

THE Civil War Curriculum

by the CIVIL WAR TRUST | Civilwar.org/curriculum

GOAL 2 | LESSON PLAN | HIGH SCHOOL 1861: The Country Goes to War

GRADES: High School

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TIME: 50 minutes

GOAL: Students will be able to discuss the state of the nation before the Civil War, citing specific documents and events.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to identify and sequence events leading up to the Civil War.
2. Students will be able to identify and discuss the relationship of war and technology in the Civil War, focusing on the role of the telegraph, weapons, railroads and ironclads.

MATERIALS:

1. Bingo Review
2. Bingo Review with Teacher Directions
3. Civil War Timeline
4. Civil War Timeline Teacher Version
5. The Country Goes to War PowerPoint
6. Technology Centers Sheets
7. Technology Graphic Organizer
8. Technology in the Civil War

ANTICIPATORY SET/HOOK

1. Hand out *Bingo Review* to review facts from the *Disunion Lesson*.
2. When Bingo is completed, have students write a headline describing the mood of the country in 1858.

3. Ask students to hold up their headline for the class to see and discuss.

PROCEDURE:

Print out the PowerPoint with notes prior to class. There are notes included with the slides that can be on the printed slides, but won't be seen by your students during the presentation.

Activity 1

1. Hand out the *Civil War Timeline*. Students will fill in the blanks of the timeline, using information from class instruction during this lesson.
2. Explain that while slavery had been an issue since the Revolutionary War, the events of the past decade had hardened attitudes about slavery. This set the stage for the election of 1860.
3. Begin *The Country Goes to War PowerPoint* presentation.

Teacher background

- a. Democratic split – Northern Democrats in favor of popular sovereignty nominate Stephen Douglas. Southern Democrats in favor of a federal slave code that would allow slavery everywhere nominated John Breckenridge.
- b. Republicans – Members of the party opposed expansion of slavery in territories but would leave the institution untouched where it currently existed. This sectional party did not run in the South and nominated Abraham Lincoln.
- c. Constitutional Party – This party wanted to uphold the Constitution; nominated John Bell.
- d. The split of the Democratic Party enabled a Republican Party victory.

Activity 2

4. Students will break into four groups to research one of four areas of technological advancement during the Civil War, using the *Technology Centers Sheets*.
 - Railroads
 - Telegraphs
 - Ironclads
 - Weapons
5. Students will record information on the *Technology Graphic Organizer*.
6. Upon completing their work, students will jigsaw with members of other groups to discuss and complete the graphic organizer. Sources can be photocopied for large group use.

CLOSURE:

Hand out *Technology in the Civil War*. On this form, students will rank what they believe are the top two technological achievements that they think will most affect the war.

ASSESSMENT IN THIS LESSON:

1. Informal assessment of Bingo activity, identifying events and compromises that led up to the war.
2. Completed *Timeline*, placing events leading up to the war in chronological order.
3. Informal assessment through cartoon interpretation and PowerPoint discussion questions.
4. Completed *Technology Graphic Organizer*.
5. Completed *Technology in the Civil War*, ranking the most influential technological developments.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Bingo Review

Directions: Select nine words from the Word Bank below. Write one word per box in any order you choose. Swap your Bingo card with the person sitting next to you.

Word Bank

Compromise of 1850

Free labor

Slave labor

California

Missouri

Southern states

Fugitive Slave Act

Kansas – Nebraska Act

36° 30'

Missouri Compromise

Northern states

popular sovereignty



Name: _____

Date: _____

Bingo Review

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Missouri Compromise

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Teacher Directions

Cut out sentence strips below and place in a bag or other container. Pull out one sentence strip at a time and read the sentence aloud. Students will mark the bingo box with the correct answer with an “x.” Game ends with Bingo. Review all sentences and answers.

Answer: Compromise of 1850	This decision also included the Fugitive Slave Act.
Answer: California	The Compromise of 1850 permitted this state to enter the Union as a free state, despite the Compromise of 1820.
Answer: Free labor	Workers receive wages and have an incentive to succeed.
Answer: Fugitive Slave Act	Failure to comply with this law could result in a \$1,000 fine and a six-month prison sentence.
Answer: Missouri	The Compromise of 1820 allowed this state to enter the Union as a slave state.
Answer: Slave labor	The economy of the Southern states relied on this.

