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Teaching the Civil War with an Interdisciplinary Approach

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Teaching the Civil War with an Interdisciplinary Approach

Megan Riehle

Honors Project

Submitted to the Honors College
at Bowling Green State University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with

UNIVERSITY HONORS
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Dr. Brigid Burke, Advisor
School of Teaching and Learning

Dr. Amy Hicks, Advisor
English Department

8th Grade Social Studies: Civil War Unit

Stage 1 – Curriculum

Content Standard(s):

R.8.3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

R.8.5: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

R.8.9: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

W.8.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

SL.8.4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL.8.5: Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

SS.8.11: Disputes over the nature of federalism, complicated by economic developments in the United States, resulted in sectional issues, including slavery, which led to the American Civil War.

SS.8.12: The Reconstruction period resulted in changes to the U.S. Constitution, an affirmation of federal authority and lingering social and political differences.

Unit Enduring Understanding(s):

Students will understand that:

1. History can be interpreted and analyzed through multiple perspectives.
2. By reading historical fiction, they will develop a deeper understanding of certain events that really occurred in history.

Unit Essential Question(s):

What will students remember in 10 years?

1. How does perspective shape the way something is viewed?
2. How can looking at something from someone else's perspective change my perceptions?
3. How did the Civil War affect American perspective?

Unit Knowledge:

Students will know:

- Important events during the Civil War: Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg Address, passing of the 13th amendment, Battle of Fort Sumter, Appomattox

Unit Skills: (include character & community)

Students will be able to:

- Develop communication skills among peers
- Engage and become an active participant in their learning

<p>Courthouse, Battle of Shiloh, Battle of Antietam, Lincoln assassination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different perspectives of people during the Civil War (i.e. Northerners, Southerners, African Americans, Women) - What events lead up to the war - What the repercussions of the war were - Have an understanding of the major events and outcomes of the Civil War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop the ability to acknowledge someone else's perspective - Analyze the accounts of history in both historical fiction and nonfiction texts
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Student Friendly Learning Target(s): (I can, I will statements)

- **I can identify varying perspectives of the Civil War.**
- **I can identify the main historical events that occurred during the Civil War**
- **I can compare and contrast the events portrayed in historical fiction and in historical documents.**
- **I can analyze primary and secondary sources to learn about historical events.**
- **I can present information to the class in an organized manner.**

Stage 2 – Assessment

<p>Summative Assessment(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unit Culminating Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ G- viewing events from different perspectives ○ R- literature circle roles ○ A- peers in the class, administration who visits for presentations ○ S- Connecting historical fiction to actual historical accounts ○ P- presentation, T-Chart/Venn Diagram ○ S- See Social Studies and Literacy standards above 	<p>Pre- & Formative Assessment(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interest Survey ○ Student interest ○ ▪ Formative assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BBK Organizer ○ Literature Circle Role Sheets ○ T-Chart/Venn Diagram
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Stage 3 – Instruction

Unit Summary:
Learning experience 1 topic (3 days): Perspectives of the Civil War
Materials/texts:

- Mystery Text: *Lincoln* movie clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qjtugr2618>
- Mentor Text: "Facts, Events & Information about The American Civil War: 1861-1865"
- Northerner Expert Texts (Two Groups):
 - <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/civilwar/northwar/>
 - *The Last Brother* by Trinka Hakes
 - *Dadblamed Union Army Cow* by Susan Fletcher
 - https://www.ducksters.com/history/civil_war/life_as_a_soldier_during_the_civil_war.php
 - <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/articles/who-fought>
- Southerner Expert Texts:

- <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/articles/who-fought>
- http://civilwar.ws/cws_confederate_soldiers.htm
- <https://acwm.org/blog/myths-and-misunderstandings-slaveholding-and-confederate-soldier>
- African American Expert Texts:
 - <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/primary-sources/reminiscences-two-years-colored-troops-0>
 - <http://blueandgraytrail.com/features/southerncauses.html>
 - <http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/confederate-states-of-america>
 - <http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/confederate-states-of-america/videos>
 - *Li'l Dan, the Drummer Boy*
- Women Expert Texts:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYCF8ALSYZw>
 - <http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/women-in-the-civil-war>
 - *Nurse, Soldier, Spy* by Marissa Moss
 - <https://www.civilwar.org/learn/articles/female-soldiers-civil-war>
 - <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1993/spring/women-in-the-civil-war-1.html>
- BBK Organizer
- Red, Orange and Green Markers
- Giant Post-It notes

1. Pre-assessment:

-Students will choose their groups by same interest in the different perspectives of people during the Civil War. There will be a sign on each table describing what each table will be investigating, and students can simply choose which one interests them the most. Here are the options:

- Northerners
- Southerners
- African Americans
- Women

(These will be put on the tables after the mystery text has been viewed and notes have been taken.)

