Squeeze or Strike

Compare Civil War strategies and their costs.

8.C.12.3 "Identify the key strategies used during the war and evaluate their effectiveness in determining the war's outcome. Compare the goal of the Union's Anaconda Plan to surround and blockade Confederate forces to the goal and strategy of..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each strategy's goal, circle the actions used to reach it, and number two details that show whether it worked. Use your marks to compare the strategies and judge their effects.

How Strategies Shaped the War

1. In 1861, Union leaders proposed the Anaconda Plan, named for a snake that squeezes its prey. Union warships would blockade Southern ports, stopping many shipments of cotton out and supplies in. Union armies would also gain control of the Mississippi River, splitting the Confederacy and limiting travel and trade. The plan aimed to surround and wear down Confederate forces rather than win with one quick battle. Blockade runners still slipped through, but the blockade tightened, and Union control of the Mississippi in 1863 made the plan more effective.

2. Confederate leaders faced a larger Union with more factories and ships. Their strategy often centered on defending Confederate territory and keeping armies in the field. If the South could hold out long enough, Northern voters might tire of the fighting and press leaders to end the war. This approach kept Confederate resistance alive for years, but it depended on Northern support for the war collapsing. Union victories and President Lincoln's reelection in 1864 showed that this hope had failed. Holding ground also became harder as Confederate food, rail lines, and troops ran short.

3. In 1864, General William T. Sherman led Union troops through Georgia and later the Carolinas. His strategy, often called total war, attacked the South's ability and will to fight by destroying railroads, supplies, and other property useful to Confederate armies. Unlike the Anaconda Plan's slow squeeze, Sherman's marches struck deep inland and brought the war to civilians' doorsteps. Civilians lost homes, crops, and livelihoods. Rifles and artillery were used widely, causing terrible losses in battle. Damage to farms and transportation weakened the economy, while war debt burdened the nation after the fighting ended.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Anaconda Plan and Sherman's strategy differ in where and how they attacked the Confederacy?

2. Why did Confederate leaders try to hold territory, and what evidence shows the limit of that strategy?

3. Why did Union control of the Mississippi make the Anaconda Plan more effective, even though some ships passed the blockade?

4. How did Sherman's marches and the widespread use of weapons create different kinds of damage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence newspaper editorial from just after the war. Argue which Union strategy most weakened Confederate resistance, compare it with the other using two details from the passage, and explain one cost civilians faced.

ANSWER KEY

Squeeze or Strike

GRADE 8 · 8.C.12.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each strategy's goal, circle the actions used to reach it, and number two details that show whether it worked. Use your marks to compare the strategies and judge their effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Anaconda Plan and Sherman's strategy differ in where and how they attacked the Confederacy?	**The Anaconda Plan blockaded ports and sought control of the Mississippi to surround and wear down the Confederacy. Sherman marched inland, destroying railroads, supplies, and other useful property.**
2	Why did Confederate leaders try to hold territory, and what evidence shows the limit of that strategy?	**They hoped Northern voters would tire of war and demand peace. Union victories and Lincoln's reelection in 1864 showed that Northern support had not collapsed.**
3	Why did Union control of the Mississippi make the Anaconda Plan more effective, even though some ships passed the blockade?	**It split the Confederacy and limited travel and trade, adding pressure even while some blockade runners reached Southern ports.**
4	How did Sherman's marches and the widespread use of weapons create different kinds of damage?	**Sherman's troops destroyed property and disrupted civilians' lives and the economy. Widespread use of rifles and artillery caused terrible losses in battle.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sherman's strategy most weakened Confederate resistance because his troops destroyed railroads and supplies that armies needed. The Anaconda Plan also cut off resources by blockading ports and gaining control of the Mississippi. Sherman's marches, however, struck deep inland rather than squeezing the Confederacy from its edges. That approach came at a terrible cost to civilians who lost crops and livelihoods.

Accept either Union strategy as the stronger choice if the editorial supports its judgment with accurate passage details and compares it with the other. The civilian cost should be tied to the strategy discussed.