The Gathering Storm: The Coming of the Civil War Lesson Plan

HIGH SCHOOL

Approximate Time: 50 minutes

Goal:

Students will gain an understanding of the main causes of the American Civil War.

Objectives:

1. After viewing an exhibit on the period before the American Civil War students will be able to identify three of the main developments of the War.
2. Students will be able to rank the three developments in order of importance and argue why those three developments should be considered the most important.

Materials:

1. The Gathering Storm Exhibit
2. The Gathering Storm Essay (PDF)

Anticipatory Set/Hook:

Ask: How do you think a citizen might be able to tell if their country is going to war? What are some things you think happen before a war? Do you think people happy or unhappy with their situation in life?

Procedure:

Activity 1:

Either view The Gathering Storm Exhibit as a group – projecting the exhibit or print the PDF's. Or have students view the exhibit on their own.

Activity 2:

Discuss what students think the most important development leading up to the war was. Have a few students give their opinion and ask them why they think it's the most important.

Hand out The Gathering Storm Essay and read over the directions: List what you think are the three most important developments leading up to the American Civil War and explain why these three developments should be considered the most important.

Students will have the remainder of class to write their essay.

Closure:

Ask: What do you think will happen next? Do you think people living in that time had a sense of what was coming? What kind of predictions do you think people had about the war at the time, what predictions would you have made?

Assessment in this Lesson:

1. Informal assessment through discussion after viewing the Gathering Storm Exhibit.
2. Completed Gathering Storm Essay, listing their top three developments with an explanation as to why these should be considered the most important.