2. Opener/Introduction:

Day 1:

- Teacher explains that students will be participating in a BBK workshop.
- Teacher plays mystery text (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qjtugr2618>) for students and instructs them to take notes on what they see and what they think they know about the Civil War. This starts the BBK Workshop.

3. Mini-lessons/workshops: (teacher-directed)

Day 1:

- Teacher will facilitate BBK workshop and monitor student progress with the Mystery text.

- Teacher models text code to the class so that students fully understand what they need to be looking for while they read and the common text at home for homework
 - o A star represents an interesting fact
 - o A question mark represents a question a student may have
 - o A circle represents an important word
 - o An exclamation point represents an interesting fact
 - o The letter C represents a connection made to the text

Day 2:

- Teacher will facilitate BBK workshop and monitor student progress as they work through the mentor and expert texts.

4. *Student-centered/small-group activities:*

Day 1:

- Students complete the lesson introduction by watching the mystery text and taking notes on what they see. Teacher instructs students to share what they took notes on with their group members and to write some of the main points down on the giant post-it note that is stuck to their table with the red marker.
- Teacher reminds students that they also need to keep good records of what they have discussed on their BBK Recording Organizer because they will be sharing that information with their peers later.

Day 2:

- Students come into class already having read and text-coded their anchor text. Students will discuss what they found in the anchor text and add their notes to their post-it notes in purple and their BBK Organizer.
- Teacher will pass out mentor texts based on which specific group that students chose to be in. Those include African Americans, women, Northerners, and Southerners. These expert texts will delve into the specific history regarding these different groups of people.
- Students will be instructed to investigate 2-3 expert texts silently and record their notes on the BBK Organizer. Teacher instructs students to share what they found and record the group's major findings on the post-it note using the orange marker. Teacher will debrief the class and remind them that the next day will be a jigsaw teaching day.

Day 3:

- Teacher will have students get into jigsaw groups at the beginning of class so that there is at least one person from each BBK group in each group.
- Students will share what they learned about the history of their certain group with the rest of their jigsaw group.

5. *Formative assessment:*

- Giant Post-It: This will be used to assess student participation in the BBK workshop. It will be a visual representation for the teacher to be able to see if his/her students are on track or need remediation in order to fully understand a topic.

- BBK Organizer: This will be used to assess student participation in the BBK workshop. It will also serve as a reference point for students when they are presenting what they found to their jigsaw group. Each layer is worth 10 points.

6. *Closure/wrap-up:*

- When all groups are finished, teacher will facilitate large group discussion on how these different groups of people had varying perspectives of the Civil War.

Learning experience 2 topic (8-10 days): Exploring the Civil War

1. *Materials/texts:*

- Literature Circle Role Worksheets
- Literature Circle Badges
- *Which Way Freedom* by Joyce Hansen
- *The War Within: A Novel of the Civil War* by Carol Matas
- *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg* by Rodman Philbrick
- *Behind Rebel Lines: The Incredible Story of Emma Edmonds, Civil War Spy* by Seymour Reit
- *Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt
- <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/literature-circles>

2. *Pre-assessment:*

- Last day of lesson segment 1: Students will be pre-assessed for their interest in the various novels using an interest survey. This will allow the teacher to place students in a group with a novel that is interesting to them.

3. *Opener/Introduction:*

- Day 1: Teachers explain to students they will be participating in Literature Circles through their assigned role and distribute specific role worksheets for each student's reference and use throughout class

4. *Mini-lessons/workshops:* (teacher-directed)

Day 1-2:

- Teachers explain to students they will be participating in Literature Circles through their assigned role and distribute specific role worksheets for each student's reference and use throughout class
 - o Summarizer - is in charge of summarizing the main ideas of the text and connecting those main ideas to possible themes. The role within the Literature Circle will be responsible for beginning the discussion, so make sure the student knows how to jot down major events throughout the story, and a plot summary.

