

Explain it!

The American Civil War

This revision activity works best if you do it with a friend, and talk about it as you do it.

In your GCSE, you will need to be able to 'explain' an event or situation; for example:

How did sectionalism help to cause the American Civil War	How did economic reasons help to cause the American Civil War
How did arguments about states' rights help to cause the American Civil War	How did expansion into the West help to cause the American Civil War
How did slavery help to cause the American Civil War	How did the election of Lincoln in 1860 help to cause the American Civil War
How did the economic superiority of the North help the Union to win the American Civil War	How did the policy of 'Total War' help the Union to win the American Civil War
How did the Emancipation Proclamation help the Union to win the American Civil War	How did the superiority of the Union Army help the Union to win the American Civil War

You answer such questions by thinking of 'reasons' why (or 'ways' how), explaining HOW those causes produced the outcome, and evidencing your arguments with facts.

Following is a table of 44 facts about the American Civil War. Cut up all the cards.

- 1 Put a grey 'question card' face up in the middle of a table.
- 2 From the 44 facts, find those you might cite in your answer and place them round the grey question card – for each fact you choose, explain its significance to the question.
- 3 When you have finished, think about how you would use the facts you have chosen to construct an answer which *explains* the question.
4. Turn over the next grey card and repeat.

The North was more populated, more urban, more industrial	The Compromise of 1850	A Union invasion of Virginia (1862) was defeated at the battle of Bull Run	The North's industrial economy boomed in the war
Professor Gallagher (2000) argued that the South had every chance to win the war	Enslaved people were running away to the North or to join the Union Army,	1857: Dred Scott case	Southern politicians saw the Homestead Act as a trick to destroy slavery
Three months after Lincoln's election, seven Southern states had seceded	Until the 1850s, the South controlled the Senate	186,000 Black soldiers and 29,000 Black sailors fought for the Union	1831: Nat Turner's Insurrection
12 April 1861: Fort Sumter Crisis	1862-63 Union General Ulysses Grant captured Vicksburg & the Mississippi valley	Northerners believed that the South was trying to 'do them down'	Union troops 'lived off the land' confiscating crops and livestock
Most northerners did not oppose slavery	2.1 million men served in the Union Army	The South's economy was based on the slave cotton plantation	The South had 'interior lines' of defence
'Bleeding Kansas', 1854-59	1859: John Brown tried to start a slave rebellion at Harper's Ferry in Virginia	1854: Kansas-Nebraska Act	800,000 men served in the Confederacy (80% of white males of military-age)
The North believed in small independent farmers and 'free labor'	In 1828, South Carolina threatened to secede over the Tariff of Abominations	In 1856 the Democrat Party split over abolition	Until 1860, 'dough face' presidents were dominated by Southern Senators
The Confederate General Robert E Lee was a brilliant general	1862: the Pacific Railway Act for the first transcontinental railroad	The South's society was based on slavery and white supremacy	Shelby Foote (1990) said the North "fought with one hand behind its back"
1852: Harriet Beecher Stowe published <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	1854: a transcontinental railroad planned through Nebraska	Lincoln said in 1865 that issue of slavery "was somehow the cause of the war"	Southerners believed that the North was trying to 'do them down'
When Lincoln raised an army in April 1861, four more Southern states seceded	Abolitionists in the north hated slavery and the plantation 'slavocracy'	The National Banking Act (1863) created a national currency 'greenbacks'	1856: Republican Party formed
The Confederate government printed money; this caused 9000% inflation	In 1864 the Union's 'March to the Sea' destroyed a fifth of the farms in Georgia	Three days after Fort Sumter, Lincoln called for an army of 75,000 men	The 'Anaconda' blockade wrecked the Confederacy's trade