Choices That Changed War

Trace how leaders shaped Civil War goals and campaigns.

6-12.US1.40 "Explain the contributions of key leaders throughout the American Civil War, including, but not limited to: Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, George McClellan, Abraham Lincoln, and Jefferson Davis."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action by each of the seven leaders, then circle a result connected to each action and give the matching action and result the same number.

Leaders and the Course of the Civil War

1. In 1861, the United States split into Union and Confederate forces. President Abraham Lincoln worked to keep the Union together. His Emancipation Proclamation, issued in 1863, declared enslaved people free in areas still in rebellion. It made ending slavery an explicit Union war goal, though freedom did not reach every enslaved person at once. Confederate president Jefferson Davis tried to unite states that insisted on governing themselves. He appointed generals and sought men and supplies for Confederate armies, but disagreements among state leaders limited the help he could get. Both presidents led governments, but their choices shaped their sides' war efforts.

2. On the Union side, General George McClellan trained the Army of the Potomac into a large fighting force. Yet he often moved cautiously, even when Lincoln wanted a faster attack. After the bloody Battle of Antietam in 1862, McClellan did not pursue Robert E. Lee's retreating army quickly, and Lincoln later removed him from command. Lee led the main Confederate army in Virginia. He won important battles there, keeping Union forces occupied, but his invasions of the North failed. Confederate general Stonewall Jackson helped Lee win battles through fast marches and surprise attacks. Jackson died in 1863 after being accidentally shot by Confederate soldiers.

3. Other campaigns changed the war's reach. Union general Ulysses S. Grant captured Vicksburg in 1863 after a long siege. The victory helped give the Union control of the Mississippi River and cut the Confederacy in two. In 1864, Grant became commander of all Union armies and pressed Lee's forces in Virginia despite heavy losses. Union general William Tecumseh Sherman led troops from Atlanta to Savannah that same year. During this March to the Sea, his troops tore up railroads and seized food, weakening Confederate supplies and damaging civilian property. In April 1865, Lee surrendered his army to Grant at Appomattox Court House.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Lee's victories in Virginia and Grant's victory at Vicksburg affect the two sides differently?

2. How did Lincoln's proclamation and Davis's work with state leaders shape their sides' war efforts?

3. How did McClellan's caution and Jackson's speed affect military operations?

4. How did Sherman's March to the Sea weaken the Confederacy beyond fighting its soldiers?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about one president and one general on the same side. Describe one action by each leader, then explain how their actions worked toward a shared goal.

ANSWER KEY

Choices That Changed War

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.40

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action by each of the seven leaders, then circle a result connected to each action and give the matching action and result the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Lee's victories in Virginia and Grant's victory at Vicksburg affect the two sides differently?	**Lee's victories kept Union forces occupied in Virginia. Grant's victory helped the Union control the Mississippi River and cut the Confederacy in two.**
2	How did Lincoln's proclamation and Davis's work with state leaders shape their sides' war efforts?	**Lincoln's proclamation made ending slavery an explicit Union war goal. Davis sought men and supplies, but disagreements among Confederate state leaders limited the help he could get.**
3	How did McClellan's caution and Jackson's speed affect military operations?	**McClellan did not quickly pursue Lee after Antietam and was later removed from command. Jackson's fast marches and surprise attacks helped Lee win battles.**
4	How did Sherman's March to the Sea weaken the Confederacy beyond fighting its soldiers?	**Sherman's troops tore up railroads and seized food, weakening Confederate supplies and damaging civilian property.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

President Abraham Lincoln made ending slavery an explicit Union war goal through the Emancipation Proclamation. Union general Ulysses S. Grant captured Vicksburg, helping the Union gain control of the Mississippi River and divide the Confederacy. Lincoln's policy gave the Union a goal beyond keeping the country together, while Grant's campaign weakened the Confederacy's ability to resist. Together, their actions advanced the Union's fight through political change and military pressure.

Accept other accurate action-and-result pairs supported by the passage. For the museum label, accept either side if the student chooses a president and a general from that side and explains their shared goal.