- Visualizer-is in charge of looking at the setting, aura, mood and tone of the text.
- Inferencer- is in charge of making connections to the real world, history, and other sections of the text. Make sure the student know that they will be in charge of keeping the conversation going and pose questions if the conversation lulls.
- Symbolizer- is in charge of searching for symbols within the text finding how they represent larger ideas.
- Word Detective- is in charge of looking for unknown or unfamiliar words defining them for their peers.
- Teachers will show a video describing Literature Circle roles and expectations <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/literature-circles>
- Teachers engage in discussion by asking about what students can glean from the video, as well as what observing young students partake in Literature Circles teaches us.
- Teacher distributes role sheets, badges, books and assign each group a color. These necklaces serve as a tangible representation of student roles throughout the literature circle. They are a small addition to help emphasize each student has a specific role to use to contribute throughout the literature circle activity. Then, the teacher explains that each student will have a different role/responsibility and should keep that in mind while reading the story.
- Teacher models the process of a literature circle discussion by first reading the picture book *Henry's Freedom Box* to the class.
 - Using a fishbowl technique with a few students in the inner circle while the rest of the class surrounds those students, the teacher and students will act out the literature circle discussion.
 - Teacher will have previously prepared the students participating in the literature circle, so they know what to do.
 - Students not in the inner circle will take notes on what they notice happening.
- Afterwards, the teacher will facilitate a discussion about what the students saw happening during the model literature circle.
- Teacher instructs students to meet with their groups and decide how much of the book they will be reading for homework that night and to distribute their role sheets.
- Teacher instructs students to read the first chunk of their book through the lens of their role, while taking notes on their worksheet for homework.

Day 3:

- Teacher begins class by discussing important things to remember when working in group including how to respectfully disagree and converse with their peers.
 - Teacher records these guidelines on an anchor chart and posts them on the wall for reference throughout the unit.
- Teacher facilitates literature circle meetings in various places around the room for the different groups.
- Teacher instructs Summarizer to begin Literature Circle discussion with his/her findings.

- Teacher walks around the room to answer questions and ensure students are participating.
- If the Literature Circle needs more instruction of order in which the roles should be sharing, teacher should put on the board this order: Summarizer, Inferencer, Symbolizer, Visualizer and then Word Detective. Each sheet is worth 5 points.
- Teacher allows students to lead discussion and reminds students to give each role a chance to share his/her findings

Day 4-12:

- Teacher conferences with two groups a day to discuss student understanding of text and historical application.
- Teacher continues to monitor student understanding and behavior throughout the learning segment.

5. Student-centered/small-group activities:

Day 1-2:

- Students participate in the mock literature circle by either being in the inner or outer circle.

Day 3-12:

- Students participate in their various literature circle group discussions and complete their role sheets.

Day 3-10:

- Students participate in their literature circles by discussing their various role sheets.
 - The Summarizer is in charge of summarizing the main ideas of the text and connecting those main ideas to possible themes. This role within the literature circle will be responsible for beginning the discussion, so make sure the student knows how to jot down major events throughout the story, and a plot summary.
 - The Inferencer is in charge of looking at the setting, aura, mood and tone of the text.
 - The Word Detective is in charge of making connections to the real world, history, and other sections of the text. Also, the student will be in charge of keeping the conversation going and pose questions if the conversation lulls.
 - The symbolizer is in charge of searching for symbols within the text finding how they represent larger ideas.
 - The Word Detective is in charge of looking for unknown or unfamiliar words defining them for their peers.

6. Formative assessment:

- Student role sheets
- Group Discussion

7. Closure/wrap-up:

- When all groups are finished, students will create a plot mountain with their groups to prepare for the following

Learning experience 3 (6 days): Civil War Comparison Presentations

1. *Materials/texts:*

- Student literature circle novels
- Student computers
- Large poster paper/Powerpoint
- <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/>

2. *Pre-assessment:*

- Students will choose their partner from their literature circle groups. There will be 2-3 per group, and teacher will be aware of affect and environment.

3. *Opener/Introduction:*

- Teacher goes over assignment sheet with students to explain to students what the project will entail.
 - o Students will be creating a poster/PowerPoint that compares at least two events from their novel to an actual account of the historical event. It will be up to the students to find their own primary sources on the internet with the teachers help.

