

Civil War and the Railroads

Grade Level: 4-8

Time to Complete: 1 to 5 days

Standard(s) Covered:

SS-5-HP-U-3

Students will understand that the history of the United States has been impacted by significant individuals, groups and advances in technology.

SS-05-5.1.1

Students will use a variety of primary and secondary sources to describe significant events in the history of the U.S. and interpret different perspectives.

SS-05-5.2.4

Students will describe significant historical events in each of the broad historical periods and eras in U.S. history and explain causes and effect relationships.

SS-4-HP-U-2

Students will understand that the history of Kentucky can be analyzed by examining the connected events shaped by multiple cause-effect relationships, tying past to present.

Major Objective(s): Students will

- Examine how the railroads impacted the outcome of the Civil War
- Understand how the U.S. has been impacted by significant individuals, groups, and technological advances
- Learn the causes and effect relationships of historical events in the historical periods and eras in U.S. history
- Understand the history of Kentucky is connected by events tying the past to the present

Major Points to Teach:

Union spies stole the locomotive “The General” outside of Kennesaw, GA intending to burn the railroad tracks and bridges between Kennesaw, GA and Chattanooga, TN to cripple the Confederate supply lines. The spies were chased and captured by railroad employees. The surviving Union spies were given the first Medal of Honor for military valor.

The Civil War was the first mechanized war in the world.

The Civil War set precedence for the government to control private corporations during national crisis. It also set precedence for cooperation between civilian and military personnel.

The Civil War was shortened due to railroads being a faster method of transportation for troops and supplies. It also was a factor in the war being fought in a wider geographic region due to the ability of transporting goods, supplies, and troops to other parts of the United States.

The Civil War emphasized the need for consistent track gauges among all railroad companies. Problems occurred in sharing railroad tracks due to the fact each company had its own gauge. Standard gauges were established by the United States government during the construction of the transcontinental railroad.

The Green River Bridge at Munfordville in Hart County was strategic to military operations as a main supply line into the south and its height made repairs difficult.

Bowling Green, positioned at the junction of the main line and the Memphis branch, tied a large section of the South together by rail, making the city a strategic transportation center at the war's beginning.

The government determined that it would pay 2 cents a mile per man for transportation on the railroads. Freight charges were 5 cents a mile, for less than 50 miles, and 3 cents a mile, for over 50 miles.

Matthew Brady's photography, of the Civil War battles and transportation, changed peoples' perception of warfare by making warfare more personal.

Teaching Strategies

- Write a poem about the relationship of the railroads and the Civil War
- Compose a song about the railroads and the Civil War
- Pretend to be one of the Union spies who stole "The General" and write a journal about the exploit between Kennesaw and Chattanooga
- Pretend to be one of the railroad employees trying to recapture "The General"
- Work the jigsaw puzzle "Ticket to Ride"
- Construct a model of a railroad bridge from the Civil War
- Write a newspaper article about the burning of the depot in Bowling Green

- Construct a chart as to the amount it would cost for the government to pay the different railroad companies to different locations in the United States
- Draw a picture of a train from the civil War era
- Complete the word search puzzle

Vocabulary

Civil War
Confederate
gauge
freight
locomotive
railroads
railways
strategic
The General
transportation
troops
Union
warfare

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Supporting Documents

Books

Bittersweet

Civil War Railroads

Excerpt from A Fort Craig Reader

The General & The Texas

History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad

Josie Underwood's Civil War Diary

Long Steel Rail

The Louisville and Nashville Railroad 1850-1963

DVDs

“The General”

“Long Road Back to Kentucky”

“Civil War in Bowling Green”

“Great Locomotive Chase”

Illustrations

Civil War railroad tickets and passes

Medal of Honor

Facsimilies of “Civil War in Bowling Green” museum exhibit reading panels

Maps

Railway Map of the Southern States

Railroads of the Confederacy

Southern Defense Line

Battlefields of Kentucky CWSAC Inventory

Artifacts

Jigsaw puzzle: “Ticket to Ride

Replica “The General”

Framed Print: “The General” 100th Anniversary Run

Framed Print: Matthew Brady Civil War RR

Website Support

www.historynet.com/railroads-critical-role-in-the-civil-war.htm

www.gatewaynmra.org/articles/civil-war1.htm