After the Battles

Trace how Civil War actions shaped life and the economy after the fighting.

8.C.12.3.C "Examine the lasting impact of the Civil War, focusing on its devastation of property and the national economy, unrestricted use of weaponry, and the involvement of civilians."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three uses of weapons or other military actions, circle two effects on civilians, and number three economic effects that lasted beyond the fighting to trace the war's longer impact.

What War Left Behind

1 In 1863, Union forces surrounded Vicksburg, Mississippi, a Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. Union cannons on land and gunboats on the river fired shells into the city. Families dug shelters into hillsides and hid there while the bombardment continued. Soldiers aimed to force a surrender, but shells could reach streets and homes, not just military positions. Civilians had little protection from these powerful weapons. After the city surrendered, residents still faced damaged buildings, shortages, and the work of restoring daily life.

2 In late 1864, General William T. Sherman's Union army marched across Georgia. Troops tore up railroad tracks, took food and livestock, and burned some buildings. Their goal was to weaken the Confederate army by destroying the supplies and routes it relied on. Yet farms and rail lines also supported civilian families and local trade. A family that lost its harvest could struggle to eat or sell crops long after soldiers had moved on. Rebuilding a rail line cost money and time, slowing the movement of goods.

3 These losses did not fall equally across the country. Fighting destroyed much of the South's transportation network and damaged farms and towns, while many Northern factories expanded by producing war supplies. The federal government also carried a large war debt, a cost that affected the national economy. After emancipation, formerly enslaved people were free, but many began their new lives without land or savings. Rebuilding property alone could not repair broken markets or erase the hardship faced by families. The war's economic effects lasted well beyond the final battles.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the use of shells at Vicksburg affect civilians during and after the siege?

2. Why did tearing up railroad tracks in Georgia affect more than the Confederate army?

3. How did the war leave different economic effects on the South, the North, and the federal government?

4. What lasting problem did civilians in both Vicksburg and Georgia face, and what caused it in each place?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four- or five-sentence museum label for an ordinary object left after the Civil War, such as a bent railroad spike. Use facts from at least two paragraphs to connect destructive weapons, civilians, and a lasting economic cost.

ANSWER KEY

After the Battles

GRADE 8 · 8.C.12.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three uses of weapons or other military actions, circle two effects on civilians, and number three economic effects that lasted beyond the fighting to trace the war's longer impact. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the use of shells at Vicksburg affect civilians during and after the siege?	**Families hid in hillside shelters during the bombardment. After the surrender, residents faced damaged buildings, shortages, and the work of restoring daily life.**
2	Why did tearing up railroad tracks in Georgia affect more than the Confederate army?	**Civilians and local businesses also relied on rail lines. Rebuilding tracks took money and time, so the movement of goods remained slow after soldiers left.**
3	How did the war leave different economic effects on the South, the North, and the federal government?	**The South faced damaged transportation routes, farms, and towns. Many Northern factories expanded by making war supplies, while the federal government carried a large war debt.**
4	What lasting problem did civilians in both Vicksburg and Georgia face, and what caused it in each place?	**Both faced the costs of rebuilding or replacing what the war damaged or took. Shells damaged buildings in Vicksburg; Union troops damaged rail lines and took food and livestock in Georgia.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This bent railroad spike stands for tracks torn up during Sherman's march across Georgia. With rail routes broken, families and merchants had trouble moving goods even after soldiers left. In Vicksburg, shells reached homes and forced civilians to hide in hillside shelters. The damaged routes and buildings show why rebuilding cost money and why war losses lasted beyond the fighting.

Accept other passage-supported links between military actions, civilian experiences, and effects that continued after battle. For the museum label, look for facts from at least two paragraphs and a clear lasting economic cost.