

Norskedalen Civil War Series

Historical Interpretation for Grades 6-8

Lesson 1: Perspectives

Prerequisite Knowledge: Students should be basically familiar with the Civil War. In particular, the Union and Confederacy; the Confederacy was attempting to secede from the Union, and that the dispute was over slavery and the rights of enslaved people.

Note: Though the lesson is on *perspectives*, we are not attempting to teach that the institution of slavery was only good or bad based on a person's perspective. This lesson attempts to show people have a variety of life experiences that influence their opinion about the Civil War. For example, a Union General may support the war for a different reason than an enslaved person. The widow of a Union soldier may oppose the war for a different reason than a Confederate infantryman. Finally, a person may be both anti-enslavement *and* anti-war.

The higher-order thinking objective is to form an opinion in support of or opposed to the Civil War, based on a person's unique perspective.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Explain how a person's experiences influence his or her views.
- Explain people's perspectives on the Civil War.
- Explain what influences people's perspectives.

Lesson Procedures:

1. Open the PowerPoint show Civil War Perspectives. Show Slide 2 - Perspectives. Explain that a perspective is a person's individual opinion about a topic or event. Their perspective is influenced by their life experiences.
2. Show slide 3: Emily and Tim's Story. Read aloud to class.
Every day in PE, Tim asks if they can play kickball. After a while, it gets pretty annoying. Eventually, the PE teacher relents and lets them play kickball. Emily freaks out, throws a tantrum, and refuses to play! When they were in elementary school, Tim realized kickball was the only PE activity he was good at. Emily was once hit in the face with the ball and broke her nose. How does this demonstrate perspectives?
3. Think-Pair-Share: How does this demonstrate perspectives?
(Tim has good experiences with kickball, and Emily has bad experiences. This makes Tim love kickball, and Emily hate it. Their opinion on kickball was

Norskedalen Civil War Series

Historical Interpretation for Grades 6-8

influenced by their life experience).

4. Hand out the Perspectives Worksheet and show Slide 4. Explain that you will be watching a series of videos explaining both Union and Confederate perspectives. As students watch the video, they will look for examples of Political, Economic, and Personal influences.

Political Influences are anything related to government. How should the government be run? Who should run the government? Who gets a vote in the government's decisions?

Economic Influences are anything related to money, business, or trade. How did people earn income? What goods are bought and sold?

Personal Influences are personal life experiences that influence opinions

5. Show Slide 5: Johnny Reb and Billy Yank. Informally, Union soldiers were called "Billy Yank" and Confederate soldiers were called "Johnny Reb."
6. Show Slide 6: The Union Perspective. Play the video while students write ideas. (Note, this video is also linked here, from the American Battlefield Trust: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44wJ1gnBK0c>)
7. Show Slide 7: The Union Perspective. Play the video while students write ideas (Note, this video is also linked here, from the American Battlefield Trust: https://youtu.be/_8EfSgfuF_s)
8. Show Slide 8: The Confederate Perspective. This video is from "Johnny Reb," a Confederate Re-enactor from Norskedalen. While students watch, they should write notes on the Confederate Perspective, Political, Social, and Personal.
9. Allow students to compare and share answers in small groups, or a whole-class discussion.

Assessment:

Review notes over Political, Social, and Personal influences on perspective.

Optional Exit Ticket: "If you were alive during the Civil War, what might your perspective be about the war?"

Note: Collect worksheets for re-use in Lesson 4.

Norskedalen Civil War Series

Historical Interpretation for Grades 6-8

Lesson 2: Compare and Contrast

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Compare life in the 1860's to life today.

Lesson Procedures

1. Pass out the Compare/Contrast Worksheet.
2. Either as a whole class or in groups, access the Civil War Videos page. Students should watch at least two videos. This can be a teacher choice, class choice, or small group choice. You can watch as many of the videos as you would like.
3. As they watch, students should write down information comparing/contrasting life in the Civil War era to today. In addition, each presenter brings a different perspective to the Civil War. Write down information you hear about what influences the presenter's perspective.

