



Blue or Gray?

Perspectives in The Civil War



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Grade Level	8th Grade	Time Frame	3-5 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	180 minutes
Course	U.S. History		

Essential Question

Why do people fight? What is worth fighting for?

Summary

In this lesson about perspectives in the Civil War, students will participate in a role-playing activity to become familiar with the motives and points of view of various key figures in the Civil War; analyze each figure in greater depth; participate in a close reading and annotation activity involving primary source materials from the Civil War, then form groups to share the knowledge they've acquired from the readings; and use a template to create a Two-Voice Poem with emphasis on the views of marginalized or traditionally underrepresented historical groups. This lesson includes optional modifications for distance learning. Resources for use in Google Classroom are included.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a Historical Mingle activity to explore different historical points of view and key figures in the Civil War.

Explore

Students discuss their roles from the Historical Mingle and complete a graphic organizer summarizing each figure's significance.

Explain

Students read primary source documents from the Civil War era and participate in Why-Lighting and Jigsaw activities to practice close reading and annotation skills. Then, they share their knowledge with each other in groups.

Extend

Students write Two-Voice Poems using a template and focusing on traditionally underrepresented historical groups.

Evaluate

Students submit their Two-Voice Poems and/or graphic organizers as assessments for the lesson.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices (8th Grade))

8.11.3: Evaluate the impact and contributions of specific groups in the Civil War including free and enslaved African Americans, American Indians, women, and immigrants.

Attachments

- [Civil War Primary Source Reading Packet—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Civil War Primary Source Reading Packet—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Civil War Primary Source Reading Packet—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Civil War Primary Source Reading Packet—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Historical Mingle Activity Cards—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Historical Mingle Activity Cards—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Historical Mingle Activity Cards—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Historical Mingle Activity Cards—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Jigsaw Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Jigsaw Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Jigsaw Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Jigsaw Graphic Organizer—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Blue or Gray.pptx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Rubric—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Rubric—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Rubric—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Rubric—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Template—Blue or Gray - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Template—Blue or Gray - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Template—Blue or Gray.docx](#)
- [Two-Voice Poem Template—Blue or Gray.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Historical Mingle Activity Cards (attached, one or two sets per class)
- Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer (attached, one per student)
- Civil War Primary Source Readings Packet (attached, one per student)
- Jigsaw Graphic Organizers (attached, one per student)
- Two-Voice Poem Templates (attached, one per student)
- Two-Voice Poem Rubrics (attached, one per student, optional)
- Highlighters
- Pens/pencils

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

Before you begin this portion of the lesson, print and cut out the attached **Historical Mingle Activity Cards**. You'll need enough cards for each student to have one character. Consider printing the cards on heavy paper or card stock so they can be used again in the future.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Begin with **slide 1** and introduce the title, then move to the lesson's Essential Questions on **slide 2**: *Why do people fight? What is worth fighting for?* Ask students to, over the course of this lesson, think about these questions in relation to the U.S. Civil War and the roles and motivations of various key figures in that conflict. **Slide 3** introduces the Lesson Objectives. Address these expectations with your students to prepare them for their learning.

Tell students that they will be handed a card with a name, a description, and (in some cases) a photograph. Distribute the prepared Historical Mingle Activity Cards randomly, one to each member of the class, and introduce the [Historical Mingle](#) learning strategy on **slide 4**. Ask students to read the description carefully and think about how they can assume the role of the character on their card. Give students 2–3 minutes to read through their roles and determine how they will present themselves, as outlined on **slide 5**.

Teacher's Note: Organizing The Historical Mingle

There are a total of eleven Historical Mingle Activity Cards. You may consider splitting the class in half and duplicating the number of cards on different colored paper. Then, invite students to "mingle" with others who have the same colored cards. Also, some of the cards have photos, while some do not. Invite students whose cards do not include a picture to imagine how their character appeared during the Civil War.

Teacher's Note: Role Playing

It may be helpful to remind students to assume their roles in non-confrontational or non-stereotypical ways. The goal is to learn, not to offend.

Once students have assumed their roles, invite them to get up from their seats, seek out another character in the class, introduce themselves, and mingle. Give students 2–3 minutes to mingle with their partner, then ask them to find a new partner. Continue until students have mingled with three to four partners. If students struggle with asking questions, display **slide 6** during the activity. This list of general questions should prompt the respondent to consider their role during the Civil War. After students have visited with several other historical figures, ask them to return to their seats.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

For online or distance learning, consider having your students introduce their historical figures in a quick video using an application such as [Flip](#). Download all attachments to use this lesson in [Google Classroom](#).

