862 Preliminary Draft of the Emancipation Proclamation.”

“September 22, 1862 Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation”

“January 1, 1863 Final Emancipation Proclamation-Final Draft”

Divide the class into four groups and give to each group one of the documents listed below.

Ask each group to fill in a Document Analysis Worksheet available from the National Archives Digital Classroom at:

http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/analysis_worksheets/document.html

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In addition have them answer the following questions:

- *Who issued the document, on what date, to what audience?*
- *What are the suggested means of forwarding emancipation in the document?*
(e.g. Federal compensation, military action)
- *What branch of government provides the means of emancipation in each document*
(e.g. Congress, President...)?

In class discussion ask each group to report to the entire group. Start with the group that has the earliest proposal, working chronologically up towards the group with the January 1, 1863 document. Ask students to note the dates of these documents in relationship to the Battle of Antietam on September 17th, 1862. As students report, list the information they provide on the blackboard. After each group has reported to the class, lead a discussion about all documents based on the following questions:

- *How have Lincoln's proposals changed over time?*
- *Why do you think they changed?*
- *Under what powers granted to him by the Constitution did Lincoln issue the final Emancipation Proclamation?*
- *Why does Lincoln view the border states as critical to the war effort?*
- *Why do you think Lincoln does not free the slaves in the Union?*
- *Returning to Lincoln's words quoted in Activity 2, what choice of the three options did he finally make?*
- *How may the Battle of Antietam influenced the final evolution of the Emancipation Proclamation?*

[Note: Advanced students can access from the Lincoln papers collection a wealth of correspondence to and from Lincoln on these and other proposals concerning emancipation for further research papers or projects.]

To help answer the final question, continue to show the video through "The Higher Ground" to the end of the program.

ASSESSMENT

- *Students can be assessed for their participation in class discussion.*
- *Students can be assessed for the individual pieces of writing they contributed to their newspaper based on their research and writing skills.*
- *To insure that all students know all the material covered in the newspapers, ask students to study both versions for a test of the information contained in them.*

EXTENSIONS

Use the "multiple perspectives of one event" newspaper assignment to highlight a different set of events during the Civil War. Newspapers could be created highlighting other significant battles such as Vicksburg or Gettysburg, following almost an identical format.

A slightly different version of this idea could be adapted for a newspaper about Appomattox and the end of the Civil War. For documents with which to begin such a lesson go to the National Archives at <http://www.nara.gov:80/cgi-bin/starfinder/7991/standard.txt>, search under Robert E. Lee for "Articles of Agreement in Regard to the Surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia under Robert E. Lee" and Lee's Amnesty Oath, among other documents.

Assigned articles could focus on Grant and Lee, Davis and Lincoln, the economic toll of the war on North and South, prospects for recovery, proposed reconstruction plans and varying views of them, Johnny Reb and Billy Yank return home, Freedmen North and South, and so forth.