

Civil War Reader's Theater Lesson Plan

BY THE CIVIL WAR TRUST

Grades: 4-8

Length of Time: Approximately three, 50 minute class meeting

Goals:

By taking part in the dialogue of a similar struggle students will begin to appreciate the difficult decisions that were made during the Civil War on both the Union and Confederate side.

Objectives:

1. After reading their parts of the play through approximately 5 times, the students will be able to read aloud their part with expression and fluidity.
2. After reading through the play two times students will be able to answer 4 comprehension questions related to the reading correctly.

Materials:

1. Copy of the play script, either **elementary** or **middle school**
2. Highlighters
3. United States flag

Procedure:

1. Teachers should read the script first, and give any background knowledge students will need to understand the historical context of the play. For example, in Comedy of Secession, explain 19th century manners, schools, and events leading up to the Civil War.
2. Read through the play together one time as a group
3. Assign characters to students

4. Have students highlight their lines.
5. Have students practice the play on their own either for homework or during independent work time. Repeat as necessary.
6. Gather students together to read the play together with each person reading their own parts.
7. Read through the play again this time adding in the entrances and exits as well as movements and facial expressions.
8. Throughout the reading process ask comprehension questions to be sure they are meeting the objective.
9. Invite other classes to come view the play, invite parents, or record the play for the class to watch later.

Closure:

Why did these children want to leave the school? Would you leave if you felt you were being treated unfairly? How else might you fix this problem?

Assessment:

Check to make sure the objectives were met.

Modification Ideas:

1. Have students rehearse with partners
2. Create two casts and do the play twice so everyone has a part
3. Print the students' lines in a bigger font and highlight for them