

A Quick Reference to the Civil War

Dates and This History Class: Does having these dates mean students are expected to memorize them? The answer is “no.” To understand how things happened, you want to notice the **order** of events. Think of it this way: if you were watching two people fight, how you interpreted things would probably depend on who did what first.

Civil War Between Brothers (and Sisters): Comparison of Strengths

Tip: Compare the column for the North and the South. Who might win in a short war? Who probably cannot win in a long war?

Issues	The Union (the North)	The Confederacy (the South)
Basics	23 states (4 slave ¹); 22M people.	11 states; 9M people (5.5M white; 3.5M slave)
Goal of war	Stop the secession (only later is slavery an official objective of the war)	Secede – Act like the Patriots in the American Revolution: avoiding defeat is enough.
Infrastructure, banking	Money in place (2X banking)	—
Infrastructure, communication	Communication in place (telegraph lines)	—
Infrastructure, government –people	Central bureaucracy in place – including for collecting taxes and dealing with revenue	Bureaucracy to build – including lacking a system for collecting taxes or dealing with revenue (Done by state governments.)
Infrastructure, government –system itself	Constitutional system of government	Government equivalent to Articles of Confederation
Infrastructure, manufacturing technology	Technology to manufacture; 6X South	— (and only 3% of firearm manufacture)
Infrastructure, government income	Printing paper money (greenbacks), but Legal Tender Act Taxes (income and tariff)	Printing \$1 billion in paper money and few goods. (What’s the result?) Confederate bonds. Taxes (property and by 1863 nearly everything)
Infrastructure, transportation –land	Railroad network in place (some varied gauges)	Inadequate railroads (varied gauges)
Infrastructure, transportation –sea	Navy in place to block ports (no Southern imports in, no Southern cotton out).	Dependent on imports of war materials and on exports of cotton to British and French.
Infrastructure, transportation –sea – protection for	Navy in place	Navy on order from British and French
Leadership	Abraham Lincoln	Jefferson Davis
Population, for manufacture	People to manufacture (quantity & consolidation)	—
Population, for military	400,000 soldiers = immigrants	20 slave/1 white exemption
Population, for military—the negatives	(But NY draft riots in 1863)	(But 1865 law to conscript 300,000 slaves)
Population, for nursing	Women as nurses - notice wounded	Women as nurses
Raw materials for manufacturing	Raw materials	Raw materials
Overall strength	Diverse economy, diverse infrastructure, large population with immigrants	Agricultural economy, limited infrastructure – and it remains so during and after the war

Civil War between Brothers: Comparison of Enlistments, the Wounded, and the Dead²

Notice the difference in the Enlistments. Remember: 22 M whites in the North; 5.5, South.

Issues	The Union (the North)	The Confederacy (the South)
Enlistments – See the Basics above	1,557,000	1,082,000
Wounded – See nursing above	275,000	100,000 minimum
Dead, #	365,000	200,000
Dead, %	5%	11-12%

¹ Delaware, Missouri, Maryland, Kentucky

² Percentages are from McPherson’s *What They Fought For*. Numbers are from the *Encyclopedia of American History*.

South's Assumptions about Their Success and the Reality of Each Assumption

Assumption	Reality
Britain and France need our cotton. "King Cotton diplomacy" will win.	Could get Egyptian cotton Also needed Northern wheat
Britain and France need our orders for a navy.	Union threat of war with them, plus South's failure to win at Gettysburg (1863)
Northwest needs our rivers to get to market.	Unaware of the Northeast-Northwest connection by canal and railroad grid Rivers opened South to Union forces (US Grant in 1862)
We're fighting a defensive war just like the Patriots.	War on the homeland—disruption of food supplies and civilian losses, as shown in Sherman's March.
We're experienced fighters.	North had Singer sewing machine, Borden milk, immigrant soldiers.
We have experienced generals.	North had, when he was sober, U.S. Grant; North had William Sherman.
We're fighting for a higher cause of liberty.	Abraham Lincoln, Radical Congress, Radical officers, and the Emancipation Proclamation—Slavery became the cause and liberty became the cause.

Timeline: Civil War – April 1861 to April 1865

Tip: The date column in the timeline shows the year followed by the number of the month. For example: 1861-04 means 1861 in April.

