

SOURCE #1:

The War Begins

Fort Sumter, which was guarded by Union troops, is located on an island in the mouth of Charleston Harbor. Confederate forces protested against the Union's presence so close to Charleston. Major Robert Anderson, the Union leader at Fort Sumter, informed President Lincoln that the fort had only six weeks of supplies remaining. A ship was sent to resupply the fort but was forced by the Confederates to turn away.

On April 11 Confederate Brigadier General P. G. T. Beauregard demanded the fort's surrender. Major Anderson refused. At 4:30 a.m. on April 12, Confederates began firing on Fort Sumter. Their assault continued for 34 hours. Abner Doubleday, the man erroneously credited with inventing baseball, was second in command of the Union forces at Fort Sumter. Doubleday ordered the first Union gunfire of the **Civil War**. Despite the exchange of fire, no one was killed in the battle. Anderson surrendered the fort on April 14. The first battle of the Civil War was a Confederate victory.

Shortly after the attack on Fort Sumter, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina seceded from the Union and joined the Confederate States of America. U.S. army General **Robert E. Lee** resigned his commission and returned to his home state of Virginia, where he became the leader of Confederate Virginia's military forces.

From Discovery Education Techbook, 9.4

SOURCE #2

Bull Run

The first major battle of the [Civil War](#) occurred on July 21, 1861, near Manassas, Virginia, and a creek named [Bull Run](#). The fighting was about 25 miles from Washington—so close that hundreds of people packed picnic lunches and went to the battlefield to watch. It was a battle between two inexperienced armies that shattered the expectation of a brief, bloodless war. The Civil War was neither. The [First Battle of Bull Run](#) was a physically and mentally exhausting bloody combat that lasted all day, leaving 847 men dead and many more wounded.

Manassas was a valuable location because it was a railroad junction. Union General Irvin McDowell planned an attack using 30,000 Union soldiers against 24,000 Confederate soldiers commanded by General P. G. T. Beauregard. Both of the leaders were inexperienced in battle, but the Union general made the more serious mistakes.

McDowell's plan was overly complicated, and it was doomed because the maps on which he based it were inaccurate. Union commanders sent smaller groups into the combat instead of using entire regiments. This eliminated the Union's initial numeric advantage. During the day Confederate reinforcements arrived by rail, fresh for battle, demonstrating the advantage provided by the railroads and the value of using resources wisely. The battle ended when the Union army and its leaders ran back to Washington in a disorganized retreat. The Confederates had won the first major Civil War battle.

General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson made a name for himself in this battle. A former professor at Virginia Military Institute, Jackson displayed his courage by facing the repeated enemy charges “like a stone wall.” Jackson continued to earn recognition in important battles and became a hero throughout the Confederacy.

From Discovery Education Techbook, 9.4

SOURCE #3

Shiloh

The Union Army began the western part of the [Anaconda Plan](#) in Tennessee. Forces led by Union General [Ulysses S. Grant](#) planned to proceed through west Tennessee to begin to take control of the Mississippi River. On the morning of April 6, 1862, the Confederates attacked an unprepared Union camp at Shiloh, in southwestern Tennessee. The two days of the bloody [Battle of Shiloh](#) resulted in more than 23,000 casualties, the most casualties caused in any battle in American history at that time.

Although the Confederates surprised the Union and won the first day of fighting, the Union recovered on the second day and was able to avoid being pushed out of its position.

From Discovery Education Techbook, 9.4

SOURCE #4

Antietam

Despite the Union's advantages, in 1862 the Civil War was not going well for the Union. The results on the battlefield were often unclear and in some cases disastrous. To many observers, the Union's military and political leaders seemed ineffective. Hoping to further demoralize residents of the Northern states and force the Union's acceptance of the Confederacy, in the late summer of 1862, Confederate General **Robert E. Lee** invaded the Union through Maryland.

On September 17, Union General **George McClellan** attacked Lee's forces near the western Maryland town of Sharpsburg. At the resulting **Battle of Antietam**, McClellan's armies managed to repel Lee's invasion. But instead of pursuing Lee and earning a more decisive victory, McClellan did nothing, even though his army was twice as large as Lee's. President Lincoln was not happy with McClellan's performance and accused him of having "the slows." Later in the year, the president removed General McClellan from command. But the Union had achieved the victory on the battlefield the president had been waiting for.

