

Civil War Projects

Objective

Although we do not have time to cover all the fascinating minutiae of the Civil War, this project will allow you to research one of those topics in which you are most interested. During the course of the project, you will engage in both online and print resource research—primary and secondary—which you will then synthesize into a lesson you teach the entire class. Although your topic will be narrow, you will also situate it in the larger context of the war; in other words, you will be able to explain its political, economic, and/or social significance. Each project will also be supplemented by a powerpoint presentation, but this **powerpoint will be entirely visual and aural and must include primary resources**. This way, you will hone your oral presentation skills and learn to identify the most relevant resources. Presenters may work individually or with a partner, but **each presenter** is responsible for at least a **five-minute** presentation—partners, at least a **ten-minute** presentation. Altogether, this project will be worth **140 points** and presentations will begin on

Requirements

1. Each presentation must include a works cited page, which will be created using NoodleTools. Moreover, you must include **at least four different sources** (although you can certainly use more), at least one of which will be a print resource and one of which will be primary. This does **NOT** include the visuals you will use for your powerpoint.
2. Notecards and/or outlines may be used during the presentation, but **NO FULL SIZE SHEETS OF PAPER. I DO NOT WANT INFORMATION SIMPLY READ TO THE CLASS.** (Again, NoodleTools can help you in creating effective notecards.) To ensure this doesn't happen, notecards and/or outlines will be handed in at the end of the presentation.
3. You will make a powerpoint, which supplements the information you are teaching the class. Be creative; use hyperlinks, video clips, and music clips, or create an in-character skit or interview. Above all, however, make sure everything you include is relevant. Likewise, keep in mind that multi-media clips do not count as part of your overall time requirement.
4. Although this is technically a lesson and not a speech, many of the same rules of speech apply. For instance, presenters need to speak clearly and concisely. Presentations should be practiced at home **MANY** times; they should not be

extemporaneous. Likewise, presenters should keep good eye contact with their entire audience, and they should keep unnecessary gestures to a minimum. As an incentive to practice, take note of the “Parent Practice Sheet,” for which you can earn 10 extra credit points simply for practicing ahead of time.

Suggested Websites

*Although you are not required to use these, the following are some rich and trustworthy sources. After all, the content is what’s most important:

1. <http://www.uhigh.ilstu.edu/library/library.htm> - U-High’s own online resources are great place to start—especially “American History Online,” which can be found under “Subject Databases.” It offers quick and easy encyclopedic entries, as well as relevant primary sources, multi-media clips, maps, and other visuals.
2. <http://www.loc.gov/search/civilwar.html> - This is the Library of Congress’s Civil War archive, perhaps the most impressive online database and archive there is. From maps to music to Congressional resources, this is an historical jackpot.
3. <http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/> - What can I say, but PBS rocks. This offers first-hand accounts, photographs, activities, and primary resources.
4. <http://www.archives.gov/research/civil-war/> - Right up there with the Library of Congress, the National Archives hosts a wealth of photos, maps, and primary resources. Plus, it provides other links to outside sources.
5. <http://www.civilwarphotography.org/olexhibits.html> - Digital Archives Project aside, this is an especially valuable resource for anyone who might be researching Civil War photography/Matthew Brady in particular.

The Topics

Although you are welcome to tackle a completely different topic, here are a few suggestions if you are not sure where to begin:

1. **Battles:** Beware—you can easily get bogged down in trivial details and military jargon. Please see me ahead of time if you choose this so that we can come up with a battle, as well as a strategy that will be a little less overwhelming.
2. **People:** Same here—make these people come alive; do not simply recite a list of encyclopedic facts. Here is a *tiny* sample of famous figures you might consider.
 - A. **South:** Jefferson Davis, “Stonewall” Jackson, Mary Chestnut, John Wilkes Booth (and the conspiracy to assassinate Lincoln)

- B. North: Ulysses S. Grant, Clara Barton, John Brown, Harriet Beecher Stowe
- C. African Americans – Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Dred Scott, a slave's life
- D. General: Female spies, Female soldiers, Abolitionists, Copperheads, Pinkertons

3. Weapons and Strategy: This topic is gigantic, so consider narrowing it to something like . . .

- A. Cavalry, Infantry, or Artillery
- B. *The Hunley*, blockade runners, ironclads
- C. Prisoners and prison camps (i.e. Andersonville)
- D. The Blockade (Operation *Anaconda*)

4. Music: This could be anything from Stephen Foster, to the bugle and drums corps that actually led the troops into battle.