Answer: Missouri Compromise	This law set a boundary line for the existence of slavery.
Answer: Northern states	The economy of these states was more industrial.
Answer: 36° 30'	This was the boundary line for slavery set by the Missouri Compromise.
Answer: Kansas–Nebraska Act	This law repealed the Missouri Compromise.
Answer: Southern states	The economy of these states was based on agriculture.
Answer: popular sovereignty	Residents of U.S. territories should be able to decide for themselves if they want to be a free state or a slave state.



Civil War Timeline

- 1787 Constitutional Compromise on _____.
-
- 1820 _____ prohibits slavery above 36°30' in Louisiana Territory, with the exception of Missouri.
-
- 1831 Nat Turner Slave Rebellion
-
- 1831 William Lloyd Garrison publishes *The Liberator*, an abolitionist newspaper.
-
- 1845 Texas admitted to the Union
-
- 1846-1848 War between the United States and Mexico
-
- 1850 Compromise of 1850 includes California entering the Union as a free state. Tougher _____ Law is enacted.
-
- 1852 Publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe raises issue of slavery throughout the country.
-
- 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act causes more sectional tension.
-
- 1856 Preston Brooks of South Carolina attacks Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate with a cane, seriously injuring him, after Sumner's "Crime Against Kansas" speech.
-
- 1857 Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision opens federal territories to slavery and outrages many in the North.
-
- 1859 John Brown's raid on _____ increases tensions.
-
- 1860 A series of fires in Texas during the summer spreads rumors of slave insurrection across the South.
-
- Nov. 1860 Abraham Lincoln elected as the first _____ president
-
- Dec. 20, 1860 The first state to secede from the Union is _____.
-

1861

Jan. 9-Feb. 1	The following states secede:
Feb.-March	Seven Southern states write a constitution for the Confederate States of America in Montgomery, Alabama
March	Lincoln's first inaugural speech states the following:
April 12-13	Confederate bombardment results in the surrender of _____
April 15	Lincoln calls for _____ to suppress the rebellion.
April 17-June 8	In response to Lincoln's call for volunteers, the following four states of the Upper South secede:
May 20	Confederate Congress votes to move the national government from Montgomery, Alabama to _____, Virginia.
July 21	Battle of First Manassas (Bull Run) results in a Confederate victory, which builds confidence in the South and convinces the North the war will be longer and harder than first thought.



Civil War Timeline (Teacher Version)

1787	Constitutional Compromise on slavery .
1820	Missouri Compromise prohibits slavery above 36°30' in Louisiana Territory, with the exception of Missouri.
1831	Nat Turner Slave Rebellion
1831	William Lloyd Garrison publishes <i>The Liberator</i> , an abolitionist newspaper.
1845	Texas admitted to the Union
1846-1848	War between the United States and Mexico
1850	Compromise of 1850 includes California entering the Union as a free state. Tougher Fugitive Slave Law is enacted.
1852	Publication of <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> by Harriet Beecher Stowe raises issue of slavery throughout the country.
1854	Kansas-Nebraska Act causes more sectional tension.
1856	Preston Brooks of South Carolina attacks Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate with a cane, seriously injuring him, after Sumner's "Crime Against Kansas" speech.
1857	Supreme Court's <i>Dred Scott</i> decision opens federal territories to slavery and outrages many in the North.
1859	John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry increases tensions.
1860	A series of fires in Texas during the summer spreads rumors of slave insurrection across the South.
Nov. 1860	Abraham Lincoln elected as the first Republican president
Dec. 20, 1860	The first state to secede from the Union is South Carolina .

