Shots at Sumter

Trace how a dispute over a fort became an armed conflict.

8.C.12.1.F "Describe how the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter ignited armed civil conflict."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one decision before the attack, the first exchange of fire, and one action afterward. Number those events in order to trace how the conflict grew.

The Fort That Sparked a War

1. In early 1861, seven Southern states left the United States after Abraham Lincoln's election. Their leaders formed the Confederate States of America, arguing that states could leave the Union. Lincoln rejected that claim and said federal property still belonged to the United States. Fort Sumter, a federal fort in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, remained in Union hands, even though South Carolina had joined the Confederacy. Inside the fort, Major Robert Anderson and his soldiers had limited food. This made the fort a tense test of which government held authority.

2. Lincoln announced that he would send supplies to Fort Sumter. Confederate leaders feared that letting the fort remain in Union hands would weaken their claim to independence. They demanded that Anderson surrender it, but he refused. Before the supply ships could reach the fort, Confederate guns opened fire on April 12, 1861. Union soldiers fired back. After more than a day of bombardment, Anderson agreed to surrender on April 13. The fort was evacuated the next day.

3. The shots at Fort Sumter turned a struggle over secession and federal authority into open fighting. Although the bombardment killed no one inside the fort, the surrender showed that the Confederacy would use force to take federal property. On April 15, Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion. People in both the North and the South prepared for a wider war. The attack, the Union's return fire, and the mobilization that followed marked the beginning of the American Civil War.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Confederate leaders see Fort Sumter's continued Union control as a problem?

2. How did Lincoln's supply plan and Anderson's refusal to surrender lead to the Confederate attack?

3. What happened at Fort Sumter that turned the dispute into armed conflict?

4. How could Lincoln's April 15 call for volunteers spread the fighting beyond Fort Sumter?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence news report dated April 16, 1861, for readers who have not heard about Fort Sumter. Explain why Confederate leaders wanted the fort, how the attack began armed conflict, and how Lincoln's response could widen it.

ANSWER KEY

Shots at Sumter

GRADE 8 · 8.C.12.1.F

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one decision before the attack, the first exchange of fire, and one action afterward. Number those events in order to trace how the conflict grew. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Confederate leaders see Fort Sumter's continued Union control as a problem?	**They believed a Union-held fort in South Carolina weakened their claim to independence.**
2	How did Lincoln's supply plan and Anderson's refusal to surrender lead to the Confederate attack?	**Lincoln planned to supply the Union-held fort. Confederate leaders demanded its surrender, and when Anderson refused, they fired before the supplies arrived.**
3	What happened at Fort Sumter that turned the dispute into armed conflict?	**Confederate guns fired on the fort on April 12, and Union soldiers fired back.**
4	How could Lincoln's April 15 call for volunteers spread the fighting beyond Fort Sumter?	**It called for 75,000 people to help put down the rebellion, preparing the Union for a wider war.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

April 16, 1861
Confederate leaders wanted Fort Sumter surrendered because it remained in Union hands despite South Carolina's secession. When Anderson refused, Confederate guns fired on April 12, and Union soldiers fired back. Anderson surrendered the fort on April 13. Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers on April 15 could bring more people into the fighting.

Accept responses that link Confederate concerns about a Union-held fort to the attack, identify fire from both sides as armed conflict, and explain how Lincoln's call for volunteers could widen the war. The dated report should have four sentences and use information available by April 16, 1861.