

Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about the Civil War. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical American history class.

★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

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INTRODUCTION

★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- *A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of American History*

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- *Based on primary or secondary sources*

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone.

- *Brief tasks promoting historical literacy*

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the students' mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- *Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments*

A BASIC and an ADVANCED version of each assessment are provided. The BASIC Assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The ADVANCED Assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the BASIC version.

- *Easy to use both as learning and assessment tools*

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess student historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- *Evaluating student responses*

Brief but specific suggestions are provided defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

The Civil War Assessment 1

Basic Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8

★ Key Ideas and Details

1. (6–8) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

★ Using this Assessment

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The Civil War: Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should note that Hughes includes a number of boastful statements by his master, such as “I can whip a half dozen Yankees with my pocket knife.” He also has an amusing description of his master’s inability to hit a target with his pistol. Finally, he makes known that his master did not have the courage to actually fight, but purchased a substitute to go in his place, something wealthy men could do. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should cite details indicating that overconfidence was widespread in both the North and South. Each side underestimated the courage or skill of its opponents. Each expected an easy and quick victory with little sacrifice required. Document 2 also makes it clear how vastly more destructive the Civil War turned out to be than anyone expected. In general, answers should describe Document 2 as confirming that the individual case described in Document 1 was typical of a much wider pattern.

*Student Handout***The Civil War: Assessment 1**

Directions: This exercise asks you to read a primary source document and a secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Document 1: A Primary Source

The war had been talked of for some time, but at last it came. When the rebels fired upon Fort Sumter, then great excitement arose. The next day when I drove Boss to town, he went into the store of one Williams, a merchant, and when he came out, he stepped to the carriage, and said: "What do you think? Old Abraham Lincoln has called for four hundred thousand men to come to Washington immediately. Well, let them come; we will make a breakfast of them. I can whip a half dozen Yankees with my pocket knife." This was the chief topic everywhere. Soon after this Boss bought himself a six shooter. I had to mould the bullets for him, and every afternoon he would go out to practice. By his direction, I fixed a large piece of white paper on the back fence, and in the center of it put a large black dot. At this mark he would fire away, expecting to hit it; but he did not succeed well. He would sometimes miss the fence entirely, the ball going out into the woods beyond. Each time he would shoot I would have to run down to the fence to see how near he came to the mark. When he came very near to it—within an inch or so, he would say laughingly: "Ah! I would have got him that time." (Meaning a Yankee soldier.) There was something very ludicrous in this pistol practice of a man who boasted that he could whip half a dozen Yankees with a jackknife. Every day for a month this business, so tiresome to me, went on. Boss was very brave until it came time for him to go to war, when his courage oozed out, and he sent a substitute; he remaining at home as a "home guard." One day when I came back with the papers from the city, the house was soon ringing with cries of victory. Boss said: "Why, that was a great battle at Bull Run. If our men had only known, at first, what they afterwards found out, they would have wiped all the Yankees out, and succeeded in taking Washington.

Source Information: This document is an account of one former slave's memories of the outbreak of the Civil War. This excerpt is adapted from Louis Hughes, *Thirty Years a Slave: From Bondage to Freedom. The Institution of Slavery as Seen on the Plantation and in the Home of the Planter* (Milwaukee: South Side Printing Company, 1897), pages 111–113. The entire book is available online at http://books.google.com/books?id=hm4EAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

The Civil War Assessment 7

Advanced Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–12

★ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 7. (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

★ Using this Assessment

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The Civil War: Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should use the documents to support the basic idea that the war devastated the South and left it greatly weakened economically. Document 1 shows a dramatic drop in Southern output after 1860 even as Northern output continued to grow. That the South's output had not recovered its 1860 level by 1880 shows how long-term the impact of the war was. Document 2 vividly suggests the destructive nature of the fighting, both in human and in economic terms. It and Document 3 call attention to the fact that this destruction was concentrated in the South. Both are evidence of short-term destruction; though it is easy to infer from them that it would take a long time to rebuild what was being destroyed. Acceptable answers to the second assessment question may vary. Document 2 and Document 3 have a local focus only, it is true. However Dora Lunt's account does make it clear that a vast army was passing through and was probably causing destruction all along its route. Answers using the source information for Document 3 should be able to infer how wide in scale the destruction in Atlanta and south of Atlanta was in this last phase of the Civil War.

