

Civil War Vocabulary

Causes

1. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 – an agreement in Congress that established a physical line on a map to show where slavery was and was not allowed in America, it allowed the free and slave states to add new states to America when the other did so (for example, if the North adds Maine, the South can add Missouri)
2. The Compromise of 1850 – an agreement in Congress that kept the United States of America from separating into two separate countries. The Northern states will get California as a free state and the largest slave market in America (Washington DC) closed forever. The south will get all fugitive slaves returned to their plantations, the right for Utah and New Mexico to vote on their own status and \$10,000,000 for Texas.
3. The Fugitive Slave Act – an agreement in congress that allowed for runaway slaves to be returned to their southern plantations if caught in a free-state or territory. In exchange the Confederate states agreed not to leave the Union
4. Kansas Nebraska Act – This act allowed both territories the chance to vote on their own slave status. According to the Missouri Compromise of 1820, that decision should have already been set in stone. Both territories vote and after a couple of rigged elections, a war breaks out between Kansas and Missouri.
5. Underground Railroad – A hidden network of escape routes that runaway slaves could take out of the southern states to reach Canada where slavery was officially banned.
6. Dred Scott v. Sanford Case – A landmark court case in which the supreme essentially ruled that if you are/were a slave then the law does not allow you to sue for your freedom or rights.
7. Bleeding Kansas – A war between residents of Kansas and Missouri over the right for states to decide for themselves if slavery should or shouldn't be allowed.
8. Uncle Tom's Cabin – A book written by Northern abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1852 to show the horrors of Southern slavery, for many Northerners this was their first and most impressionable experience with how slavery was
9. The Raid on Harper's Ferry – Abolitionist John Brown wanted to attack southern farms, arm the slaves so they could kill their masters and then join his army as they went to the next farm down the road. In order to get the guns he needed, Brown and a small posse attacked the US Army arsenal at Harper's Ferry, WV.
10. The Assault on Fort Sumter – To prove that the Confederate States had in fact left the United States of America, they raise an army and show their military readiness by attacking a Union base in Charleston Harbor, SC – This is the official start of the Civil War.
11. The Emancipation Proclamation -

Key People

1. Frederick Douglas – A former slave who became a famous abolitionist and author who helped the Union government realize the evils of slavery
2. Harriet Tubman – A former slave who became a famous abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor who helped slaves run away from slavery
3. Sojourner Truth – A former slave who became a famous abolitionist and women's rights advocate who spoke to groups in the Northern states to show how evil slavery was
4. John Wilkes Booth – Southern sympathizer who assassinated President Lincoln at the end of the Civil War
5. Abraham Lincoln – President of the United States of America, he kept the border states a part of the USA thus creating a buffer zone between the free North and slave South
6. Jefferson Davis – President of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War
7. John Brown – Northern abolitionist who fought in the Bleeding Kansas war and ultimately starts the Civil War with his Raid on Harper's Ferry
8. General William Tecumseh Sherman – Union general who helped end the Civil War by destroying the States of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina
9. General Philip Sheridan – Union general who helped end the Civil War by destroying the states of Virginia (most notably the Shenandoah Valley) and Tennessee
10. General Robert E. Lee – Main general of the Confederacy for most of the war
11. General Ulysses S. Grant – Main general of the Union at the end of the war

Key Battles

1. Battle of First Bull run – The first battle of the Civil War, the Confederacy could have ended the war at this battle, citizens of Washington DC had arrived to watch the battle (and picnic) and caused many more troubles for the retreating Union army
2. Battle of Shiloh – The first major victory for the Union, in this battle General Grant earns the nickname “unconditional surrender”, toxins in the battlefield caused the soldiers wounds to glow green at night
3. Battle of Antietam – The single bloodiest day in American History, this battle proved that the Union could compete with the Confederacy on the battlefield
4. Battle of Gettysburg – The single bloodiest battle in American history, this is the turning point of the war, General Lee desperate for supplies invades the north but is stopped and defeated outside of Gettysburg College
5. The Siege of Vicksburg – This battle used mediaeval tactics to control the Mississippi River, by taking Vicksburg General Grant essentially separates/isolates the Confederacy’s supply line to troops
6. Battle of Richmond/Petersburg – Major battles towards the end of the war, defeats for the Confederacy signal the end of the war is near, this is also where trench warfare was used
7. Sherman’s March to the Sea – General Sherman used “total warfare” to destroy and burn a path 60 miles wide from Atlanta to Savannah Georgia. Using total warfare destroyed southern factories, railroads, supplies and destroyed the moral of the Southern citizens in surrender.
8. Battle of Appomattox Courthouse – After a crushing defeat, General Lee and the Confederacy surrender to General Grant in Central Virginia. This marks the unofficial end of the war (even though several battles occurred after).