

## 21: 8th\_SocialStudies\_Research\_LeadPreInterview

Speaker 1: Small scale-wise for this particular unit, or for this particular lesson, we wanted the students to look at a variety of sets of data, evaluate that data and synthesize it, and form an opinion about it, answer high-level questions. Unit-wise, it works within the purpose of our unit, get these kids to answer claimant evidence-based questions, argument writing, summative assessment. This is just one of those pieces going into that writing, going into that assessment.

We're trying to get them to form an opinion; that's the whole point of this writing. Everything we've been doing this year is to get them to develop an opinion, so what's what this is. While we're specifically talking about the Civil War, you can apply this to any current event, like, do the benefits outweigh the costs?

In the learning outcomes students are going to try to evaluate the impacts of war, both financially in human lives, effects on society work force, gender roles, a lot of different aspects we're trying to bring into this. We're also trying to separate the difference: How did it affect certain parts of the country different than the others? How did it affect families, seeing images of dead family relatives in the newspaper for the first time, because photography was starting to come out? How does this affect America's culture? How does it play into today?

Do we view war differently today because we now are seeing images on a nightly basis? Is that why a war support is high at the beginning, low at the end, because people start seeing the impacts and the effects of this war that it has? Again, it goes back to the idea: I want these kids to form an opinion. We want these [00:02:00] kids to form an opinion. I think that's our, not just my co-teachers and I, but our school's school, especially in the social studies department. Have an opinion and defend it. I don't care what is, I just want you to form your own opinion and defend it, because so much of this age group just regurgitates what they hear, whether it's teacher or family member, or whatever. Form an opinion for yourself and defend that, not just follow up blindly.

Formatively and summatively. Formatively, at the end of class, they're going to answer that question, that big picture question, evaluate the impact of the Civil War, and they're going to have to cite two pieces of evidence from the stations that they rotate through today to back up their claim, back up their idea. At the end, they're going to write a summative assessment, the essay, "Should Lincoln Have Let the South Secede?"

We know what happens, and that's maybe the easy way to do it, but it's really trying to challenge those leaders, what if it happened differently? What if he lets them secede? What do we avoid? What is different? Slavery's still around, but does that mean that it will always be around? We may avoid the Civil War now if we let them secede, but does that mean war is always put off? How does that affect the global scale? How does Mexico play in this? How does Cuba play in this? Does Britain come back now that we're weaker and try to attack us again? My favorite part about history is asking that what-if question: What if this moment of history changes, how does it affect the long scale, the long term?

Management at this point in the year is fairly built into our routine. They know how to conduct themselves, they know how to pace themselves through class, what is expected of them. I'll give out the guidelines and the expectations for today's specific lesson, but I think when you write a good [00:04:00] lesson, especially something like this that has movement, that involves so many different learning styles, behavior management's going to come very naturally. I think it's going to require very little on my part to redirect. I'm hoping that because engagement is high, classroom management should be fairly straight forward to that.

Our sums question for today, "Evaluate the Impact of the Civil War," and then try to give them some kind of hints in guiding along: How does it affect the economy? How does it affect society? How does it affect culture? How does it affect gender roles, all these different things? There's other questions in there, looking at Sherman's March, his march to the sea and his total war campaign. How did that affect the South mentally and emotionally?

That's basically what we use today, the scorched ground approach: looking at images of dead human beings on the ground and in newspapers, and without limbs, and in the medical tents, and knowing that those images are being shown to families for the first time; having to make a prediction of how that's going to affect people. We're trying to get that higher-level critical thinking. I know those are buzz words, but that's just good teaching. We want these kids to think for themselves and get to that higher level, not just remember and regurgitate.

Stations helps a lot. Any time you can get movement in a classroom, you're going to up the engagement. We're trying to hit multiple learning styles: auditory with the video, visual with the pictures, the reading with both the pictures and the data, and then we'll discuss it. You get those visual, and when we discuss we also have the tactile advice to get those kinesthetic students involved, so trying to hit as many learning styles as possible. It's not always easy, but with stations [00:06:00] it's easy to build them in, so hopefully, the engagement is high.

I think it's meaningful in a few ways. First off, academically, they're looking at different types of data, they're reading different kinds of reading images, they're reading data tables, they're reading multimedia video. Again, they're having to synthesize that and form an opinion and answer questions for those specific kinds of media, and then it goes large scale. We have to take all these three different kinds of input, all these three different forms of data, and then apply that to a larger context, that being the summative assessment at the end. Meaningfulness, it goes back to forming an opinion for themselves, becoming critical thinkers, becoming engaged in the world around them, not just physically but mentally as well.