1861

Jan. 9-Feb. 1	The following states secede: Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas
Feb.-March	Seven Southern states write a constitution for the Confederate States of America in Montgomery, Alabama
March	Lincoln's first inaugural speech states the following: I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the South were it exists.
April 12-13	Confederate bombardment results in the surrender of Fort Sumter
April 15	Lincoln calls for volunteers to suppress the rebellion.
April 17-June 8	In response to Lincoln's call for volunteers, the following four states of the Upper South secede: Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee
May 20	Confederate Congress votes to move the national government from Montgomery, Alabama to Richmond, Virginia.
July 21	Battle of First Manassas (Bull Run) results in a Confederate victory, which builds confidence in the South and convinces the North the war will be longer and harder than first thought.



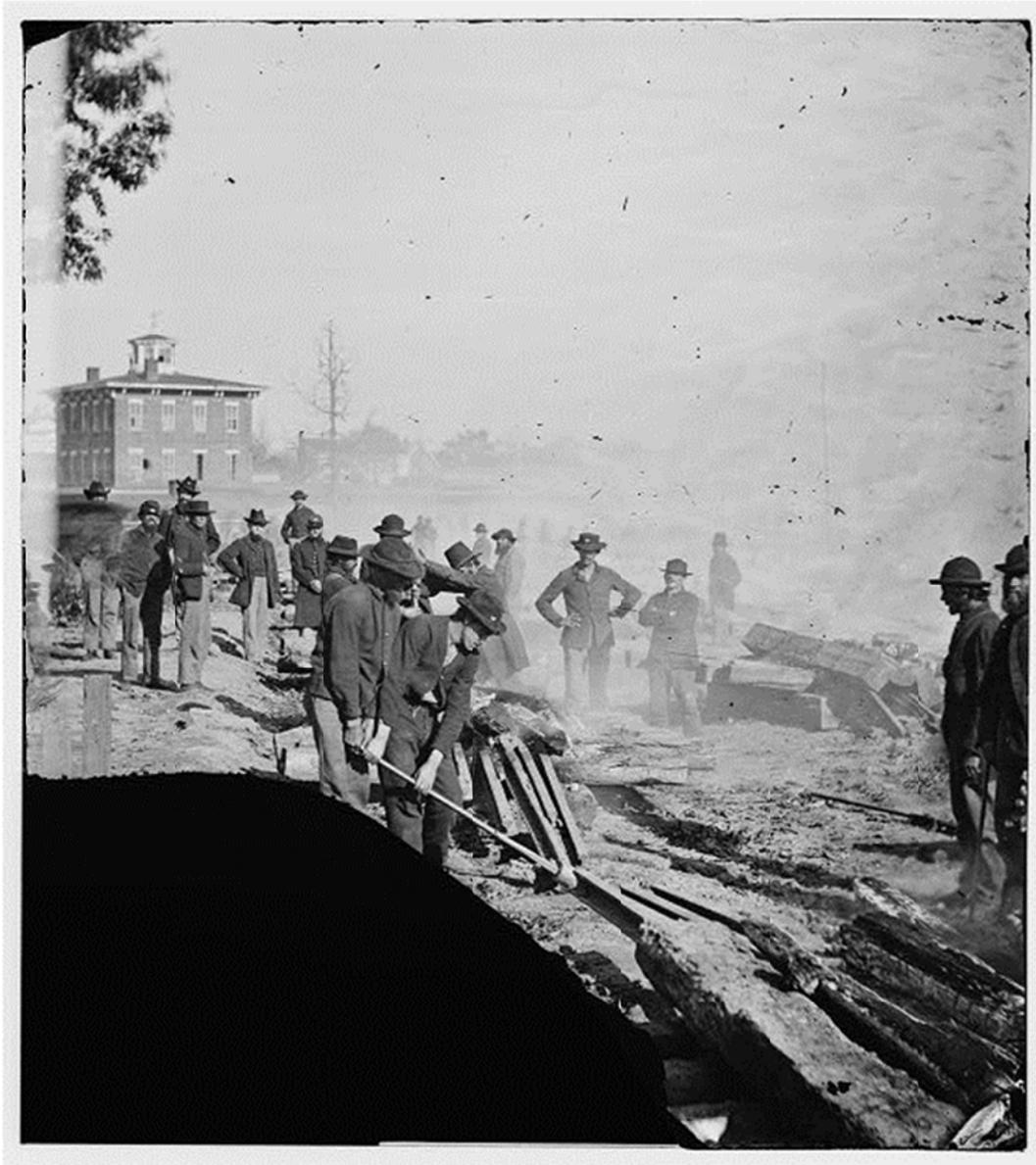
Railroads



Railroads were central to the conduct and outcome of the Civil War. Because railroads allowed for the transportation of men and supplies over great distances and at a speed never before seen in war, they became central to the strategic thinking of both armies. The first battle of the war, for example, took place near the crucial railroad junction at Manassas, Virginia, because both sides recognized its logistical importance. The Battle of Manassas, or Bull Run, was also the first time in history that reinforcements arrived on a battlefield by rail.

Railroads

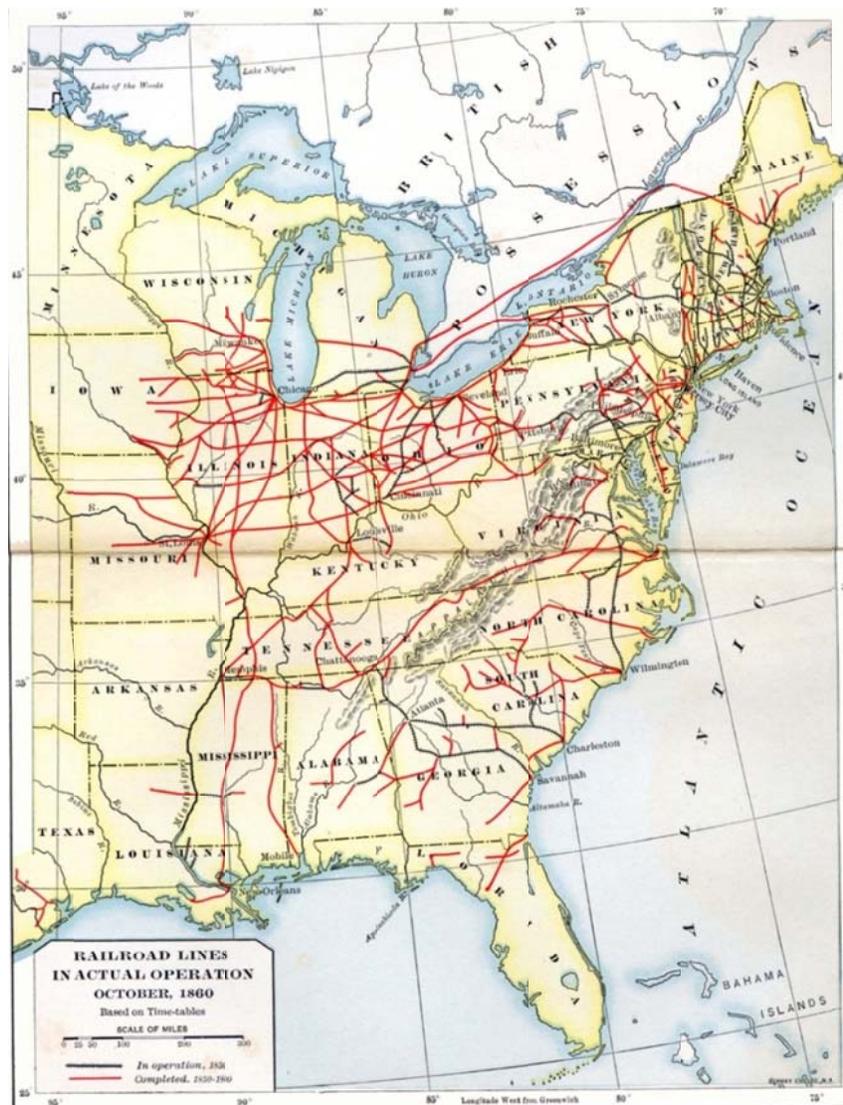
Throughout the war, armies went out of their way to wreck railroads in order to sabotage the enemy. General Sherman's troops were so effective at destroying track that Confederates began calling the wreckage his men left behind – twisted beyond use or repair – “Sherman's neckties.”