Assessment

Option 1: Examine answers on the Compare/Contrast Worksheet

Option 2: One paragraph essay: Of all the differences between the 1860's and today, which one do you think is the most significant, and why?

Norskedalen Civil War Series

Historical Interpretation for Grades 6-8

Lesson 3: Letter Analysis

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Examine the perspectives of several people impacted by the Civil War.
- Identify the influences on people's perspectives through letters.

Lesson Procedures

1. Pass out the Civil War Letters and Letter Analysis Worksheets.
2. Assign students to small groups.
3. Read aloud Letter 1 from Robert E. Lee and fill out the analysis of his letter as a whole class.
4. Think-Pair-Share: How is Robert E Lee, and why is his perspective important?
He was the commander of the Confederate Army. His feelings about the war impacted the instructions he gave his army. He would try to teach the army to adopt his perspective.
5. Think-Pair-Share: What is Robert E Lee's perspective?
He doesn't want the war to happen, but if it does, he will defend his country and his honor.
6. Think-Pair-Share: What influences his perspective?
He believes the Constitution does not allow the country to be split apart. He honors and values the work of Washington and the other Founding Fathers. He believes the South has been aggrieved by acts of the North.
7. Think-Pair-Share: What is the purpose of his letter?
Arguments could be made for both informing and persuading. Ask students to explain their thinking.
8. After analyzing General Lee's letter as a class, have students work in their small groups to read Letter 2 and Letter 3. Discuss answers as a class.
9. After discussing answers as a class, have students analyze Letter 4 and Letter 5 on their own.

Norskedalen Civil War Series

Historical Interpretation for Grades 6-8

Assessment:

Analysis of Letter 4 and Letter 5.

Optional assessment: Short essay - "Do you agree or disagree with any of the letters in particular, and if so, why?"

Norskedalen Civil War Series

Historical Interpretation for Grades 6-8

Lesson 4: Perspective Taking

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Adopt a perspective about the Civil War.
- Defend that perspective using historical information.

Lesson Procedures

1. Pass out the Letter Writing Worksheet and the Perspectives worksheet from Lesson 2.
2. Review both Confederate and Union Perspectives.
3. You can decide to have students fill out the planning side of the Letter Writing Worksheet on their own or with groups.
4. You can decide whether students should have the teacher check their planning worksheet before they write their letter, or if they should just start writing.
5. Students should plan their letter on the planning side, using the information they have collected on perspectives.
6. After students have filled out their plan, they should write a letter. In this letter, they adopt the perspective of someone who lived in the Civil War time period. They either defend their perspective, or oppose the perspective of the person they're writing to. The letters we read in Lesson 3 serve as an effective model.

Assessment

Final Letter. Does the letter:

- Adopt a clear perspective.
- Defend the perspective using historical information.
- Adequately explain what influences their perspective.

Suggested grading rubric is on the next page.

Norskedalen Civil War Series

Historical Interpretation for Grades 6-8

	Exceeds – Meets expectations over 90% of the time.	Secure – Meets expectations between 70-90% of the time	Developing – Meets expectations below 70% of the time
Content – The writing contains the elements it is expected to contain (vocabulary, length, etc)	The student adopts a clear perspective and explains what influences that perspective.	The student adopts a clear perspective, but is unable to clearly explain what influences that perspective.	The student does not adopt a clear perspective. They may have evidence, but it doesn't make their perspective clear.
Accuracy – The information in the assignment is accurate	The historical information used is accurate.	The historical information used is mostly accurate, with a few errors.	The historical information used is missing or not accurate.
Creativity – The extent to which the product is original in the student's social context	Student combines rich details in new and unexpected ways	Student's work is based on something already written, but still uses original ideas	Student's ideas are almost entirely copied from another source(s).