4. *Mini-lessons/workshops: (teacher-directed)*

Day 1:

- Teacher goes over assignment sheet and rubric with students to explain to students what the project will entail and reviews expectations from learning contract.
 - o Students will be creating a poster/PowerPoint that compares at least two events from their novel to an actual account of the historical event. It will be up to the students to find their own primary sources on the internet with the teachers help.
- Teacher models an analysis of a primary source document from another event in history for the class and fills out an example T-Chart/Venn Diagram.
 - o Teacher takes a vote to determine which is the more popular model for organizing ideas.
- Teacher gives students time to go through their book and identify the events they would like to research and report them to the teacher for approval.
- Teacher facilitates and monitors student research

Day 2-4:

- Teacher facilitates research in the classroom and library as well as Google Slide creation while helping struggling students.
- Teacher meets with each group once throughout this time to check the status of the class.

Day 5-6:

- Teacher grades students as they present their findings to the class.

5. *Student-centered/small-group activities:*

Day 1:

- Students will go over assignment sheet/rubric and review learning contract.
- Student will participate in analyzing a primary source and filling out a T-Chart/Venn Diagram with the rest of the class as the teacher models.
- Students will identify the events in their novels that they would like to analyze for their presentation and reports this to the teacher.
- Students begin research if time allows.

Day 2-4:

- Students research and complete their T-Charts/Venn Diagrams.
- Students create a Google Slides presentation with their group as they research.
- Students practice and prepare for their presentations.

Day 5-6:

- Students present their findings to the class and evaluate their peers in their color groups.

6. *Formative assessment:*

- Venn Diagram/T-Chart recording sheet
- Meetings with groups

7. *Closure/wrap-up:*

- Teacher will facilitate discussion about the comparison between what is depicted about the Civil War and what actually happened.

Name _____

Circle Color _____

Meeting Day _____

Novel _____

Summarizer

The **summarizer** is in charge of summarizing the main ideas of the text and connecting those main ideas to possible themes. You will be beginning the discussion, so make sure you jot down major events throughout the story, and a plot summary in the below note space. This role sheet is worth 5 points.

Major Events

Historical Connections

Character Development

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Please summarize the plot of this chunk of text in three sentences or less.

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Name _____

Circle Color _____

Meeting Day _____

Novel _____

Word Detective

The word detective is in charge of looking for unknown or unfamiliar words and defining them for their peers. List 5 words and define that are unfamiliar or need further information on in order to understand the text. You will need your electronic device to look up these words. This role sheet is worth 5 points.

Word / Definition

1. _____:

2. _____:

3. _____:

4. _____:

5. _____:

Name _____

Circle Color _____

Meeting Day _____

Novel _____

Inferencer

The inferencer is in charge of making connections to the real-world, history and other sections of the text. The inferencer also keeps the conversation going and poses questions if

the conversation lulls. In the spaces below, write down your connection to self, world, and history. This role sheet is worth 5 points.