SOURCE #5

The Emancipation Proclamation

In response to the battle of [Antietam](#), on September 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued a preliminary Proclamation of Emancipation:

[O]n the first day of January in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

—Proclamation of Emancipation, September 22, 1862

As promised, Lincoln later issued a final [Emancipation Proclamation](#) on January 1, 1863. It is important to note that the Emancipation Proclamation did not end slavery in the United States or in any areas where the federal government could enforce its terms. Because Lincoln wanted to avoid hostility in the border states, the proclamation did not apply to the slave states that remained in the Union. Emancipation applied only to the states that had seceded, who were already ignoring U.S. laws. Emancipation also did not apply in Confederate territory that the Union Army already controlled. As a result, Tennessee and parts of Louisiana and Virginia were exempted. Secretary of State William Seward said, “We show our sympathy with slavery by emancipating slaves where we cannot reach them and holding them in bondage where we can set them free.”

But the Emancipation Proclamation was an important step in adding the abolition of slavery to the Union’s original wartime objective of preserving the Union. Though imperfect, it was the federal government’s most decisive statement against slavery in the nation’s history. It encouraged African Americans to support the Union and authorized them to serve in the Union’s army and navy.

After the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, as Union forces moved into Confederate territory, many enslaved African Americans freed themselves by seeking the protection of the Union Army and traveling with it. In 1863 and 1864, thousands of emancipated slaves volunteered to serve in the Union Army. By the end of the Civil War, about 179,000 African American men fought for the Union Army, and about 19,000 served in the Navy. One example of African American heroism was William Harvey Carney, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions of protecting the U.S. flag, despite multiple wounds, during the Battle of Fort Wagner in 1863. When he returned to Union lines, Carney modestly stated “Boys, I only did my duty. The old flag never touched the ground.”

Other enslaved African Americans demanded pay for their work. In this they were obeying the president, whose Emancipation Proclamation said, “And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.”

The Emancipation Proclamation gave the Union war effort a moral clarity. It helped convince European countries not to support the [Confederate States of America](#), it motivated the Union, and it demoralized Confederates. It made clear that the war was not just about politics, nor was it about defending the Southern homeland. Confederate soldiers were fighting for the right to keep enslaved people, even though many of them were not wealthy enough to own any themselves.

From Discovery Education Techbook, 9.4

SOURCE #6

Gettysburg

*What happened at Gettysburg?***The Battle**

Several battles and skirmishes occurred in the months after [Antietam](#). Confederate General Stonewall Jackson was wounded at the Battle of Chancellorsville, in Virginia, in May 1863. Confederate General Lee said, “He has lost his left arm; but I have lost my right arm.” Jackson died a few days later of pneumonia. Lee wrote, “It is a terrible loss. I do not know how to replace him.” But a Confederate victory at Chancellorsville convinced Lee to attempt a second invasion of Union territory.

In June, Confederate General Lee led his army of almost 72,000 men into Pennsylvania. Lee invaded the North to gather supplies for his army and because he hoped a major victory in Union territory would make the Union lose the will to fight. This invasion led to the [Battle of Gettysburg](#), a three-day battle from July 1 to July 3, 1863. The Battle of Gettysburg was critical because it would determine whether Lee’s invasion of the North would be successful.

Union forces led by General George Meade occupied Cemetery Ridge, the high ground. On the first day of the battle, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain successfully led a charge down Little Round Top, a nearby hill, to capture nearly 100 Confederate soldiers and prevent their advances on the left flank, or side. On the third day, Confederate General Lee ordered Officer George Edward Pickett and two other generals to lead their divisions up the hill, directly into enemy fire. Pickett’s Charge was a disaster for the Confederates. In the end, the three-day Battle of Gettysburg caused more than 51,000 casualties, including close to 8,000 killed. Confederate General Lee’s army was seriously weakened, and his second, and final, attempt to invade the North was a failure. The Union had a clear victory. The tide of the war would continue to flow in the Union’s favor.

The Memorial

Several months later, on November 19, 1863, a cemetery was dedicated at the site of the Battle of Gettysburg. President Lincoln was the second speaker that day, following a two-hour speech. His simple address lasted only two minutes. He spoke with a serious and solemn tone about the soldiers who had fallen. He invoked the Declaration of Independence and its principles of liberty and equality in the proposition that “all men are created equal.” He linked the [Civil War](#) to the American Revolution, reinforcing the purpose of the Civil War as a “new birth of freedom” and equality for the nation. Instead of just focusing on preserving the union of government, Lincoln suggested that the real goals of the war were the preservation of both unity and freedom. Lincoln’s [Gettysburg Address](#) has often been described as one of the most eloquent speeches in history.

SOURCE #7

Turning Point: Siege of Vicksburg

How was the Siege of Vicksburg important?

