Squeeze or Strike

Compare two Union strategies for weakening the Confederacy

8.C.12.3.A "Compare the goal of the Union's Anaconda Plan to surround and blockade Confederate forces to the goal and strategy of Sherman's "Total War" strategy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the goal of each strategy and circle the actions used to reach it. Write S beside one detail that shows what the strategies had in common.

Two Ways to Weaken the Confederacy

1. In 1861, Union general Winfield Scott proposed a plan that newspapers nicknamed the Anaconda Plan. Like a snake tightening its coils, the Union would squeeze the Confederacy rather than rely on one quick battle. Union ships would blockade Southern ports, making it harder to sell cotton abroad or bring in weapons and supplies. Union forces would also take control of the Mississippi River, cutting Confederate states west of the river off from those to the east. The plan aimed to surround and weaken Confederate forces by restricting their routes and resources.

2. By 1864, Union general William Tecumseh Sherman was using a different approach in Georgia. After taking Atlanta, his troops marched toward Savannah, moving through Confederate territory instead of holding a distant blockade. They tore up railroad tracks, burned stores of supplies, and took food from farms to feed their army. Sherman wanted to damage the South's ability to support its armies and to shake confidence that the Confederacy could win. Civilians felt the effects of destroyed property and scarce supplies, although Sherman's military goal was not to kill civilians.

3. Both strategies treated supplies as a weapon of war, but they pressured the Confederacy in different ways. Scott's plan tried to close paths into and across Confederate territory. Sherman's campaign sent soldiers through that territory to destroy useful resources on the ground. A blockade could slowly reduce trade from outside, while torn tracks and seized food could disrupt movement and support from within. Sherman also hoped the damage would weaken Southern morale. Neither strategy depended only on winning a single battlefield clash; each aimed to make continued fighting harder.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the goal of Scott's plan compare with Sherman's goal for weakening Confederate forces?

2. Where did each strategy apply pressure on the Confederacy?

3. Compare how each strategy interfered with Confederate supplies or movement.

4. Why might Sherman's strategy affect Southern confidence differently from the Anaconda Plan?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence editorial for a Union newspaper in 1864 that compares both strategies and argues which could interrupt Confederate supplies sooner. Use two different facts from the passage and explain one limitation of your choice.

ANSWER KEY

Squeeze or Strike

GRADE 8 · 8.C.12.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the goal of each strategy and circle the actions used to reach it. Write S beside one detail that shows what the strategies had in common. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the goal of Scott's plan compare with Sherman's goal for weakening Confederate forces?	**Scott aimed to surround and weaken Confederate forces by restricting routes and resources. Sherman aimed to damage the South's ability to support its armies and weaken confidence that it could win.**
2	Where did each strategy apply pressure on the Confederacy?	**Scott's plan pressured ports and the Mississippi River. Sherman's troops moved through Confederate territory in Georgia.**
3	Compare how each strategy interfered with Confederate supplies or movement.	**The blockade limited trade and incoming supplies, while control of the Mississippi River would cut off routes between Confederate states. Sherman's troops tore up tracks, burned supplies, and took food within Confederate territory.**
4	Why might Sherman's strategy affect Southern confidence differently from the Anaconda Plan?	**Sherman's troops destroyed property and supplies as they moved through Georgia, making the damage visible to people there. The Anaconda Plan relied on a slower squeeze through blocked ports and river control.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Union readers, we need to cut Confederate supplies before more battles are fought. Scott's Anaconda Plan called for blockading Southern ports and taking the Mississippi River, limiting trade and travel. Sherman's troops, however, tore up railroad tracks and took food as they moved through Georgia. I think Sherman's campaign could interrupt supplies sooner because it damaged routes and resources where his troops traveled. Its reach was limited to places his troops passed, while a blockade could press on many ports at once.

Accept either strategy in the editorial if the student compares both, supports the claim with two accurate passage details, and explains a reasonable limitation. For the marking job, accept any shared detail showing that both strategies made continued fighting harder.