Explore

Distribute a copy of the attached **Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer** to each student.

Move to the discussion instructions on **slide 7**. Have students debrief and discuss the Historical Mingle. Use **slides 8–18** to guide the discussion. As you move to each slide, ask the student(s) who played this role to respond to the questions shown. As students answer and discuss these roles, the class should fill in the Historical Mingle Graphic Organizer.

Teacher's Note: Strategies For Brainstorming

As students are filling out their graphic organizers, encourage students to circle, highlight, or underline any words or trends that jump out to them. These annotations will help students in the discussion phase.

After all of the roles have been discussed, move to **slide 19**. Ask students to analyze their graphic organizers for any trends that they see and try to brainstorm and identify reasons why each person would fight for one side or the other.

Once students have analyzed the roles for trends, ask students to share out. Move to **slide 20**. Invite students to share their thoughts about each historical figures' significance and motivation. You may also wish to use the space provided on slide 20, or a similar whiteboard space, to jot down important shared ideas for the class to note.

Explain

Pass out copies of the attached **Civil War Primary Source Reading Packets** to students, along with highlighters.

Primary source documents are first-person historical or eyewitness accounts, as well as pamphlets, speeches, posters and other historical records that are original to a particular time or event. Each of the documents in this packet represents an account from the Civil War era. Explain to students that they will be responsible for reading and becoming an expert on one document in the packet.

Teacher's Note: Reading Level And Authentic Language

Because these primary source documents are original to the Civil War era and unedited, their reading level and length varies, and the language can be unusual or difficult to follow for some students. You may want to scan the documents and assign the longer or more difficult readings to students with higher-level reading skills, or scaffold the reading by partnering students. Because there are 11 readings, you should be able to pair students on some of the texts in an average-sized classroom.

After assigning student(s) to each document, display **slide 21** and introduce the [Why-Lighting](#) strategy for text annotation. As students highlight the important facts in their assigned document, also have them make notes about in the document margin about why they chose to highlight that particular information. Allow ample time for students to read and consider their documents, highlight, and make notations.

When everyone has completed the Why-Lighting strategy, assign students to groups. Be sure there is only one representative of each reading per group. Since there are 11 readings, you might only have two large groups in your class. Once students are grouped, move to **slide 22** and distribute a copy of the attached **Jigsaw Graphic Organizer** handout to each student. Introduce the [jigsaw](#) reading strategy to the class. The purpose of the jigsaw strategy is to have each student, who has become an expert on their assigned reading during the Why-Lighting activity, reveal their acquired knowledge with their classmates. Students share responsibility for each others' learning while developing group communication and close-reading skills.

Invite students, now that they are the experts about their assigned documents, to teach the rest of the group what they've learned. Ask group members to fill out the corresponding portion of their Jigsaw Graphic Organizers as each student discusses their reading.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

To make this activity accessible for online or distance learners, you may choose to have students read all of the articles instead of using the jigsaw strategy. You might also consider choosing just one of the articles to focus on. If you prefer to keep the jigsaw strategy, you can invite students to share their assigned sections of the reading in a discussion board on a web-based platform (e.g., Google Classroom). Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

Extend

Next, introduce the [Two-Voice Poem](#) strategy and ask students to use it to showcase the perspectives of two different groups during the Civil War. Display **slide 23** and hand out the attached **Two-Voice Poem template** to students.

Optional: Scaffolding Instruction

If you have students who love writing, consider letting them write the poem without a template. If you have students who struggle with writing poems, consider pairing students and have them write a collaborative poem.

Ask students to select at least one group that is not traditionally represented in discussions about the Civil War, such as women, immigrants, African Americans (free or enslaved), or Native Americans.

Students may choose to refer to their Jigsaw Graphic Organizers to find inspiration for the content of their two-voice poems.

Two-Voice Poem Rubric

In the attachments, you will find a **Two-Voice Poem Rubric**. You may choose to share this with students in advance of writing their poem to set the expectations for an exemplary assignment.

Evaluate

You may have students turn in their Jigsaw Graphic Organizers and/or Two-Voice Poems to be used as formative assessments for the lesson.

Resources

- Free Photos and images. (n.d.). Union soldiers capture Vicksburg during the American Civil War. Retrieved from <https://www.goodfreephotos.com/historical-battles/american-civil-war/union-soldiers-capture-vicksburg-during-the-american-civil-war.jpg.php>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Historical Mingle. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/ed4bc73102cfd13e3a18ee87202e7ee>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f507c1b8>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Two-Voice Poem. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f50611a8>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-Lighting. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505e7d5>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google Classroom. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/628>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Flip. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1075>