Vicksburg, Mississippi, lay atop a bluff, or cliff, along the Mississippi River where it is joined by the Yazoo River. Overlooking the continent's largest river, Vicksburg's position gave it control of the major thoroughfare, or transportation route, of the Confederacy.

By spring 1863, Vicksburg had been a Union target for months, but attempts to capture it were unsuccessful until General **Ulysses S. Grant** took over. Grant's strategy was to circle behind Vicksburg and cut the rail line that provided supplies to the town. Grant's forces moved into position from the east, forcing the Confederates to back up to the cliffs. Union forces spread out until they surrounded the city. The Confederate position was fortified, so Union forces could not overrun it. But the Confederates were trapped.

The Union army laid siege to Vicksburg on May 19, 1863. Over the following weeks the city's supplies ran out, and civilians and soldiers began to starve. They ate mules, rats, and tree bark to survive. On July 4 the city finally surrendered. It was only one day after the Union victory at Gettysburg.

With the capture of Vicksburg, the Union now surrounded the South: it controlled the Mississippi River on the west, it controlled the North, and it had blockaded Confederate ports on the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. The Confederate states west of the Mississippi were isolated from those in the east. Control of ports and rivers put a stranglehold on Confederate supplies; the **Anaconda Plan** was finally being successfully implemented.

From Discovery Education Techbook, 9.4

SOURCE #8

Sherman's March to the Sea

What events convinced many Confederates that the time to surrender had come?

Combat continued after the battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Most of these battles were Union victories, but the Confederacy refused to surrender even though the death toll continued to rise. A key turning point arrived when President Lincoln appointed **Ulysses S. Grant** general-in-chief in March 1864.

On September 1, 1864, Union General **William Tecumseh Sherman** captured Atlanta, Georgia. He held Atlanta until November. Before leaving, Sherman commanded his forces to burn down munitions factories, railroad facilities, and other resources that could be useful to the Confederate war effort. This event was the backdrop for *Gone with the Wind*, a famous novel by Margaret Mitchell.

President Lincoln was reelected on November 8. A few days later, on November 16, Union General Sherman began a military campaign known as the March to the Sea. With 60,000 troops, he marched from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia. On the way, Sherman's army took food and burned property, destroying everything that could be used by the Confederates. This policy of **total war** terrified and demoralized the Confederates—both civilians and soldiers. Sherman stated that the Union was fighting hostile people who supported the Confederacy as well as hostile armies. He believed that it was important to stop civilians from supporting the war by making “old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war.” On December 21 he captured the city of Savannah.

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SOURCE #9

As Union General Sherman moved through the Confederacy from west to east, the Union's top general, **Ulysses S. Grant**, began a push toward the Confederate capital in Richmond, Virginia. In the spring of 1864, Union soldiers attacked the **Robert E. Lee**'s Confederate troops in several costly battles in Virginia, including the Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. In each battle, the Union army tried to push past the Confederates to gain a clear path to Richmond. In each battle, the Confederates fought, then fell back, preventing the Union from advancing too quickly. Both armies lost many soldiers.

After a bloody battle at Cold Harbor, Virginia, Grant realized that he would not be able to attack Richmond directly, and moved his army toward Petersburg, an important transportation hub 25 miles away from the capital. In June 1864, the Union army began its attack on Petersburg. The siege on the city lasted over 10 months. Through the fall and winter, the Union army focused its efforts on capturing railroads in an attempt to cut off supplies to Confederate troops. It succeeded in capturing the final supply line, the South Side Railroad, on April 2, 1865.

Lee and his hungry troops were forced to flee Petersburg. This left Richmond unguarded. Lee attempted to join forces with Confederate General Joseph Johnston, but Grant was positioned to block this meeting. After several brief skirmishes, on April 7 Grant offered Lee the opportunity to surrender:

The result of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood, by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the C. S. Army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

—Letter from Grant to Lee

After exchanging several letters, the two generals agreed to meet on April 9, 1865, at the town of **Appomattox Court House**, Virginia. After General Lee surrendered to General Grant and Grant accepted, Union troops provided food rations for Lee's men.

Technically, General Lee's surrender did not end the **Civil War**. Lee commanded only the Army of Northern Virginia, one of several Confederate armies. But Lee's army was the largest of all the Confederate forces, and Virginia was the key state of the Confederacy, both politically and economically. Over the next few weeks, the other Confederate armies surrendered as well. The bloodiest chapter in U.S. history was over. The reunited states now needed time to heal and recover.