

The American Civil War

Language Arts Book Club Unit (8th Grade)

By Anna Walters

Objectives:

- Discuss some of the social, political, and personal issues that challenged Americans during The Civil War.
- Use the Internet to visit websites that describe the Civil War and incorporate information from these resources into their own writing.
- Define *historical fiction* and identify some of the techniques writers use to create good historical fiction.
- Discuss the central issues of the Civil War from a variety of different perspectives.
- Share their personal reactions to what they have learned in both small-group and whole-class discussions.
- Talk about literature being read
- Work together in a small group setting

Language Arts: Ohio Benchmarks and Standards:

- *Communication: Oral and Visual Standard* (During Book Club)
 - Use a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension.
 - Apply active listening strategies (e.g., monitoring message for clarity, selecting and organizing essential information, noting cues such as changes in pace)
- *Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies Standard* (During Book Club)
 - Apply reading comprehension strategies to understand grade-appropriate texts.
 - Apply reading comprehension strategies, including making predictions, comparing and contrasting, recalling and summarizing and making inferences and drawing conclusions
 - Demonstrate comprehension of print and electronic text by responding to questions (e.g., literal, inferential, evaluative and synthesizing)
 - Answer literal, inferential, evaluative and synthesizing questions to demonstrate comprehension of grade-appropriate print texts and electronic and visual media.
- *Acquisition of Vocabulary Standard* (During Book Club)
 - Use multiple resources to enhance comprehension of vocabulary.
 - Determine the meanings and pronunciations of unknown words by using dictionaries, thesauruses, glossaries,

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technology and textual features, such as definitional footnotes or sidebars.

- *Writing Applications Standard* (Abolition Letter or Speech)
 - Write a persuasive piece that states a clear position, includes relevant information and offers compelling evidence in the form of facts and details.
 - Write persuasive compositions that:
 - establish and develop a controlling idea
 - support arguments with detailed evidence;
 - exclude irrelevant information; and
 - Cite sources of information.
 - Formulate writing ideas, and identify a topic appropriate to the purpose and audience.
 - Generate writing ideas through discussions with others and from printed material, and keep a list of writing ideas.

Social Studies: Ohio Benchmarks and Standards Addressed

- Benchmark G. Analyze the causes and consequences of the American Civil War
 - Explain causes of the Civil War with emphasis on
 - a. Slavery
 - b. States' rights
 - c. The different economies of the North and South
 - Contributions of key individuals, including Abraham Lincoln

I can Statements:

- I can agree without arguing
- I can take turns speaking and listening
- I can discuss the content of the book
- I can discuss how the book made me feel
- I Can listen with sustained concentration
- I Can take turns to speak, listen to others' suggestions and talk about what they are going to do
- I Can explain my views to others in a small group

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Materials

Writing Folders (For periodic writing prompts and writing assignments): 1 per Student (Will be collected periodically for participation points. See attachment for writing folder rubric and assessment)

Reading Logs (Specifically for Book Club): 1 per student (Will be collected at the end of Book Club. See attachment for reading log rubric and assessment)

Across Five Aprils Movie

Books and Websites for Unit

Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco (Even though it is for younger kids I think this would be a great book to introduce the Civil War and how it impacted the lives of young adults).

This picture book set during the Civil War is a departure for Polacco in terms of content and audience. It is certainly the deepest and most serious book she has done. Sheldon Curtis, 15, a white boy, lies badly wounded in a field in Georgia when Pinkus Aylee, an African American Union soldier about Sheldon's age, finds him and carries him home to his mother, Moe Moe Bay. Sheldon, known as Say, is nursed back to health in her nurturing care. But then she is killed by marauders, and the boys return to their units. They are then captured and taken to Andersonville, where Pink is hanged within hours of their capture. One of the most touching moments is when Pink reads aloud from the Bible to Moe Moe and Say. Say tells them that he can't read, but then he offers something he's very proud of: he once shook Abraham Lincoln's hand. This is a central image in the story, and is what ties the boys together for a final time, as Pink cries, "Let me touch the hand that touched Mr. Lincoln, Say, just one last time." The picture of their clasped hands, with the hands of the soldiers wrenching them apart, is exceptionally moving. Polacco's artwork, in fact, has never been better. She uses dramatic perspectives, dynamic compositions, and faces full of emotion to carry her powerful tale. History comes to life in this remarkable book.

North Star to Freedom by Gena K. Gorrell (**SMALL GROUP**)

Is historically rich with period posters, photographs and paintings, making it a wonderful starting point to focus on the human tragedies of slavery. The author, Gena K. Gorrell, gives a vivid ride on the Underground Railroad from the origins of slavery through the Civil War and beyond. From a crowded slave ship to the injustices of the galleries of human trade to freedom through the Underground Railroad, she shows the determination and strength of the passengers on escape routes and the conductors who risked their lives

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to help others. The people who were pivotal in roles they played are presented clearly. Those who became famous and those who remained obscure share equally in this book.

(<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1997/2/97.02.02.x.html>)

Follow the Drinking Gourd by Jeanette Winter (With the Musical Lyrics)
(WHOLE CLASS)

Across Five Aprils by Irene Hunt **(Book Club)**

This beautifully written novel offers valuable insights into the difficulties faced by families and communities caught up in the political, economic, and personal upheavals of war. The events of the Civil War unfold *Across Five Aprils* (Berkley Pub., 1986) in this moving story by Newbery Award winner, Irene Hunt. It is set in southern Illinois where Jethro Creighton, an intelligent, hardworking boy, is growing into manhood as his brothers and a beloved teacher leave to fight in the Union and Confederate armies. Hunt presents a balanced look at both sides of the conflict, and includes interesting information on lesser-known leaders and battles. Of course, Abraham Lincoln is a frequent topic of conversation, and Jethro even receives a letter from his fellow Illinoian. Narrator Tom Stechschulte captures the richness of the regional dialogue and blends it with a careful reading of the story's descriptive passages. Sound reproduction is good, and the hard plastic case can be processed easily for circulation. *Across Five Aprils* adds a valuable new perspective to audiobook collections that already have works such as Fleischman's *Bull Run* (HarperCollins, 1993), and Pinkney's *Silent Thunder: A Civil War Story* (Hyperion, 1999). Students studying the Civil War have much to gain from this recording because it goes beyond historical fiction to show the value of family love and loyalty.

Additional Books for Unit

Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln: A Photobiography by Russell Freedman

Abe's Honest Words by Kadir Nelson

Abraham Lincoln Comes Home by Robert Burleigh

The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary by Candace Fleming

Lincoln Shot: A President's Life Remembered by Barry Denenberg

Civil War

The Big Book of the Civil War: Fascinating Facts about the Civil War, Including Historic Photographs, Maps, and Documents by Joanne Mattern

The Civil War for Kids: A History with 21 Activities by Janis Herbert

The American Civil War by Gary W. Gallagher, Stephen Douglas Engle, Robert K. Krick

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You Wouldn't Want to Be a Civil War Soldier: A War You'd Rather Not Fight by Thomas Ratliff

If You Lived At the Time of the Civil War Kay Moore

Webquests

After completing the webquests, you will be able to describe what it was like to be a Confederate or Union soldier. Also you will be able to state both positions of the North and the South.

A Nation Divided

<http://www.stonewall.fayette.k12.ky.us/wq/cwwwebquest/civilwar.htm>

The Civil War

<http://www.fcps.edu/LondonTowneES/Webquests/civwarwbq/civwarwbq.htm>

The North Vs the South

http://www.barrow.k12.ga.us/hes/classrooms/html/civil_war_webquest.html

Other Websites

These websites will serve as additional resources to help the students gather information for their writing assignment.

Love letters of the Civil War:

This website shows authentic love letters that were written during the Civil War from soldiers. <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/cwlove/>

Civil War

Website contains other links to additional sites.

<http://edtech.kennesaw.edu/web/civwar.html>

Strategies and Writing Activities

***Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco (INDIVIDUAL)**

- After reading this book, I will have the students pretend they are reporters and develop 10 interview questions they would ask Pink or Say. This would just serve as a tool to get the students brainstorming on what else they would like to learn about the life back then and about the war. They would share what they write in a small group the following day.

***North Star to Freedom* by Gena K. Gorrell (SMALL GROUP)**

- Class will be broken up into small groups and give one chapter to read. They must summarize the chapter; create a presentation to teach the other groups what they have read. A variety of ways to present the information will be allowed:
 - PowerPoint, Poster board, play, informational commercial etc.

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- **Two days** will be given—one for reading and organizing and one for presentation

Follow the Drinking Gourd by Jeanette Winter (INDIVIDUAL)

The students will have two choices to pick from after reading this together.

- Write a short story from the perspective of a young slave on their journey to freedom.
- Write a poem describing what it must have felt like as a young slave was escaping

I would also ask the students to illustrate what they write. They would be displayed around the room when they are finished.

Activity: Using Additional Books and Websites (INDIVIDUAL)

I will divide the class into two sides the Confederate side and the Union side (I will divide the sides by having the students draw from a hat. One piece of paper will say north one would say south). This is an individual activity and they will either:

- Write a letter to President Lincoln stating their side and why their side is correct in their stance.
- Write a speech in favor of their side.

(See Rubric to see requirements)

Across Five Aprils by Sandra Forrester (Book Club)

- Reading Logs: will be used to write down their predictions, questions, thoughts on the stories be read
 - After each book club discussion and after I assign them the next chapters I will give them a few writing prompts that will help them focus on what they are reading and help them with book club discussion.
- Creative Writing:
(<http://www.smplanet.com/civilwar/civilwar.html#Objectives>)
 - Pretend you are Bill Creighton. Write a letter to Jethro describing prison camp and how you got there. Have your beliefs changed?
 - Imagine that you have been transported through time to the Civil War era. Write a story telling about the adventures you have there. First think about the geographical setting of your story -- did you land in the North or the South? Whom did you

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meet there? What happened next? How does it feel to be in the middle of a civil war? When you have written a first draft of your story, share it with a classmate and talk about ways you could improve the story in the revision stage.

Across Five Aprils Movie

Compare/Contrast--Write a paper showing how the book and movie, *Across Five Aprils*, were alike and how they were different.

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Unit Schedule Weeks 1 and 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Unit Intro: KWL Chart On Civil War Read <i>Pink and Say</i> (Whole Class) Discuss Hand out Writing Folders; discuss expectations Writing Prompt (HW) Interview Questions for Pink or Say	Day # 2 Share Interview questions Introduce 1 st Book Club Book <i>Across Five Aprils</i> . Organize the class into their book clubs. Hand out Reading Log Review about Book Club and Reading Log Expectations HW: Read Ch 1-2 (Due Thursday) Reading Log Prompt	Day # 3 <i>North Star to Freedom</i> (Small Group) Class is broken into groups and given a chapter to read. They will then organize a presentation to the class.	Day # 4 Book Club Discussion (40 minutes) Pull together to discuss (15 minutes) HW: Read Ch 3-5 (Due Monday) Reading Log Prompt	Day # 5 Finish North Star Chapter presentations
Week 2	Day # 6 Book Club Discussion (40 minutes) Pull together to discuss (15 minutes) HW: Read Ch 6-7 (Due Thursday) Reading Log Prompt	Day # 7 Presentations: North Star to Freedom Groups are to take notes on each group's presentation and store in writing folders	Day # 8 Whole Class Read: <i>The Drinking Gourd</i> Discuss In-Class and HW (Due Friday) Introduce Writing Assignment Poem OR story from the perspective of a slave w/ illustrations	Day # 9 Book Club Discussion (40 minutes) Pull together to discuss (15 minutes) HW: Read Ch 8-10 (Due Monday) Reading Log Prompt	Day # 10 Assembly-No Class

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Unit Schedule Weeks 3 and 4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 3	Day # 11 Book Club Discussion (40 minutes) Pull together to discuss (15 minutes) HW: Read Ch 11-12 (Due Wednesday) Creative Writing Prompts (Due Friday) Assign each group to bring in an "end of book" snack/drink to celebrate another successful book club! (Due Wednesday)	Day # 12 Introduction of Creating Writing Assignment (Due Friday) Choice # 1 Pretend you are Bill Creighton. Write a letter to Jethro describing prison camp and how you got there. Have your beliefs changed? Choice # 2 Imagine that you have been transported through time to the Civil War era. Write a story telling about the adventures you have there.	Day # 13 Book Club Discussion (40 minutes) Pull together to discuss (15 minutes) End of Book Party will coincide with the last book club session. Let's Celebrate!	Day #14 Movie: Across Five Aprils Before movie begins explain compare/contrast writing assignment (DUE MONDAY)	Day # 15 Finish <i>Across Five Aprils</i> —extra time will be given for compare contrast writing assignment (DUE MONDAY) QUIZ ON MONDAY
Week 4	Day # 16 <i>Across Five Aprils</i> Quiz (Multiple choice with Short Essay questions)	Day # 17 Persuasive Letter or Speech Activity Introduction <u>Computer Lab</u> <i>A Nation Divided</i> Webquest <i>Love Letters of the Civil War</i> Take notes in Writing Folder on both sides of the issue When finish visit other sites written on the board that also explain both sides.	Day # 18 Persuasive Letter Research Continue Class will be given additional books to help them form their letters. They can work with partners or groups of three. HW: Start Rough Draft of Letter or Speech (Due Tomorrow)	Day #19 Persuasive Letter or Speech editing and revising sessions with peers HW: Final Copy with rough draft (Due Thursday)	Day #20 Presentation of Letters or Speeches (Counts as Participation grade)

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Assessments

Writing:

- Each of the main writing assignments (the creative writing piece, the persuasive writing piece, the compare/ contrast piece) would have similar assessments. However, I only included the persuasive writing assessment in this assignment.
- The Reading Logs will be collected at the end of Book Club and would be counted towards the participation grade. As I look through the logs I would expect to see
 - Predictions, questions, and inferences
 - I would look for complete answers to all writing prompts given during the book club

Reading:

- I would assess reading and comprehension skills through informal observations
- I would also pull students aside that I feel are struggling to question and assist as the book club progresses
- At the end of the book club, I would include a small multiple choice quiz and short essay quiz to assess students comprehension of the novel

Listening:

- I would assess listening through informal observations during book club and presentations
- I watch for questions being asked during book club and presentations
- I would look over notes that were taken during presentations in their writing folder

Group Participation

- I included an example of a rubric I would use to assess group participation.
- During group work I would also use informal observations to assess students

Sharing With Parents

I would make sure that parents are kept up-to-date with their child's progress by sending notes home, graded work home, and posting information on Grade Book Wizard. If I notice a student is struggling or failing I would immediately contact the parents to ensure the student is getting support at home also.

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Persuasive Writing Scoring Guide

COMPONENT	6	5	4	3	2	1
Focus	Takes a clear position and supports it consistently with well-chosen reasons and/or examples.	Takes a clear position and supports it with relevant reasons and/or examples through much of the essay.	Takes a clear position and supports it with relevant reasons and/or examples through much of the essay. There is some development of the essay.	Takes a position and provides uneven support; may lack development in parts or be repetitive OR essay is no more than a well-written beginning.	Takes a position but essay is underdeveloped	Attempts to take a position (addresses topic) but position is very unclear OR takes a position but provides minimal or no support.
Organization	Is focused and well organized, with effective transitions	Is well organized, but may lack some transitions	Is generally organized, but has few or no transitions among sections	Is generally organized but has few or no transitions among sections	Is organized in parts of the essay; other parts are disjointed or lack transitions	Exhibits little or no apparent organization
Sentence Fluency and Word Choice	Consistently exhibits variety in sentence structure and word choice	Exhibits some variety in sentence structure and uses good word choice, sometimes words may be used inaccurately	Most sentences are well constructed but have similar structure. Word choice lacks variety or flair	Sentence structure may be simple and unvaried; word choice is mostly accurate.	Sentences lack formal structure; word choice may be inaccurate.	Sentences run-on and appear incomplete or rambling; word choice may be inaccurate un much of the entire essay.
Conventions	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation are few and do not interfere with understanding.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation do not interfere with understanding.	More frequent errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but they do not interfere with understanding.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation sometimes interfere with understanding	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation Interfere with understanding in much of the essay.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation prevent reader from fully understanding essay.

Taken from: http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson405/PersuasiveWritingScoringGuide.pdf

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Book Club Group Rubric
Participation Grade

Group Member Names

Component					
Stay on Topic					
Makes Intertextual Connections					
Shares ideas related to topic					
Asks Appropriate Questions					
Listens to Discussion					
Builds on Ideas					
Maintains smooth conversations					
Support Ideas with evidence					
Demonstrates Comphrenson					

I will observe each group club while they are discussing the book and put checks by each name and corresponding component when I see it is occurring.

Adapted and taken from: <http://www.planetbookclub.com/teachers/BCsample9.pdf>