Sherman's men destroying Atlanta railroads

Railroads

The North had a distinct advantage when it came to the railroads. In 1860, there were 22,000 miles of track in the Northern states compared to just 9,000 in the South, and the North contained virtually all of the track and locomotive factories. Union armies targeted cities like Corinth, Chattanooga and Atlanta (and Manassas, twice!) because they were crucial Southern railroad junctions, and capturing them would make supplying the Confederate armies with much-needed food, ammunition and reinforcements that much more difficult.



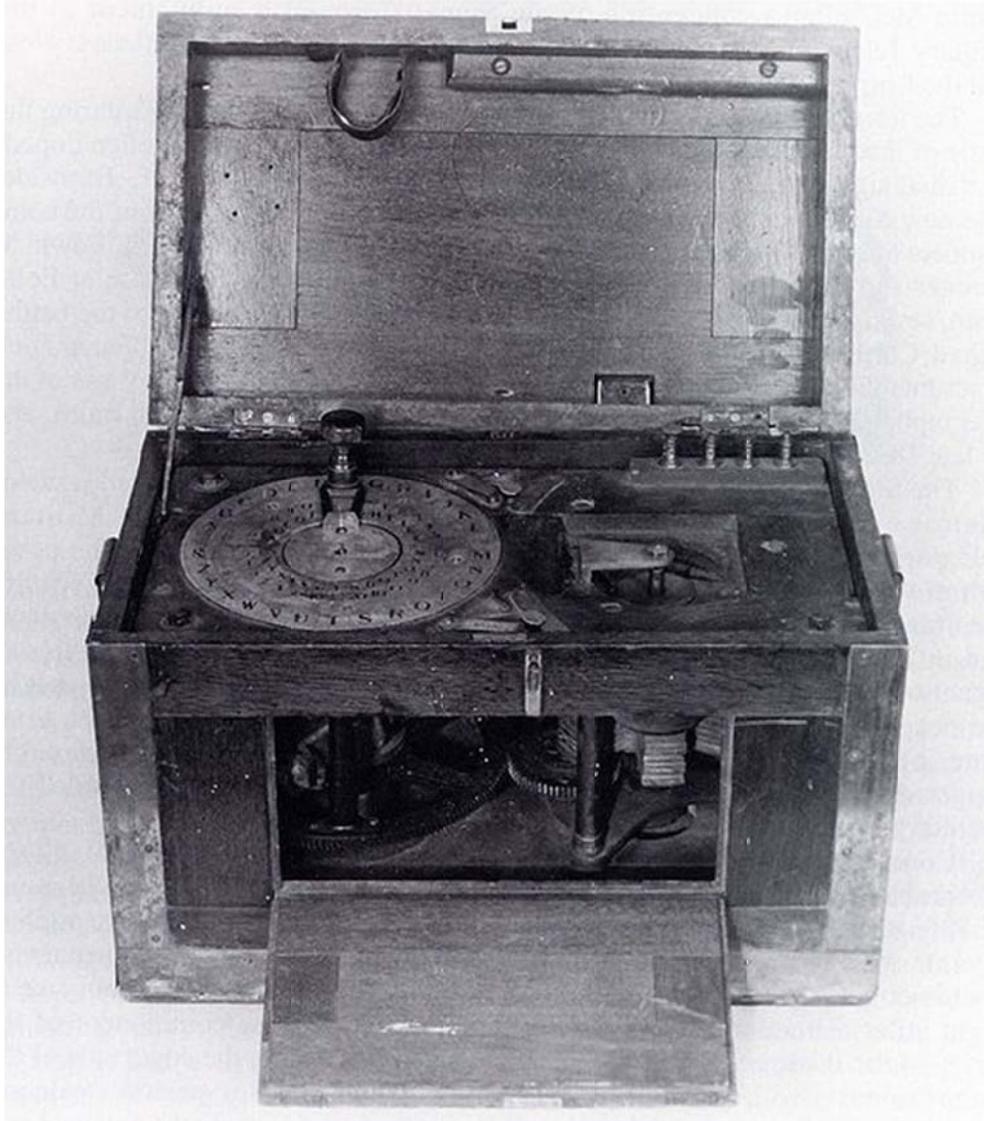
Albert Bushnell Hart, LL.D., *The American Nation Vol. 18* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1907) 62. Retrieved March 1, 2010, from <http://etc.usf.edu/maps/pages/2800/2889/2889.htm>