The Civil War: Assessment 7

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer two questions focused on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 7: (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Document 1: A Primary Source Table

Commodity Output Per Capita by Region (in 1879 dollars)

Years	Outside the South	The South
1860	\$74.8	\$77.7
1870	\$81.5	\$47.6
1880	\$105.8	\$61.5

Source Information: This table shows the value of annual per capita economic output in two regions for three different years. That is, it is a measure of the goods produced in a year, on average, per individual. It shows this figure for the U.S. outside the South and in the South itself. The table is adapted from one in Gary M. Walton and Hugh Rockoff's *History of the American Economy* (Mason, OH: South Western Cengage Learning, 2010), p. 248. The book can be accessed online at http://books.google.com/books?id=lyhl1q_E4G0C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Document 2: A Primary Source

November 19–20: Sherman himself and a greater portion of his army passed my house today. All day, as the sad moments rolled on, were they passing not only in front of my house, but from behind. They tore down my garden palings, made a road through my back-yard and lot field, driving their stock and riding through, tearing down my fences and desolating my home—wantonly doing it when there was no necessity for it. Such a day, if I live to the age of Methuselah, may God spare me from ever seeing again!

As night drew its sable curtains around us, the heavens from every point were lit up with flames from burning buildings. Without dinner and supper as we were, it was nothing in comparison with the fear of being driven out homeless to the dreary woods. Nothing to eat! I could give my guard no supper, so he left us. . . .

My Heavenly Father alone saved me from the destructive fire. My carriage-house had in it eight bales of cotton, with my carriage, buggy, and harness. On top of the cotton were some carded cotton rolls, a hundred pounds or more. These were thrown out of the blanket in which they were, and a large twist of the rolls taken and set on fire, and thrown into the boat of my carriage, which was close up to the cotton bales. Thanks to my God, the cotton only burned over, and then went out. Shall I ever forget the deliverance?

To-night, when the greater part of the army had passed, it came up very windy and cold. My room was full, nearly, with the negroes and their bedding. They were afraid to go out, for my women could not step out of the door without an insult from the Yankee soldiers. They lay down on the floor; Sadai [Mrs. Lunt's nine-year-old daughter] got down and under the same cover with Sally, while I sat up all night, watching every moment for the flames to burst out from some of my buildings. The two guards came into my room and laid themselves by my fire for the night. I could not close my eyes, but kept walking to and fro, watching the fires in the distance and dreading the approaching day, which, I feared, as they had not all passed, would be but a continuation of horrors. . . .

About ten o'clock they had all passed save one, who came in and wanted coffee made, which was done, and he, too, went on. A few minutes elapsed, and two couriers riding rapidly passed back. Then, presently, more soldiers came by, and this ended the passing of Sherman's army by my place, leaving me poorer by thirty thousand dollars than I was yesterday morning.

Source Information: Dolly Sumner Lunt was born in Maine, but she moved to Georgia where she taught school and married a plantation owner. Her husband died in 1858, and Dolly continued to run the plantation. This document is an excerpt adapted from her diary, *A Woman's Wartime Journal, An Account of the Passage over a Georgia Plantation of Sherman's Army on the March to the Sea* (New York: The Century Co., 1918), pages 29–34. The entire diary can be accessed online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/burge/lunt.html>.

*Student Handout***Document 3: A Visual Primary Source**

DESTRUCTION OF THE DEPOTS, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND MANUFACTORIES AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA, November 15, 1864.



THE FOURTEENTH AND TWENTIETH CORPS MOVING OUT OF ATLANTA, November 15, 1864.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction Number: LC-USZ62-127598.

Source Information: The campaigns of General William Tecumseh Sherman in 1864 were among the most destructive of the war. They included the conquest and burning of Atlanta, Georgia, and Sherman's "March to the Sea" through Georgia. On that march, Sherman's 65,000 soldiers burned crops, farms, and plantations in a deliberate effort to defeat and demoralize the entire population. This wood engraving shows the destruction of the depots, public buildings, and manufacturing plants in Atlanta, Georgia, November 15, 1864.

Assessment Questions

1. How do all three of these documents help in assessing both the short-term and the long-term impact of the Civil War on the South?
2. One document is about the South in general. The other two are not. Does that mean the documents cannot be used together? Why or why not?