Date	Details
1861-04	Fort Sumter (harbor of Charleston, SC) —Lincoln states his intent is only to "hold, occupy, and possess" federal property in the South. That is all he is going to do. Provisions in short supply, Lincoln sends an unarmed supply ship. 2 days firing by the South and surrender of fort. South became the aggressor. Threat to slavery in the South by Lincoln: none
1861-07	Bull Run (near Manassas, VA) – failure of Northern generals Officially a Southern victory
1862-04	Shiloh Church (near Pittsburgh Landing, TN) A mixed outcome with each side having a claim to success, but the South is unable to stop the Union's moves (led by U.S. Grant) into the Mississippi.
1862-09	Antietam (creek near Sharpsburg, MD) – Lee attacks in the North. 2,100 Union deaths and 2,700 Confederate; wounded 18,500. Stalemate, but Lee retreated— Official victory Lincoln needed.
1863-01	Emancipation Proclamation - freed slaves in rebellious territory only (where the Union troops conquered the South) , not in the border states still in the Union—a beautiful chess move. His action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did nothing that could be stopped (Northern Democrats could criticize, but not stop it.) ▪ Did not offend the slave-holding Union states – Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, Kentucky ▪ Did give a reason for black freemen to join the Union army ▪ Blocked Radical Republicans—pressing Lincoln for more hostile actions to South ▪ Blocked the radical press—arguing for emancipation ▪ Blocked the Radical military—freeing slaves they found and classifying them as contrabands. As the war continues, the former slaves are emancipated. (What's a plantation without labor?) ▪ Blocked French and British sentiment toward South (The British public was increasingly anti-slavery as were the textile workers, who remained supportive of the North even as they lost jobs.) Threat to slavery in the South by Lincoln: only if a state continues to be in rebellion (but no Southern state took his offer)
1863-07	Gettysburg (PA) — Eastern part of the war – Lee attacked in the North—the last time. Why? Hopes for France and Great Britain as allies – for an equivalent to Saratoga in the American Revolution.

Date	Details
	<p>165,000 troops; Southern charge (George Pickett's charge), 14,000-15,000 soldiers made it to engage the Union forces. Later, Confederate retreat.</p> <p>Consequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Union had clout to threaten to Britain and France. (The South had no Saratoga.) ▪ British blocked delivery of ironclads/rams ▪ French blocked delivery of 6 vessels. (FYI: French in June had occupied Mexico City, placed Maximilian of Austria as Emperor of Mexico.) <p>Vicksburg (MS)—Western part of the war—Defeat of the South by Ulysses S. Grant—Confederacy now divided at the Mississippi; Mississippi now controlled by North.</p> <p>Tip: Look at the map of the war. Notice that the North has divided the South vertically at the Mississippi River. The North can now use the Mississippi to get to the Gulf of Mexico from the west.</p>
1863-12	<p>Lincoln Plan—Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction — a moderate, not a Radical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Premise—The states never left the Union. ▪ Presidential control ▪ 10 % legal voters taking oath of allegiance accepting end of slavery ▪ Amnesty with the oath ▪ Legitimate state government, representatives and senators to Congress <p>1864 Per this plan, Arkansas, Tennessee reconstructed, but Congress not admit.</p> <p>Tip: Notice the offer to the South and the 10%. Do the math on the years: how long has this war lasted?</p>
1864-05 – 09	<p>Sherman's March through Georgia to the Sea—William T. Sherman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 60,000 Union soldiers - Their Orders: To "forage liberally on the country" ▪ 300 miles long ▪ 60 miles wide. <p>Tip: Why would Sherman do this and at this time. Look at the map of the war. Notice that the North has now marched across the South diagonally from the West in Tennessee down to the East through Georgia.</p>
1864-11	<p>Re-election of Lincoln over Democrat George B. McClellan, former General, means the war continues.</p>
1865-01	<p>13th amendment—passed</p> <p>Tip: What's the difference between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An amendment and a law? ▪ Passing an amendment and ratifying it? If you do not know, then ask. Glad to help you.
1865-02	<p>Sherman's March to the Carolinas</p> <p>Tip: Look at the map of the war. Notice that the North has now marched across the South from Georgia through North and South Carolina.</p>
1865-02	<p>Meeting: Hampton Roads (VA) – not in your book but useful to realize</p> <p>Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward with Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens Lincoln offered compensation for lost slaves. Confederate President Jefferson Davis rejected the offer because he wanted independence</p>

Date	Details
	<p>Tip: How realistic was the rejection? Do the math:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On the years: how long has this war lasted? ▪ On the geography: how much has the North conquered? ▪ On the number of population for a war: how many did each side have and how many at the end of the war?
1865-04	<p>Surrender at Appomattox Courthouse (VA) – Previously at 165,000 before Gettysburg in 1863, Lee’s army to 25,000, rations short.</p>
1865-04	<p>Lincoln assassinated</p>

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