Telegraphs



The telegraph was a monumental invention of the 19th century, allowing almost instantaneous communication over great distances, and was utilized to great effect during the Civil War. By the end of the war in 1865, the Union Army had strung over 6,000 miles of insulated copper wire. Most of this work was done by the U.S. Military Telegraph Corps, established in 1861 and led by a young Andrew Carnegie, who would go on to become one of the famed 'titans of industry' of the late 19th century. In 1862 alone, the U.S.M.T.C trained over a thousand telegraph operators and sent more than one million messages to and from battlefields across the country.

Telegraphs

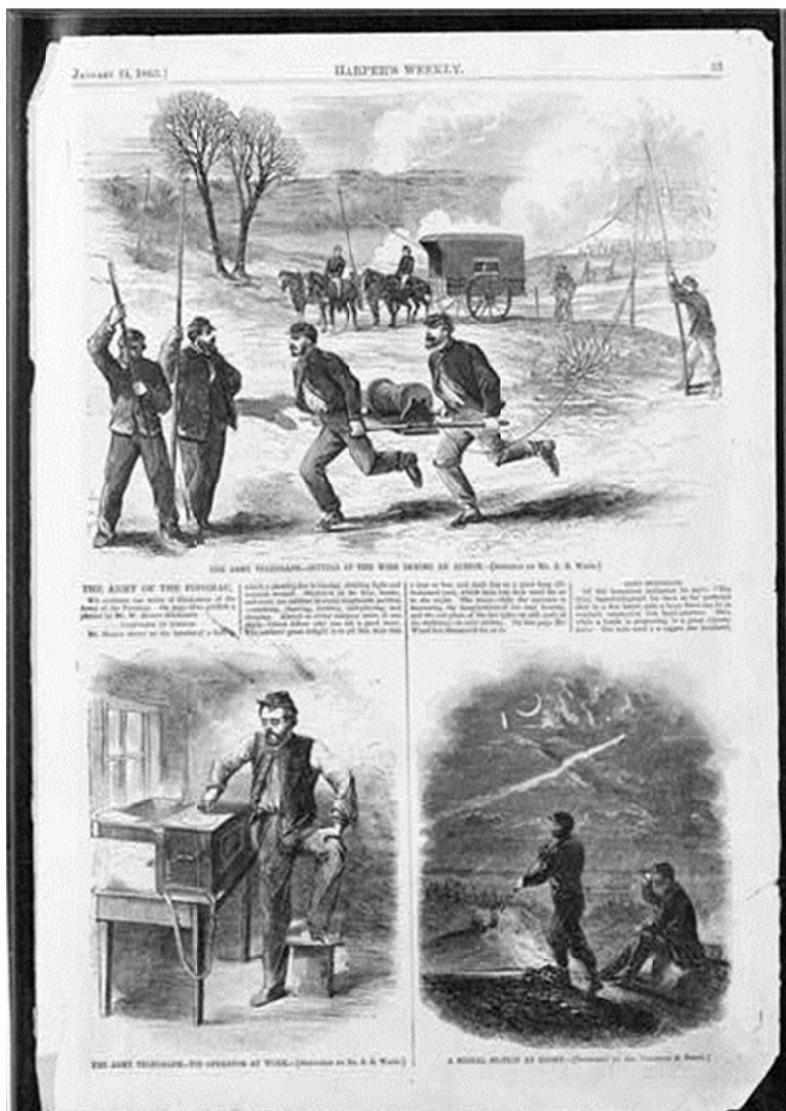


(United States Army Center for Military History)

Telegraphs

An article in *Harper's Weekly* explained, "The machine is a simple one, worked by a handle, which is passed around a dial-plate marked with numerals and the alphabet. By stopping at the necessary letters a message is easily spelled out upon the instrument at the other end of the line, which repeats by a pointer every move on the dial-plate. The whole thing is so simple that any man able to read and write can work it with facility."