5. Medicine: Discover how the doctors—a.k.a. “Sawbones”—dealt with the modern weaponry of the Civil War. It was a brutal life, but somebody had to do it.

6. Cotton: Research why “King Cotton” was so integral to the Southern economy, but perhaps not integral enough to disrupt Northern industry or foreign industry.

7. Other – 54th Massachusetts, Underground Railroad, photography (and Matthew Brady), a soldier's life, a woman's life (South and/or North)

***There are a MILLION more topics, so don't hesitate to see me if you have a better idea!**

Name/s _____

Civil War Project Evaluation

I. Time – 15 points _____

- 5 minutes for one person (minimum)
- 10 minutes for two people (minimum)

II. Works Cited Page – 15 points _____

- At least two different source types
- At least four sources used
- Format is correct (presenters used appropriate MLA format)

III. Outline – 10 points _____

- Format is correct (typed, double-spaced between Roman numerals, etc.)
- Only used three Roman numerals
- For every A, there is a B; for every 1, there is a 2
- Subpoints are relevant and broad; specific details are in the presentation, but not necessarily in the outline

III. Powerpoint – 30 points _____

- Pictures, maps, etc. are easy to see
- Information is supported by the powerpoint; pictures, maps, videos, music are germane to the information
- Visual aid supplements content instead of hindering it; powerpoint is integral to the presentation, not just a backdrop
- Presenter knows what all of the visuals are; has NOT just thrown them in because they looked interesting or filled space

#1 _____ #2 _____

IV. Delivery and Participation - 20 _____

- Clear voices that can be heard anywhere in the room
- Eye contact – presenter is not simply reading AND information has been put into the presenter's own words
- Coherent discussion – not separate presentation between group members; there are not overlaps or omissions in information
- Each group member participates equally
- Organization is clear and easy-to-follow; it follows the outline
- Practice is evident

V. Content – 50 points _____

- Group members have good understanding of their topic
- Information is interesting and relevant to the Civil War; it is not simply a list of facts
- Information has been correctly situated in its political, economic, and/or social context; presenters have made the content important, not just trivial
- Information is thorough; research is accurate and the most important information has been included

VI. Extra Credit – 0 points _____

- creative format has been used
- appropriate costumes
- parent practice sheet

#1 _____ #2 _____

Total _____ / **140** **Total** _____ / **140**

General Comments:

December 4, 2008

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you know (hopefully), your son or daughter is currently working on a Civil War presentation for U.S. Studies class. S/he must teach a short lesson on his or her selected topic (e.g. a particular battle, a historical figure, weaponry, cotton production, slavery, etc.). S/he is also required to create an outline, a works cited page, and a powerpoint presentation. Finally, the students will be graded on their speaking style, which is where you come in.

Although content will be weighted most heavily, I will also be grading on eye contact, volume, speaking pace, and so on. Many students are terrified of public speaking, but as you well know, it's an important skill to learn. Therefore, to make your son or daughter more comfortable with public speaking and to ensure that s/he delivers the best presentation possible, I am offering 10 bonus points to any student who practices in front of his/her parents/guardians at least three times before the final due date (_____), which is the day the final presentations are due. All you need to do is date and sign the following blanks and then add a few comments on how your son or daughter is doing. But please, be honest with them; I'm certainly going to be.

Thanks for your help,

Kate Pole
U-High Social Studies

1. Date Practiced _____ Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Comments on the presentation:

2. Date Practiced _____ Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Comments on the presentation:

3. Date Practiced _____ Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Comments on the presentation: