

The American Civil War's Impact on the United States and the World

Subjects: Social Studies

Suggested Grade Levels: 6–8

Time Frame: 1 class

Jennifer Bellantoni,

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Catholic School

Overview

This lesson will examine the impact of the American Civil War on Philadelphia and the world.

Connection to Philadelphia World Heritage Tool Kit's Goal

The American Civil War had a great impact economically, culturally, politically, and socially on the United States and the world.

Core Curriculum Standards

Explain how continuity and change have impacted U.S. history as demonstrated in their belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, technology, politics and government, physical and human geography and social organizations.

Objectives

Students will demonstrate an understanding that the American Civil War had a great impact economically, culturally, politically, and socially on the United States and the world, specifically but not limited to Europe and Asia.

Essential Question

What impact did the American Civil War through the years before, during and after, have on the United States, as well as other parts of the world?

Materials Needed

Handouts of excerpts from the following books: *The Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War* and *The American Civil War, Emancipation, and Reconstruction on the World Stage*. (More readings are listed under additional resources.)

Procedure

Step One: Students will learn about the decisions by the Union to blockade the ports of the Southern Confederacy. Afterwards, students will discuss the implications to the South on an economic level. In what way does this affect more than just the Southern Confederacy?

Step Two: Students will read sections from the book *Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War* edited by David Gleeson and Simon Lewis, and answer or discuss the additional questions:

- <http://www.sc.edu/uscpres/books/2014/7325.html>
- 1. How did a War that was only to be fought within the borders of the United States affect the social, political, and economic policies of another country?
- 2. What impact did the positions on slavery and democracy play out on a world stage in a country that was not considered a world power?

Step Three: Students will read the following excerpt from *The American Civil War, Emancipation, and Reconstruction on the World Stage* by Edward L. Ayers, and answer or discuss the additional questions.

- http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/152481.html

An excerpt from *The American Civil War, Emancipation, and Reconstruction on the World Stage*:

“Americans demanded the world’s attention during their Civil War and Reconstruction. Newspapers around the globe reported the latest news from the United States as one vast battle followed another, as the largest system of slavery in the world crashed into pieces, as American democracy expanded to include people who had been enslaved only a few years before.

Both the North and the South appealed to the global audience. Abraham Lincoln argued that his nation’s Civil War “embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man, the question, whether a constitutional republic, or a democracy...can, or cannot, maintain its territorial integrity.” The struggle, Lincoln said, was for a “vast future: a struggle to give all men “a fair chance in the race of life”. Confederates claimed that they were also fighting for a cause of world-wide significance: self-determination. Playing down the centrality of slavery to their new nation, white Southerners built their case of independence on the right of free citizens to determine their political future.

People in other nations could see that the massive struggle in the United States embodied conflicts that had been appearing in different forms throughout the world. Defining nationhood deciding the future of slavery, reinventing warfare for an industrial age, reconstruction a former slave society—all these played out in the American Civil War.

By no means a major power, the United States was nevertheless woven into the life of the world. The young nation touched, directly and indirectly, India and Egypt, Hawaii and Japan, Russia and Canada, Mexico and Cuba, the Caribbean and Brazil, Britain and France. The country was still very much an experiment in 1860, a representative government stretched over an enormous space, held together by law rather than by memory, religion, or monarch. The American Civil War, played out on the brightly lit stage of a new country, would be a drama of world history. How that experiment fared in its great crisis— regardless of what happened—would eventually matter to people everywhere.”

1. What does this mean to the United States?
2. What does this mean to other countries looking in to what is happening within the boundaries of the United States?
3. How do the decisions made about the war help or hurt other countries struggling with the same scenarios?

Outcome/Assessment

This is only one lesson in an entire unit of study on the Causes of the Civil War, the Battles of the Civil War and the impact on a transnational level, as well as Reconstruction. The assessment of the understanding of this information will be through the class discussions as well as Edmodo questions, which will be presented for insights on the day’s lesson.

Additional Resources

Web:

“How America’s Civil War Changed the World” a WSJ article by Fergus Bordewich:
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704101604576249612177206884>

Influence of the American Civil War on countries in Asia:
<http://www.quora.com/What-influence-did-the-american-civil-war-have-on-India-and-the-asian-countries-in-general>

Technology, Industry, and Innovation during the American Civil War:
<http://pacivilwar150.com/Understand/TechnologyIndustry>

Philadelphia’s role in the American Civil War:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia_in_the_American_Civil_War

“How the Civil War Changed the World” a New York Times article:
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/05/19how-the-civil-war-changed-the-world/?_r=0

India, Britain, and America: [http://cwh.ucsc.edu/brooks/India, Britain and America.html](http://cwh.ucsc.edu/brooks/India,_Britain_and_America.html)

The effects of the American Civil War on the British economy:
<http://www.quora.com/How-did-the-american-Civil-War-affect-the-British-economy>

The American Civil War and the British Textile Industry:
<http://www.thefashionhistorian.com/2011/03/american-civil-war-and-the-british-textile.html>

Important Pennsylvanians who fought in the American Civil War:
<http://pacivilwar150.com/Understand/HistoricalFigures/ImportPennsylvanians>

Print:

India-Britain’s Substitute for American Cotton, 1861-1865 by Frenise A. Logan, *The Journal of Southern History*, 1958 Southern Historical Association