Connection to Self

Connection to World

Connection to History

Name _____

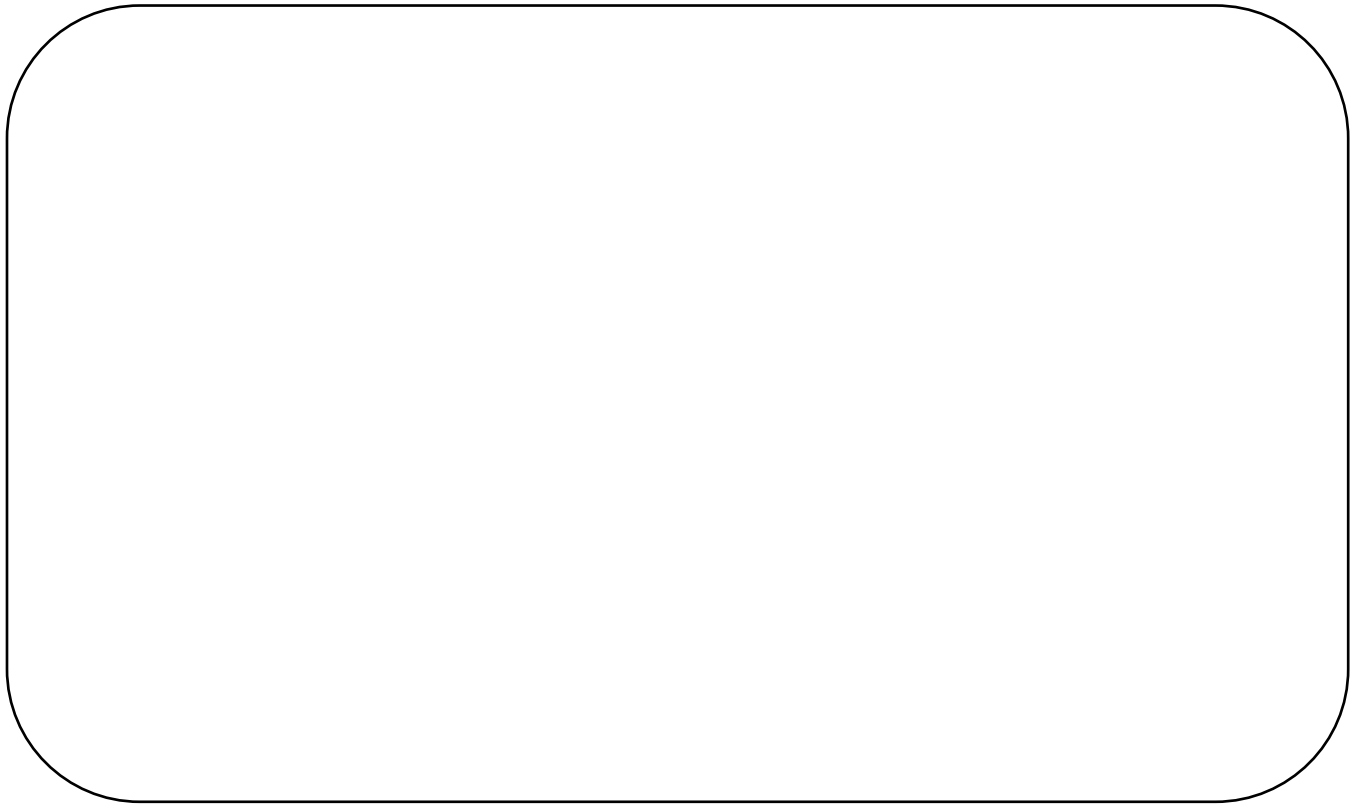
Circle Color _____

Meeting Day _____

Novel _____

Visualizer

The **visualizer** is in charge of looking at the setting, aura, mood and tone of the text. In the space below, draw a visual representation of the setting, and provide an explanation of this visual. The explanation space should explain the aura, mood and tone of the visual representation you have chosen to draw and should be 3-4 sentences. This role sheet is worth 5 points.



Explanation:

Name _____

Circle Color _____

Meeting Day _____

Novel _____

Symbolizer

The symbolizer is in charge of searching for symbols within the text finding how they represent larger ideas. Pick two symbols found in the text, and connect it to larger theme or idea present in the text. Illustrate this symbol below and then write the connection to a larger theme or idea found in the text. This role sheet is worth 5 points.

Symbol Illustrations



Connection

1.

1.

2.

2.

Name: _____

Perspective: _____

BBK Organizer

Mystery Text Notes:

CommonText Notes:

Expert Text Notes:

Interest Survey

Please rank how interested you are in the following five stories with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. I cannot promise that you will get your first pick, but I will do my best to choose within your top 2-3.

Which Way Freedom

- "Obi had never forgotten the sounds of his mother's screams on the day he was sold away from her. Making plans to run away to find her was a secret game he played with friend Buka, an old African who lived at the edge of the farm.

When the Civil War began, Obi knew it was time to run -- or be sold again. If he was caught, he'd be killed...or worse. But if he stayed, he might never know freedom."

The War Within: A Novel of the Civil War

- "Hannah Green can't believe what happens to her family after the war breaks out. First, her sister Joanna falls in love with a Union soldier -- an enemy. Next, the same soldier tells Hannah and her family about General Grant's General Order #11, which commands all Jews to evacuate the territory for violating trade regulations. The Greens escape from Holly Springs just before their home is destroyed. They lose everything -- even their slaves, when Lincoln declares them free.

Now, because she is Jewish, Hannah cannot go home to Mississippi -- a Confederate state that's dear to her heart. Confusion sets in. Who is on her side, and whose side does she want to be on?"

The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg

- "Master storyteller Rodman Philbrick takes readers on a colorful journey as young Homer Figg sets off to follow his brother into the thick of the Civil War. Through a series of fascinating events, Homer's older brother has been illegally sold to the Union Army. It is up to Homer to find him and save him. Along the way, he encounters strange but real people of that era: two tricksters who steal his money, a snake-oil salesman, a hot-air balloonist, and finally, the Maine regiment who saved Little Round Top at the Battle of Gettysburg and won the war for the Union."

Behind Rebel Lines: The Incredible Story of Emma Edmonds

- "Combining U.S. Army records and files from the National Archives, Reit has reconstructed the story of an incredible woman who joined the Yankee army disguised as a man. A suspense-filled account of a brave and loyal feminist."

Across Five Aprils

- "The Newbery Award winning author of *Up a Road Slowly* presents the unforgettable story of Jethro Creighton—a brave boy who comes of age during the turbulent years of the Civil War."

Comparing Historical Fiction to Historical Sources: Assignment Sheet



Congratulations! You have finished reading a historical fiction novel! Hopefully you have learned a bit about what life was like for people who lived during that time. We know that historical fiction is made up by the author, so now it is time to compare what the author has written to what actually happened during the Civil War. You will be creating a presentation that compares the historical events in your book to what actually happened.

Step 1: Identify the main historical events in your novel!

- Some examples are the Gettysburg Address, the Battle of Antietam, the Emancipation Proclamation etc. Each person in your literature circle group will be research one event so you will need to find one each.

Step 2: Do research!

- You are going to be doing research to find primary and secondary sources about the event you have chosen. I will provide some resources to help you and we will spend some time in the library so you can look information up. You MUST find at least one primary source for your event.

Step 3: Compare!

- You will be comparing the actual event to what was depicted in your novel. You may use T-Chart or a Venn Diagram to demonstrate your understanding between the different texts.

Step 3: Create a presentation!

- You will be presenting this project with your group to the class. This will be the time to show your classmates and I what you have learned from reading your historical fiction novel and the historical accounts of what happened.

Step 4: Visit a Civil War museum!

- After working so hard and finishing up your project, we will take a trip to the Civil War Museum.

Learning Contract



I, _____ have read both the rubric and the expectations/assignment sheet and understand my responsibilities and assignments I must complete in order to receive “exemplary” or “acceptable” remarks on my individual and group projects. I understand that I must participate and engage in the “Perspectives of the Civil War Unit” each day in order to know and understand what is expected of me and to apply knowledge obtained to enhance my learning experience. I am aware that I am responsible for:

1. Reading the historical fiction novel assigned to me and completing my literature circle role sheet.
2. Choosing ONE event from my historical fiction novel to research and compare to the actual historical event.
3. Working with 1-2 other students from my literature circle group on my presentation and doing my share of the work.
4. Completing my Individual part of the presentation by the assigned due date
(_____/_____) ^{SEP}
5. Being an engaged, active participant in each day of this Unit ^{SEP}

I have read and understand my responsibilities,

Student Signature/Date

I have read and understand my student’s responsibilities.

Parent Signature/Date

Presentation Rubric

Category: 20 pts.	Exemplary: 20-15 pts.	Acceptable: 14-10 pts.	Needs Improvement: 9-5 pts.	Points Earned
Organization	Students have clearly organized their presentation/work and there are no moments when group members are not sure of what to do next. There are no awkward pauses during the presentation.	Students have organized their presentation but there are moments when the presenters do not know what they are supposed to do. There are a few awkward pauses.	Students did not organize their presentation. It is clear that there was no practicing before students present their project.	
Venn Diagram/T-Chart	Written portion accurately represents what is presented. There are little to no grammar mistakes. All citations are made correctly in MLA format.	Written portion accurately represents what is presented. There are some grammar mistakes throughout and almost all citations are made correctly in MLA format.	Written portion does not represent what is presented. The grammar mistakes hinder the understanding of the writing and there are many incorrect MLA citations.	
Participation in Group	Each group member has done their share of the work and has received good peer reviews. This will be graded on an individual basis through peer reflection.	Group members did not fully share the workload and did not equally contribute to the project. This will be graded on an individual basis through peer reflection.	Group members did not share the workload and did not contribute to the project. This will be graded on an individual basis through peer reflection.	
Organization	Students have expertly organized their work and the final product shows detailed planning and thought. There are clear connections made between what was taught in class and the finished product.	Students have organized their work and the final product shows some planning and thought. There are connections between what was taught in class and the finished product.	Students did not organize their work and the final product shows no planning or thought. The connections between the finished product and what was taught in class is missing.	
Grammar and Elocution	Written/spoken portion has little to no grammar mistakes. All citations are made correctly in MLA format.	Written/spoken portion has some grammar mistakes throughout and almost all citations are made correctly in MLA format.	The grammar mistakes hinder the understanding of the writing/spoken work and there are many incorrect MLA citations.	

