Turning Points

Trace how Civil War events changed the course of the war

6-12.US1.39 "Analyze the impact of major military events in the Civil War, including, but not limited to Fort Sumter, First Bull Run, Antietam, Vicksburg, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Sherman's March, and Appomattox."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the eight military events in the order they appear. Underline one consequence of each event, then circle two consequences that changed the course of the war.

Battles and Their Consequences

1. In April 1861, Confederate guns fired on Fort Sumter in South Carolina. The Union fort surrendered, and the attack pushed the country into open war. That July, spectators expected a quick Union victory at First Bull Run in Virginia. Instead, Confederate troops drove Union soldiers back toward Washington, showing that the war would not end quickly. In September 1862, Union forces stopped Robert E. Lee's invasion of Maryland at Antietam. The battle was terribly costly, but the result gave President Lincoln the chance to announce the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, making freedom for enslaved people in rebel states a stated Union war aim.

2. A Union attack at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in December 1862 ran into strong Confederate defenses. Thousands of Union soldiers were killed or wounded, and the defeat shook confidence in Union commander Ambrose Burnside. The next summer brought a different kind of turning point. In July 1863, Union forces captured Vicksburg, Mississippi, after a long siege. Control of the entire Mississippi River followed soon after, cutting the Confederacy's eastern states off from Texas, Arkansas, and much of Louisiana. That same month, Lee's army lost at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The defeat ended his second invasion of the North and weakened his army.

3. In 1864, General William Tecumseh Sherman led Union troops from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia. During Sherman's March, they destroyed railroads, supplies, and other resources that could support Confederate armies. The campaign damaged the South's ability to keep fighting and brought the war's destruction to civilians far from the battlefield. In April 1865, Lee surrendered his army to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. Other Confederate forces surrendered later, so this meeting did not end every fight at once. Taken together, these events show how battles changed more than territory: they shifted war aims, resources, and hopes for victory.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Fort Sumter and First Bull Run change expectations about the war in different ways?

2. How did Antietam affect Union war aims, while Fredericksburg affected Union confidence?

3. Why did Vicksburg and Gettysburg each weaken the Confederacy in 1863?

4. How did Sherman's March and Appomattox weaken Confederate resistance in different ways?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose two events from different years in the passage. In one paragraph, argue which did more to change the Union's path to victory, using a specific consequence of each as evidence.

ANSWER KEY

Turning Points

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.39

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the eight military events in the order they appear. Underline one consequence of each event, then circle two consequences that changed the course of the war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Fort Sumter and First Bull Run change expectations about the war in different ways?	**Fort Sumter pushed the country into open war. First Bull Run showed that the war would not end quickly.**
2	How did Antietam affect Union war aims, while Fredericksburg affected Union confidence?	**Antietam gave Lincoln the chance to announce a plan for freedom in rebel states. The defeat at Fredericksburg shook confidence in Union commander Ambrose Burnside.**
3	Why did Vicksburg and Gettysburg each weaken the Confederacy in 1863?	**Vicksburg helped the Union gain control of the Mississippi River, separating eastern Confederate states from western ones. Gettysburg ended Lee's invasion of the North and weakened his army.**
4	How did Sherman's March and Appomattox weaken Confederate resistance in different ways?	**Sherman's March destroyed resources that supported Confederate armies. At Appomattox, Lee surrendered his army, though other Confederate forces surrendered later.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Vicksburg did more than First Bull Run to change the Union's path to victory. First Bull Run showed that the Union could not win quickly, which forced people to face the scale of the war. At Vicksburg, the Union captured a key city, then gained control of the entire Mississippi River soon after. That control separated eastern Confederate states from western ones, directly limiting the Confederacy's ability to keep fighting.

Accept other well-supported choices for which event mattered more. Responses should accurately explain a consequence of each event and use those consequences to support the comparison.