

## Section 8: Introduction

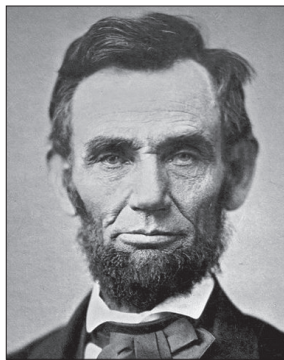
**The Civil War Era: 1861–1865**

Abraham Lincoln had just become the 16th President in April of 1861 when the Civil War began. Troops from the Confederate States of America (CSA) opened fire on a military base called Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. Thousands of men voluntarily joined the armies of the North and the South and trained for what each side thought would be a short war. A few months later, however, when the deadly Battle of Bull Run occurred outside of Washington, D.C., it was clear the war was going to be a costly one and last a long time.

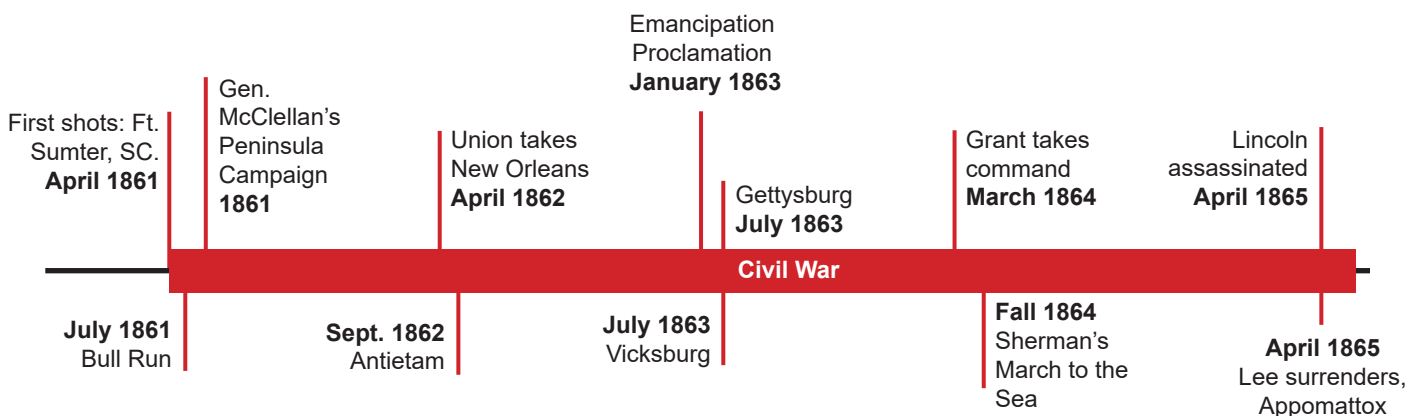
Although the North seemed to have the advantage in terms of military might and resources, the South was victorious in defending its territory in the first two years of fighting. The North struggled to keep the Border States (states in the middle between North and South) in the Union and tried to blockade the southern coastline. However, General Robert E. Lee and the Confederate Army won important battles in Virginia and the Confederate capital of Richmond could not be taken. President Lincoln fired and hired several new generals to lead the Union to a victory.

It was not until July of 1863 that the North turned the tide at the battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Lincoln now switched war goals. Instead of a war to keep the Union together, he urged Americans to fight a war to free the slaves. His speech honoring the battle dead at Gettysburg captured the new plan perfectly. Afterwards, African Americans were allowed to take up arms to fight for slavery's end and women became involved in the war effort as nurses. Photographer Mathew Brady brought home startling visual war images and the poet Walt Whitman tried to capture the meaning of the war in literature.

In 1864, Lincoln finally appointed a general who could match Lee's army—Ulysses S. Grant. While Grant pushed the rebels into trenches outside the CSA's capital, General William Sherman marched on a diagonal of destruction through the heart of Georgia. By April 1865, the war was over, but approximately 625,000 people were dead. One last casualty of war occurred when President Lincoln was assassinated.