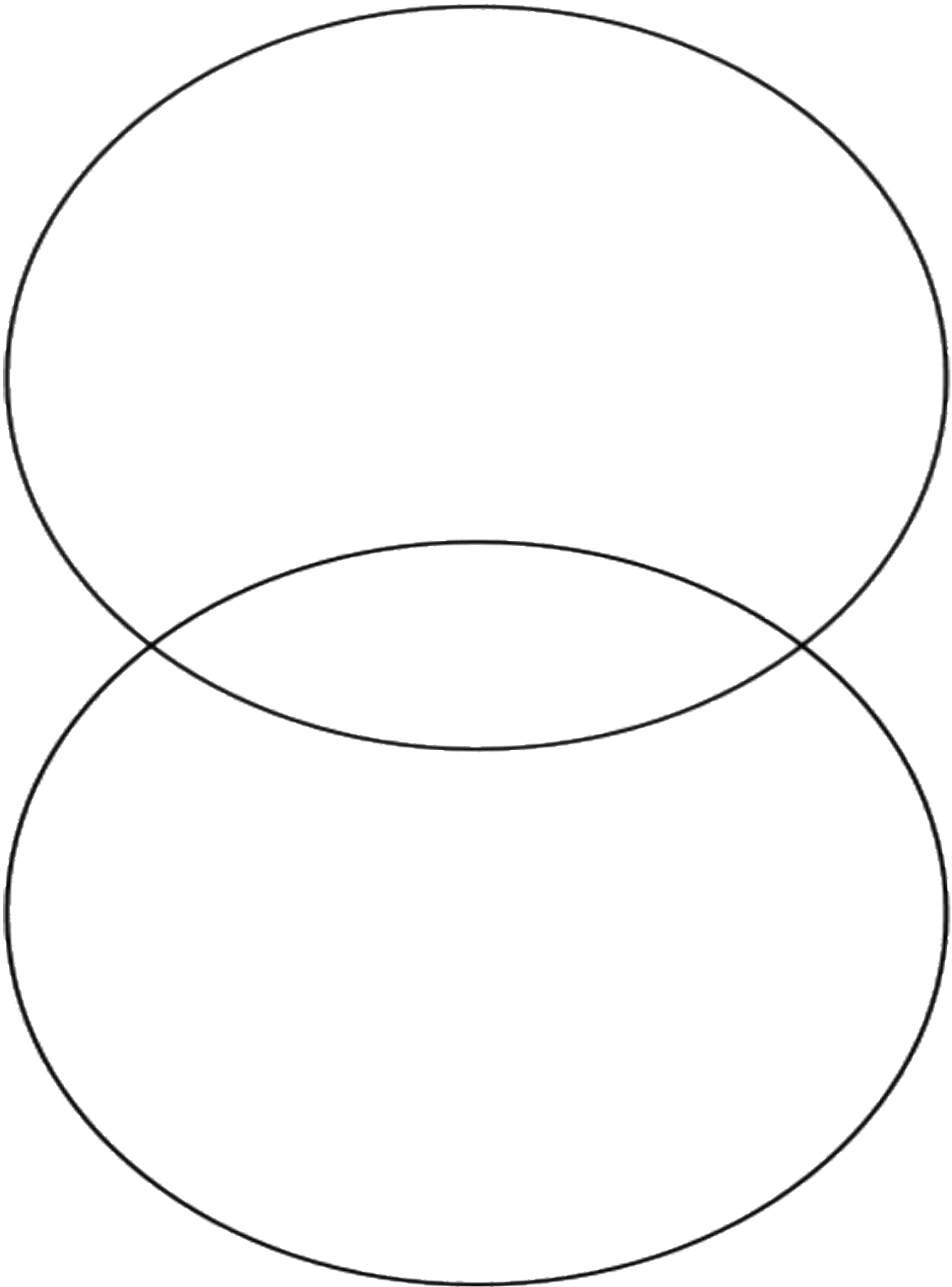
<p>Self Evaluation (Teacher reserves the right to make final decision on this portion)</p>	<p>This will be an assessment of yourself and what you think you deserve in this area. Consider these questions: What did I learn? Did I do my absolute best? What could I have done better?</p>	<p>This will be an assessment of yourself and what you think you deserve in this area. Consider these questions: What did I learn? Did I do my absolute best? What could I have done better?</p>	<p>This will be an assessment of yourself and what you think you deserve in this area. Consider these questions: What did I learn? Did I do my absolute best? What could I have done better?</p>	
<p>Teacher Comments</p>				

My Novel

Both

Historical Sources

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Template adapted by Brigid Burke from the work of Grant Wiggins, Jay McTighe, and Carol Ann Tomlinson

