

## The American Civil War

1. Why did you choose this piece?
2. How familiar are you with the events leading up to the Civil War?
3. Was it the events of last week (storming of Capital Hill) or a wider interest?
4. What did you make of what happened last week?
5. What do you think about the police response? How did it differ from that of the BLM protests?
6. What role do you think Trump played in instigating the insurrection?
7. What do you think of the decision to suspend his Twitter account?
8. What next for the US? Do you think the inauguration will pass off peacefully?
9. What challenges do you think the new president faces?
10. Do you think it could be described as a coup? If not, how would you describe it?
11. The Civil War left between 620,000 and 750,000 dead soldiers. Why do you think it was such a bloody conflict? (para. 3)
12. Do you agree that this was among the earliest industrial wars? Why? (para. 5)
13. Why was the issue of slavery left unsettled? (para. 6)
14. Speaking directly to the "Southern States", Lincoln said, "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the United States where it exists." Why do you think he said this? (para. 8)
15. Why do you think no European country entered the conflict? (para. 8)
16. Final thoughts.
17. This video might also help. You'll need to watch it with subtitles as the guy is speaking super fast but it's an interesting video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7m4ld6Bgxc>
18. Let's check the vocabulary highlighted in blue below:

1. The American Civil War was a civil war in the United States from 1861 to 1865, fought between northern states loyal to the Union and southern states that had **seceded** to form the Confederate States of America. The Civil War began primarily as a result of the **long-standing** controversy over the enslavement of Black people. War broke out in April 1861 when secessionist forces attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina, just over a month after Abraham Lincoln had been **inaugurated** as the President of the United States. The loyalists of the Union in the North, which also included some geographically western and southern states, **proclaimed** support for the Constitution. They faced secessionists of the Confederate States in the South, who advocated for states' rights to uphold slavery.
2. Of the 34 U.S. states in February 1861, seven Southern slave states were declared by their state governments to have seceded from the country, and the Confederate States of America was organized in rebellion against the U.S. constitutional government. The Confederacy grew to control at least a majority of territory in eleven states, and it claimed the additional states of Kentucky and Missouri by **assertions** from native secessionists fleeing Union authority. These states were given full representation in the Confederate Congress throughout the Civil War. The two remaining slave states, Delaware and Maryland, were invited to join the

Confederacy, but nothing **substantial** developed due to intervention by federal troops.

3. The Confederate states were never diplomatically recognized as a joint entity by the government of the United States, nor by that of any foreign country. The states that remained loyal to the U.S. were known as the Union. The Union and the Confederacy quickly raised volunteer and **conscription** armies that fought mostly in the South for four years. Intense combat left between 620,000 and 750,000 soldiers dead, along with an undetermined number of civilians. The Civil War remains the **deadliest** military conflict in American history, and accounted for more American military deaths than all other wars combined until the Vietnam War.
4. The war effectively ended on April 9, 1865, when Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at the Battle of Appomattox Court House. Confederate generals throughout the Southern states followed suit, the last surrender on land occurring on June 23. Much of the South's infrastructure was destroyed, especially its railroads. The Confederacy collapsed, slavery was **abolished**, and four million **enslaved** Black people were freed. The war-torn nation then entered the Reconstruction **era** in a partially successful attempt to rebuild the country and grant civil rights to freed slaves.
5. The Civil War is one of the most studied and written about episodes in U.S. history, and remains the subject of cultural and **historiographical** debate. Of particular interest are the causes of the Civil War and the **persisting myth** of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy. The American Civil War was among the earliest industrial wars. Railroads, the telegraph, steamships and iron-clad ships, and mass-produced weapons were employed extensively. The mobilization of civilian factories, mines, shipyards, banks, transportation, and food supplies all **foreshadowed** the impact of industrialization in World War I, World War II, and subsequent conflicts.
6. The **practice** of slavery in the United States was one of the key political issues of the 19th century. Slavery had been a controversial issue during the **framing** of the Constitution, but the issue was left unsettled. On the eve of the Civil War in 1860, four million of the 32 million Americans were black slaves.
7. In the 1860 presidential election, Republicans, led by Abraham Lincoln, supported banning slavery in all the U.S. territories (parts of the U.S. that are not states). The Southern states viewed this as a **violation** of their constitutional rights, and as the first step in a grander Republican plan to eventually abolish slavery. The three pro-Union candidates together received an overwhelming 82% majority of the votes cast nationally: Republican Lincoln's votes centred in the north, Democrat Stephen A. Douglas' votes were distributed nationally and Constitutional Unionist John Bell's votes centred in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. The Republican Party, dominant in the North, secured a plurality of the popular votes and a majority of the electoral votes nationally; **thus**, Lincoln was elected president. He was the first Republican Party candidate to win the presidency.

8. The South was **outraged**, and before his inauguration, seven slave states with cotton-based economies declared secession and formed the Confederacy. The first six to declare secession had the highest proportions of slaves in their populations, with an average of 49 percent. Of those states whose legislatures resolved for secession, the first seven voted with split majorities for unionist candidates Douglas and Bell (Georgia with 51% and Louisiana with 55%), or with sizable minorities for those unionists (Alabama with 46%, Mississippi with 40%, Florida with 38%, Texas with 25%, and South Carolina, which cast Electoral College votes without a popular vote for president).
9. Eight remaining slave-holding states continued to reject calls for secession. Outgoing Democratic President James Buchanan and the incoming Republicans rejected secession as illegal. Lincoln's March 4, 1861, **inaugural** address declared that his administration would not **initiate** a civil war. Speaking directly to the "Southern States", he attempted to **calm their fears** of any threats to slavery, reaffirming, "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the United States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." After Confederate forces seized **numerous** federal forts within territory claimed by the Confederacy, efforts at compromise failed and both sides prepared for war. The Confederates assumed that European countries were so dependent on "King Cotton" that they would **intervene**, but none did, and none recognized the new Confederate States of America.
10. **Hostilities** began on April 12, 1861, when Confederate forces fired upon Fort Sumter. While in the Western Theater the Union made significant permanent gains, in the Eastern Theater, the conflict was inconclusive during 1861–1862. In September 1862, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which made ending slavery a war goal. To the west, the Union destroyed the Confederate river navy by summer 1862, then much of its western armies, and **seized** New Orleans. The successful 1863 Union siege of Vicksburg split the Confederacy in two at the Mississippi River. In 1863, Robert E. Lee's Confederate incursion north ended at the Battle of Gettysburg. Western successes led to Ulysses S. Grant's command of all Union armies in 1864. Inflicting an ever-tightening naval blockade of Confederate ports, the Union **marshalled** resources and manpower to attack the Confederacy from all directions, leading to the fall of Atlanta to William Tecumseh Sherman and his march to the sea. The last significant battles raged around the Siege of Petersburg. Lee's escape attempt ended with his surrender at Appomattox Court House, on April 9, 1865. While the military war was coming to an end, the political **reintegration** of the nation was to take another 12 years, known as the Reconstruction era.