

LESSON PLAN

U.S. Wars in the 1800s

Level: Literacy, Low Beginning

Suggested Length: 1 class period

Civics Test Questions

#72—Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.

#73—Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.

Related Test Items:

#91—Name one U.S. territory.

#98—What is the name of the national anthem?

#100—Name two national U.S. holidays.

Reading Test Vocabulary

states

United States, U.S.

Memorial Day

have, is/was, name

a, in, of, the, to, we

many, north, south

Writing Test Vocabulary

Civil War, states

California, Mexico, United States

May

Memorial Day

have, is/was

and, during, in, of, the, to, we

north, south

Objectives:

Students will:

- identify U.S. wars in the 1800s
- identify Puerto Rico and Guam as two U.S. territories
- identify the title of the U.S. national anthem and understand its historical background
- understand the purpose of Memorial Day and identify it as a national U.S. holiday

Materials:

Wall maps of the world and the United States

Handouts: **The War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War, The Civil War and the Spanish-American War, Review—U.S. Wars in the 1800s, and Timeline of the 1800s**

Optional handout (Literacy Level Writing Practice): **Memorial Day**

U.S. Wars in the 1800s Lesson Answer Key



Lesson Overview and Notes to Teacher:

This lesson covers the four U.S. wars fought during the 1800s, linking each to other civics content, such as U.S. territories, the national anthem, and the celebration of Memorial Day. We recommend teaching the lesson on the Civil War prior to this one. With the exception of the Civil War, the students will not need to recall specifics of the wars in the 1800s for the Civics Test. They will need to name only one of the wars. If the students have difficulty with this, you may want to emphasize the Civil War as one possible answer since they will have already studied it. The dates of the wars are provided here to help

the students understand the chronology of events. The use of a timeline on the board and in the handout **Timeline of the 1800s** helps reinforce this understanding.

Each war in the 1800s is covered in a short reading paragraph. Display a wall map of the world and the United States to explain the points about U.S. expansion and the U.S. territories. The Literacy Level Writing Practice handout **Memorial Day** reinforces vocabulary from the Reading and Writing Test.

Introduction: Tell the class you will talk about U.S. history and the wars in the 1800s. Draw a timeline on the board and mark the far left point with the year **1800** and the far right with **1900**. Explain that there were four U.S.

wars in the 1800s. Ask the students if they can name any of those wars. The students should be able to identify the Civil War as one of them and give the approximate years. Mark the war on the timeline with the dates **(1861-1865)**.

Guided Practice: Distribute the handout **The War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War**. Have the students look at the picture and ask them to describe what they see. The students should note the man pointing to the American flag. Discuss how our national anthem was inspired by a battle during the War of 1812. Explain that the man, Francis Scott Key, wrote the lyrics the morning after the battle when he realized that the U.S. troops had won that battle against the British. On the board, write **national anthem** (**anthem=official song of a country**), and **Star-Spangled Banner** (**U.S. flag with stars**). Model the pronunciation of these words for the students to practice. Ask the students where they might hear the national anthem (sports and school events, Fourth of July, etc.). Point out that **What is the name of the national anthem?** is a Civics Test item. Go over the paragraph, reading each

sentence 2-3 times out loud for students to hear and repeat after you. Ask the students **When did the War of 1812 begin? (1812)** and **When did it end? (1815)**. Have a student come to the board and write **War of 1812** and the dates of the war on the timeline. For the reading on the Mexican-American War, review the sentences as previously described. Ask the students **When was the Mexican-American War? (1846-1848)** and have a student write the dates and label the war on the timeline. Explain that, as a result of the Mexican-American War, the United States acquired a great deal of land from Mexico. Have the students look at a U.S. map to find which states were gained as a consequence of this war. Remind the students that the 1800s was a time of expansion in the United States and that this land, along with the Louisiana Purchase, greatly increased the size of the country.

More Practice: Distribute the handout **The Civil War and the Spanish-American War**. Ask the students what they remember from the lesson on the Civil War. Ask the students **Who fought in the Civil War? (The North and the South)**. Ask **When did the Civil War begin? (1861)** and **When did it end? (1865)**. Point out this war on the timeline. Discuss the photo of the Civil War soldiers. Write the word **soldier** on the board and model the pronunciation for the class. Remind the students that this was our most deadly war with more than 620,000 casualties. Review the paragraph on the Civil War with the students. Point out that **Name the U.S. war between**

the North and the South and **Name two national U.S. holidays** are items on the Civics Test.

In reviewing the paragraph on the Spanish-American War, explain first that this short war was fought in 1898, from April to December. An important outcome was that the United States acquired Puerto Rico, Guam, and other islands from Spain. Write **territory** on the board. Explain that a territory is an area governed by the U.S. federal government but is not a state. In some cases, territories eventually become U.S. states, such as Hawaii and Alaska. Point out that **Name one U.S. territory** is one of the Civics Test items.

Evaluation: On the handout **Review—U.S. Wars in the 1800s**, the students fill in vocabulary from the Word Bank to complete the sentences. On the handout **Timeline of the 1800s**, point out the timeline and have the students label

the wars for the dates indicated. Once again, stress to the students that they do not need to remember these dates for the Civics Test, but that it is interesting to know the history.

Follow-Up Extension: Using world maps, have the students find **Puerto Rico**. Ask the students **Where is Puerto Rico? Puerto Rico is in which ocean? (Atlantic)**. Have a student find **Guam** on the world map (east of the Philippines), and ask **Where is Guam? Guam is in which ocean? (Pacific)**. Then tell the class that there are three other major U.S. territories (**American Samoa, U.S.**

Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands) that were later acquired in the 1900s. Have the students find them on a world map. American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands are located in the Pacific and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Atlantic. Again, remind the students that **Name one U.S. territory** is on the Civics Test.

Additional Writing Practice for Literacy/Low Beginning Students: The handout **Memorial Day** is included for optional copy work. Students can practice

writing words from the Reading and Writing Vocabulary lists.