

Civil War Strategy

This project provides an opportunity for students to expand upon a skill (orienteering) learned at another grade level and then apply that knowledge in a realistic setting to synthesize the learning that has taken place. We also believe that learning about the emotional and psychological aspects of warfare will prepare students for the Grade 8 NYS social studies curriculum, which focuses heavily on the World Wars. We hope that the experience will give them a greater understanding of the historical events that formed our country. The ability to compare and contrast and evaluate American involvement in war is an analysis skill that we hope to nurture.

Curriculum/State Standard

NYS 1,2,3 in Social Studies, NYS 1,2 in Physical Education, NYS 1,2,3,4 in English, NYS 3,4 in the Arts (music, dance, theatre)

Overview

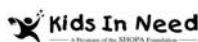
This project includes all 7th grade students and involves four curricular areas. Students use a skill introduced in 6th grade (orienteering) and see its practical application in an historical context. They not only mimic typical battlefield strategy but, also, participate in the activity with the background knowledge of the emotional/

mental/physical demands that were placed on soldiers during this war, as learned through their social studies and English classes. The culminating activity is a daylong immersion in a realistic portrayal of the culture (military and civilian) of this time period.

Objectives

- The student will study troop movements and strategy in relation to the topography of the location as utilized by the Union and Rebel armies during various critical battles of the Civil War. The student will use a compass and coordinates in an outdoor activity simulating troop placement and movement as applied to the physical characteristics of the geography of our school campus.

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THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

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7

GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



SOCIAL STUDIES

1

MONTH

\$1010

TOTAL BUDGET

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- The student will read historical fiction (Soldier's Heart by Gary Paulsen) that portrays aspects of military life during the time of the Civil War.
- The student will create a character chart, compare the landscapes of Minnesota and Bull Run, and develop maps (foot, train and river-boat) as the storyline progresses.
- The student will participate in a performance event by attending all sessions, singing songs of the time period, and evaluating the event following its conclusion. .

Materials

Copies of “Soldier's Heart” by Gary Paulsen; maps of the battlefields and states cited in the book; compasses for all students; calculators for all students; pre-determined orienteering routes written on color coded, laminated index cards and separated into green painted coffee cans as route markers; maps of each route; music and lyrics for songs of the period; social studies text books for historical lessons; clipboard for each group

Readiness Activity

Students have studied American history up to the onset of the Civil War. Within each social studies class period, they are divided into groups of 4-6 students. These groups are, for the remainder of the project timeline, Union Infantry, Union Cavalry, Confederate Infantry, and Confederate Cavalry. All further study within the social studies class is undertaken in the assigned unit.

Strategies/Activities

Social Studies: The students study the history, causes, and effects of the Civil War as per the social studies text book.

English: The students will read the book Soldier's Heart by Gary Paulsen. Provide activities for the students which focus on the main character's emotional and physical journey (i.e. journal or letter writing in character, vocabulary, character chart, map development).

Orienteering Activity: Students are pulled from gym class over a period of two days. We review the use of the compass. Students are taught how to measure distances by determining their average pace. This is accomplished by having students measure the number of steps they take in a given length (i.e. 100 meters). This should be done 3 times and averaged to ensure accuracy. For the culminating outdoor activity each location marked by a can will include compass coordinates and a route length (i.e. 160 degrees South South-East, 250 meters). As a practice, simple coordinates and lengths are used during the second of these gym sessions.

Students will receive a route card and then set their compasses for the coordinates given, orient themselves to that direction and then travel in that direction the appropriate number of steps. To determine the number of steps they will take the route length, divide it by 100 (for the meter length previously measured) and multiply that by the number of paces they take in that 100 meters. Given our example of a 250 meter route a student with a pace of 80 steps would have to travel 200 steps ($250/100=2.5$ $2.5*80=200$).

Song Activity: Students pick a favorite Civil War song by class period. For one day they learn and practice the song in the auditorium with the help of the choral music teacher.

Presenters:

- One day lecture by re-enactor on soldier life with military drill practice.
- One day lecture by historian on symbolism of battle flags and motivations of the soldier
- 4 guides to help with individual groups during orienteering day
- Living History unit for final Civil War day.

Culminating Activity

There are two culminating activities. One is related to the orienteering skill, the other a cultural immersion day.

Orienteering: Each class period has been divided into 4 distinct groups (Union cavalry, Union infantry, Confederate cavalry, Confederate infantry). Each group meets with a guide, Union or Confederate, at their headquarters outside (a desk and appropriate flag). The guide provides the first of a series of route cards, calculators and compasses. Students, within the group, must read the card, determine their direction of travel and the distance they must go. If they follow a correct route they should find a coffee can (painted green and labeled with a name such as "Gettysburg" for ease of identification for the guides) which will contain their next set of instructions. If the route is incorrect they may find a "dummy" can, or another group's can, which will give them a penalty, such as dysentery, whereupon they must

“Civil War Strategy” project continued...

return to their previous point and refigure their route. The cans are used for more than one group's directions so each can will have colored coded cards for each group (i.e. Union cavalry is the "blue" team). Maps of each route (you must have at least 4, we had 6) have been provided to the guides only. The first group to reach their final destination in each period is the "winner". These groups then compete against each other on a route where their performance is timed. The winner is honored at the end of the year awards ceremony with their name engraved on a plaque.

Civil War Day: Students are assigned in groups of approximately 20 with a teacher chaperone. For the first two hours of the day they watch the movie "Glory." They then rotate through a series of 20-minute workshops (artillery, surgery, dancing, cooking, camp-life, ladies fashion, infantry) provided by a unit of re-enactors who engage in living history educational performances. The groups are led by a commander who is instructed to move his/her "troops" using the military drill learned on another day. There is also a 40-minute block of time where we all assemble in the auditorium to hear performances of the previously learned Civil War songs. The day ends with a demonstration of a cannon firing. Extra credit is given to students who bring a lunch appropriate to the time period or dress in the attire of the day.

Evaluation

Students were evaluated through the completion of the class assignments, correct and timely following of the orienteering routes, appropriate behavior during Civil War Day, and an evaluation form completed following Civil War Day.