**U.S. President**

**16. Abraham Lincoln**  
1861-1865



## Lesson 51

## Opening Volleys: Fort Sumter and Bull Run

## A. Fort Sumter

<sup>1</sup>By the time President Lincoln arrived at the White House as the 16th president, seven states in the Lower South had declared independence from the United States. <sup>2</sup>Lincoln took the oath of office in early March, 1861, and made it clear in his first acts that he did not recognize the legality of secession of those Southern slave states. <sup>3</sup>He still considered the seven Confederate states part of the Union.

<sup>4</sup>A test of this idea presented itself in early April.

<sup>5</sup>At Charleston, South Carolina, a U.S. military post (Fort Sumter) on an island in the harbor had long protected the city. <sup>6</sup>South Carolina, now a member of the Confederate States of America (CSA), considered Fort Sumter to be under its control.

<sup>7</sup>Confederate forces set up artillery on shore across from the island and demanded surrender.

<sup>8</sup>The fort's commander, Major Robert Anderson, refused to turn the fort over to the Confederate States of America, but he had a problem. <sup>9</sup>Food and supplies on the island were running out.

<sup>10</sup>He sent a message to Lincoln asking for supplies and the president decided to send relief. <sup>11</sup>A flotilla (a group of small naval vessels) of supply ships headed out to re-supply the fort.

<sup>12</sup>The Confederate military decided to take a stand. <sup>13</sup>Rather than allow Fort Sumter to be re-supplied and exist as a U.S. military post in a CSA harbor, Confederate General P.T.G. Beauregard ordered his men to open cannon fire on Fort Sumter beginning at 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1861.

<sup>14</sup>The bombing continued all day. <sup>15</sup>The Union troops returned fire but had little ammunition. <sup>16</sup>By April 13th, Anderson decided to surrender the fort. <sup>17</sup>The Battle of Fort Sumter is considered to be the opening shot of the Civil War. <sup>18</sup>A civil war occurs when a war divides a government or country.

<sup>19</sup>Some interesting coincidences at the battle of Fort Sumter point out a theme that continued throughout the American Civil War. <sup>20</sup>People of the North and South knew each other prior to the war. <sup>21</sup>These relationships produced complicated tests of loyalty. <sup>22</sup>The man (Major Anderson) defending the Union at the fort was actually a former slave-



Major Robert Anderson

owner from Kentucky. <sup>23</sup>Anderson had decided to stay loyal to the Union despite his Southern upbringing. <sup>24</sup>He knew Lincoln personally, having commanded him during the Black Hawk Indian War in the 1830s. <sup>25</sup>Anderson also knew his attacker at Fort Sumter. <sup>26</sup>He had previously taught artillery strategy at the West Point Military Academy; ironically one of his star students was P.T.G. Beauregard.

## B. Civil War Geography

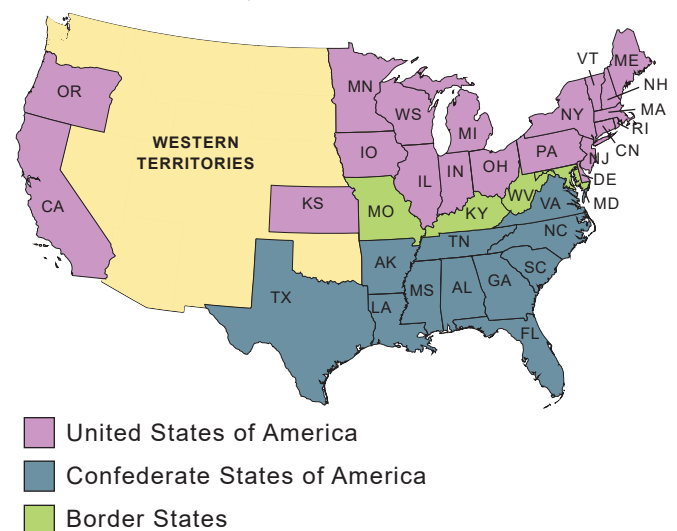
<sup>27</sup>Soon after shots were fired at Fort Sumter, the U.S. Congress authorized President Lincoln to use force to return Confederate states to the Union, but the task of doing that grew larger.