Abraham Lincoln frequented the telegraph office in the White House regularly, and used it to communicate directly with commanders in the field, something never done before in wartime, and something that could not be matched by his Southern counterpart, Jefferson Davis, because the Confederacy lacked the industrial ability to string so much wire.



Ironclads



As you can see from the dent above, ironclads like this one, the *U.S.S. Monitor*, were impervious to the sorts of direct hits that might have sunk a wooden ship in the past. The ironclad vessel was a Civil War invention, one of the many technological advances of history accelerated by the crucible of war. When news reached Washington of Confederate efforts to build an ironclad warship, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles feared it not only would effectively disrupt the blockade, but could even steam up the Potomac and shell the White House. Accordingly, he determined the Federal navy needed its own ironclad, to neutralize the threat. Swedish engineer John Ericsson produced a design so ingenious, replete with the world's first rotating gun turret (seen above), Secretary Welles was skeptical whether it could even float and maneuver in the water. Ericsson declared confidently that “the sea would ride over her and she would live in it like a duck.” He was right.

Ironclads



The Onondaga

When the first two ironclads, the Confederate *CSS Virginia* (also known as the *Merrimack*) and the *Monitor*, came to grips at Hampton Roads, Virginia on March 9, 1862, they ushered in a new era in naval warfare, and made wooden fleets everywhere obsolete. The fight was a standoff. The *Monitor* and the *Merrimack* exchanged cannon fire for three hours at point-blank range, but neither was able to sink the other despite landing dozens of direct hits. The iron siding achieved its desired effect. Northern and Southern shipyards set to work building ironclads as quickly as possible.

Ironclads dominated naval operations of the Civil War, and played an especially crucial role in the Union effort to open the Mississippi River, which effectively cut the Confederacy in two and signaled the beginning of the end of the rebellion.

Ironclads



The Battle Between the Monitor and Merrimac – Kurz & Allison; notice the Union flagship Minnesota sinking as the two ironclads exchange fire at close range

Weapons

The Civil War saw the introduction of a new breed of technologically advanced weaponry. Whereas in wars past the 'effective range' of a musket was a scant 80 yards, in the Civil War the vast majority of soldiers used rifles which had an effective range of up to 400 yards, and were much more accurate. The increased range and accuracy of rifles changed the way war was fought. Attacking a well-entrenched position became a much more desperate proposition, because the defenders could open fire much earlier and with greater precision.



Springfield Model 1861: The most common firearm of the Civil War

Weapons

During the Civil War, rifles not only became more accurate, cannons became larger. Under the supervision of Army officer Thomas Rodman, the first 15-inch gun (shown below) was completed in 1861 and mounted at Fort Monroe, Virginia.



Weapons

Another Civil War innovation was the repeating rifle. The Spencer carbine could fire seven shots in thirty seconds, prompting one Union soldier to write that, “I think the Johnnys [Confederates] are getting rattled; they are afraid of our repeating rifles. They say we are not fair, that we have guns that we load up on Sunday and shoot all the rest of the week.”



Spencer carbine (Smithsonian)

The North enjoyed most of the technological advances that were made during the Civil War, for the simple reason that it had the greater industrial capacity.

Many scholars maintain that one of the principal reasons for the massive casualties that characterized the Civil War is that antiquated military tactics had not caught up to advances made in military technology.



Technology Graphic Organizer

Directions: Use the available resources to find information about your assigned technological development. List a minimum of three facts, then make a conclusion about how the technology was used during the Civil War. You will share your information with other centers at the end of the activity.

Railroads

Fact 1:

Fact 2:

Fact 3:

Conclusion:

Telegraph

Fact 1:

Fact 2:

Fact 3:

Conclusion:

Ironclads

Fact 1:

Fact 2:

Fact 3:

Conclusion:

Weapons

Fact 1:

Fact 2:

Fact 3:

Conclusion:



Technology in the Civil War

Rank what you believe will be the top two technological achievements that will most affect the war's outcome.

1. _____

Why?

2. _____

Why?