Book Choice Rationale

The historical fiction novels *Which Way Freedom* by Joyce Hansen, *The War Within: A Novel of the Civil War* by Carol Matas, *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg* by Rodman Philbrick, *Behind Rebel Lines: The Incredible Story of Emma Edmonds*, *Civil War Spy* by Seymour Reit, and *Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt each give a different perspective into the Civil War. These novels have taken what is known to be true from the Civil War era and crafted a narrative around the story that will expose readers to the life experiences of those who lived during that time period. These novels allow readers to delve into the life experiences of African Americans, women, children, northerners, and southerners in a manner that demonstrates the real-life struggles and triumphs of a person's life.

Which Way Freedom by Joyce Hansen describes the life of an African American child during the events of the Civil War. The main character Obi is a slave at the beginning of the war. Haunted by the memory of being sold away from his mother when he was younger, he decides that this is his moment to run away from his bondage or never be set free. The book details his quest for freedom and how the Civil War affects his life. The historical narrative is unique in this novel because readers are able to grasp what the war felt like from the perspective of an African American. Often, people focus on the Civil War from a white soldier's view; however, *Which Way Freedom* demonstrates a slave's view on a war being waged in the name of his freedom. Readers will be able to see the hardships that came with escaping from slavery and fearing the Confederate Army after Obi joins the Union Army.

The War Within: A Novel of the Civil War by Carol Matas is a truly unique narrative told from the perspective of a southern, Jewish girl. Hannah Green is thrust into the thick of the Civil War after her sister falls in love with a Union soldier and is then ordered to evacuate her home because she is Jewish. Hannah and her family lose absolutely everything, even their slaves, after President Lincoln declares them free. Hannah must struggle with her desire to go home to her Confederate state of Mississippi to learn what side of the war she wants to be on. This novel allows readers to grapple with seeing the perspective of someone who believed slavery to be a normal and good thing. This can be somewhat of a shock to many readers. Furthermore, this novel is unparalleled because it describes the experiences of someone who is Jewish. Overall, the Jewish population is not discussed during the Civil War era of history. This will allow readers to see another facet of how the Civil War affected everyone in the United States in different ways. The narrative of the story is centered equally on both issues of internal and external conflict as readers see the effects of the society on the family featured in the novel as well as the singular beliefs of Hannah as the main character.

The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg by Rodman Philbrick is a humorous historical fiction novel depicted from the perspective of a twelve-year-old boy. Homer's older brother is illegally sold to the Union Army and Homer is determined to save him. Along his journey, he meets different characters who introduce Homer to life during the war. This adventure culminates as Homer ends up in the middle of the Battle of Gettysburg. The gruesome and devastating events of the Civil War juxtaposed with the child-like narrative of Homer's story are striking. A narrative that is usually littered

with strife and pain is full of humor because of the perspective it is written through. It gives readers the opportunity to visualize what a child may have experienced living through such times.

Behind Rebel Lines: The Incredible Story of Emma Edmonds, Civil War Spy by Seymour Reit is a novel that details the life of Emma Edmonds. Emma disguised herself as a Yankee soldier in order to fight in the Civil War. Emma becomes a spy for the Union army and poses as a peddler, slave, washerwoman, and fop. These missions take her behind Confederate lines as she gathers intel for the Union army. This narrative illustrates the difficulties that women had during the time period if they wanted to get involved with the war. Women had to overcome obstacles to have the opportunity to fight for their country. Readers are able to experience this as they read, as well as the bravery needed to accomplish something as daunting as spying on the Confederate army.

Across Five Aprils by Irene Hunt follows Jethro Creighton through his experiences during the Civil War. After his brother Bill chooses to fight for the south, the story follows Jethro's family as they navigate through the years of the war. This is an interesting look not only into Jethro's perspective of the Civil War as a child but also the family dynamic in the Civil War. It is often discussed that the Civil War was a war fought brother against brother. However, it is difficult to grasp what that truly felt like. This narrative demonstrates to the reader what it was like to grapple with disagreeing with family during the war. Jethro's brother was fighting for the Confederate army and Jethro loved Lincoln, so the struggle between family and personal beliefs is an important aspect to the narrative presented. This also shows the perspective of a child. At the

beginning of the novel, Jethro is only nine. He is young enough to not have to fight in the war, but he is old enough to be emotionally and mentally impacted by it. This will add to the understanding of the narrative because even though he does not fight in the war, it still impacts who he is and how he lives.

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