<sup>28</sup>The Fort Sumter events caused the states of the Upper South (Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee) to join the Confederacy by June.

<sup>29</sup>Richmond, Virginia, became the new capital of the Confederate States of America. <sup>30</sup>Now there were eleven states in the Confederate States of America.

<sup>31</sup>People in Virginia who lived on the western side of the Appalachian Mountains disagreed with their state's decision to secede. <sup>32</sup>They took up arms, declared their loyalty to the Union, and petitioned Congress to create their own new state of West Virginia. <sup>33</sup>This was granted in 1863.

## A Nation Divided, 1861-1865



<sup>34</sup>West Virginia and four other states (Maryland, Delaware, Missouri, and Kentucky) were called the “Border States” because they were all slave states located between the Confederate States of America and the free states of the United States. <sup>35</sup>Loyalties in those states were often split 50/50 among the citizens as to which side to support. <sup>36</sup>Lincoln quickly sent Union troops there to gain military control over them. <sup>37</sup>Lincoln knew it was important to keep them on the Union side. <sup>38</sup>Without control of Maryland and Delaware, the Union Capital, Washington, D.C., would have been surrounded by the Confederate States of America. <sup>39</sup>Control of Missouri and Kentucky secured both sides of the Ohio River, an important transportation route. <sup>40</sup>The family of Mrs. Lincoln was upset by the decision of the president to take control over their native state of Kentucky. <sup>41</sup>Several of Mrs. Lincoln’s brothers fought for the Confederate States of America.

<sup>42</sup>The territories in the West were generally under the control of the Union during the war. <sup>43</sup>The states of Oregon and California also declared their loyalty to the Union. <sup>44</sup>They both sent soldiers east where most of the battles of the war took place.

### C. Mobilizing for War

<sup>45</sup>Both the Confederate States of America and the United States quickly called for volunteers after Fort Sumter surrendered. <sup>46</sup>Tens of thousands of men answered the call on both sides. <sup>47</sup>Military officers who had been born in the South had a difficult choice to make. <sup>48</sup>If they stayed with the Union, they would be asked to fight against their home states. <sup>49</sup>Almost one-third of the Union officers resigned to join the Confederacy. <sup>50</sup>One of those was Robert E. Lee. <sup>51</sup>He had served well in the Mexican War and stopped John Brown’s rebellion. <sup>52</sup>President Lincoln asked Lee to lead the Union Army now in the Civil War. <sup>53</sup>Lee’s plantation home was only one mile away from Lincoln’s White House residence, on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. <sup>54</sup>Lee decided he could not fight against his native state. <sup>55</sup>He became the military leader of the South instead. <sup>56</sup>Lincoln then picked General Winfield Scott, another Mexican War hero, to lead the North.

<sup>57</sup>General Winfield Scott tried a strategy of preventing the South from exporting (selling) its cotton and receiving help from Europe. <sup>58</sup>He ordered a blockade of the Southern coast. <sup>59</sup>This was called the “Anaconda Plan” because, like the

large snake, Scott hoped to slowly squeeze the Confederacy into surrender. <sup>60</sup>However it took a long time for the North to implement the plan. <sup>61</sup>In the meantime, the Confederate States of America decided to boldly strike Washington, D.C., to end the war quickly. <sup>62</sup>In July, 1861, the two armies clashed only 25 miles south of the U.S. capital at a place called Bull Run. <sup>63</sup>General Beauregard led the Confederate States of America attack against his former West Point classmate General Irvin McDowell. <sup>64</sup>Thousands of Washington, D.C. citizens came out with their picnic lunches to watch. <sup>65</sup>Most thought that once the “rebels” were defeated, the Union army would march 100 miles south to the Confederate States of America capital at Richmond and end the war quickly.

<sup>66</sup>During the first part of the battle, the inexperienced Southern army took a beating, but then reinforcements, led by General Thomas Jackson, bravely plugged a gap in the Confederate line. <sup>67</sup>The tide of battle turned in the Confederate’s favor. <sup>68</sup>General “Stonewall” Jackson got his new nickname that day when another officer noted: “Look at Jackson, standing there like a stone wall.” <sup>69</sup>Confederate troops rallied to rout (defeat) the Union troops, sending them on a bloody, chaotic retreat through the panicked Washington, D.C. spectators. <sup>70</sup>Over 2,000 men on each side were killed or wounded during the battle. <sup>71</sup>It was now clear that the Civil War would be no “picnic.” <sup>72</sup>The war would last longer, and be far more deadly, than expected.



A Cartoon Depicting General Scott’s “Anaconda Plan”



**Fun Fact Feature**

To punish General Robert E. Lee for resigning from the U.S. army and fighting for the South, Union troops overran and captured his plantation across from Washington, D.C. when the Civil War began. Lee had named his plantation “Arlington.” Can you guess what the Union did with Lee’s land?

1. When Abraham Lincoln took his oath of office as president in March, 1861, how many states had seceded from the Union?
  - a. four
  - b. seven
  - c. eleven
  - d. thirteen

Which sentence best supports the answer?

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2. How many total states had seceded from the Union three months after Lincoln had been president?
  - a. four
  - b. seven
  - c. eleven
  - d. thirteen

Which sentence best supports the answer?

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3. What event was the spark of the Civil War, causing the states of the Upper South to join the Confederate States of America?
  - a. the Battle of Bull Run
  - b. the election of President Abraham Lincoln
  - c. John Brown’s raid
  - d. the Battle of Fort Sumter

Which sentence best supports the answer?

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4. Who was President Lincoln’s first choice to lead the Union army in the Civil War?
  - a. Robert Anderson
  - b. P.T.G. Beauregard
  - c. Winfield Scott
  - d. Robert E. Lee

Which sentence best supports the answer?

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5. Give two reasons why it was important for President Lincoln to secure the “Border States” when the Civil War began.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. When the Civil War began, the Confederate States of America moved their capital city from Montgomery, Alabama to:
  - a. Richmond, Virginia.
  - b. Bull Run, Virginia.
  - c. Charleston, South Carolina.
  - d. West Point, New York.

Which sentence best supports the answer?

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7. The states of Oregon and California were far to the west. Which side did they join during the Civil War?
  - a. the Confederacy
  - b. the Union
  - c. neither side—they were neutral
  - d. Oregon supported the United States; California the Confederate States of America

Which sentence best supports the answer?

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8. Explain why General Winfield Scott’s idea to win the war against the Confederate States of America was called the “Anaconda Plan.”

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What lesson did both the North and South learn from the Battle of Bull Run in July, 1861?
- The South's army was weaker than the North's.
  - Both armies were well prepared for battle.
  - The Civil War would be longer and bloodier than expected.
  - The North would soon capture the CSA capital at Richmond and quickly end the war.

Which sentence best supports the answer?

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### Written Response Question

10. *"People of the North and South knew each other prior to the war. These relationships produced complicated tests of loyalty."*

Use complete sentences to explain what this quote from the lesson means to you and give several examples to support your explanation.

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### Fun Fact Finale

To punish General Robert E. Lee for resigning from the U.S. army and fighting for the South, Union troops overran and captured his plantation across from Washington, D.C. when the Civil War began. Lee had named his plantation "Arlington."

The Union used the land as a cemetery to bury soldiers who were killed in the war. Arlington National Cemetery continues to honor Americans killed in battle. The "Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers" is there and two presidents, William Taft and John Kennedy, are also laid to rest at the site.