

Teachers Guide: Community at War

Battle of Fredericksburg Web-based Curriculum
Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park

www.nps.gov/frsp/forteachers

Goals:

The *Community at War* curriculum seeks to illuminate the experience of the Battle of Fredericksburg and place it in the broader context of the Civil War by examining the past through the eyes of individual accounts. This approach reinforces the fact that the Civil War was a collective, lived experience that touched the lives of Americans on every level of society. Fredericksburg serves as a case study for the broader experience of the Civil War, reminding students that battles extended beyond the confines of the fields we see today, interrupted lives, and continued to influence those lives after the armies disappeared.

Additionally, the curriculum reflects modern scholarship of the Civil War by complicating a historically one-dimensional narrative and telling the story of the Battle of Fredericksburg from a variety of different viewpoints. These perspectives are grouped into three categories: slave, civilian, and soldier. Within each category, progression through the narrative hinges on the choices made by each individual, all of whom confronted differing realities bound by the common experience of war. The lessons asks students to consider the various factors weighing on an individual's decision at critical moments and question what they would have done under the same circumstances.

Suggestions for Use

We hope that the *Community at War* curriculum will be a resource for teachers and students who visit the park as well as those who do not have the opportunity to do so. As such, the Let's Explore! section is intended for students who have not had a chance to visit our battlefield to learn about the events that transpired here. We suggest Let's Explore! as a great starting place for students unfamiliar with the battle to gain an understanding of the narrative and place the lesson modules in their proper context. Additionally, students who have visited the park before will most likely benefit from the Let's Explore! section as it investigates a variety of significant places and spaces students are unable to visit in a single trip.

We suggest students complete all three lesson modules as each one illuminates a different but equally important aspect of the Battle of Fredericksburg and indeed the experience of the Civil War more generally. The activities are designed to work in conjunction with one another, but also to stand alone if you would like to focus on a particular area of study. Each individual's story is unique to Fredericksburg, but their perspectives provide valuable lenses through which to understand life in the war-ravaged United States. We hope these lessons will be useful as potential pre and post visit activities, but also object lessons easily adapted to the needs of Civil War studies in your classroom.



Below we have outlined the themes, topics and objectives related to each element of the *Community at War* curriculum as well as the corresponding education standards (Common Core and Virginia SOLs). However, to get the most comprehensive understanding of what your students can encounter and gain through this program, we invite you to visit the site and take a look! It can be found at: www.nps.gov/frsp/forteachers.

Let's Explore!

Objectives:

1. Identify the events that led the armies to Fredericksburg, including the major causes of the Civil War, events leading up to the battle and the Emancipation Proclamation
2. Identify significant locations on the modern landscape and explain how they relate to historical events
3. Compare and contrast the 1860s landscape with modern development
4. Discuss the importance of preservation and remembrance
5. Explain the aftermath of the Battle of Fredericksburg, its impact on the war effort and the surrounding landscape

Themes/Topics:

1. **The Battle of Fredericksburg**
 - This introductory video will explore the dynamics of the Battle of Fredericksburg. What brought the Union Army here? What were the goals of the armies at Fredericksburg? Why was this city significant? What were the military outcomes of the battle?
2. **Chatham Manor**
 - **Slavery and the Struggle for Freedom**
 - Slaves sought varying degrees of freedom within the confines of slavery from breaking tools, working slow, to armed rebellion and escape. Chatham's history highlights both subtle and overt acts of resistance utilized by slaves before and during the Civil War.
 - **Secession and the Struggle for Control**
 - Secession represented a fundamental disagreement over who was the rightful arbiter of the fate of individuals in the United States. Though Confederate soldiers described their motivations for joining the army in a variety of ways, they all served a government founded on the cornerstone goal of perpetuating a system of human bondage. The Civil War was ultimately a war of freedom, but that freedom was often defined differently by varying groups of people. Ultimately, the meaning of the word was contested and reimagined throughout the war, especially after the Battle of Fredericksburg.
3. **The Rappahannock River**
 - **Crossing the River to Freedom**
 - The Rappahannock River represented both an obstacle for escaping slaves as well as a point of triumph and separation from the city of Fredericksburg.



However, crossing the river was only the first step in a long journey to true freedom.

- **Crossing the River to Battle**

- For Union soldiers, the Rappahannock River represented a serious obstacle as well. However, rather than a point of triumph, it was a gateway to danger and to battle.

4. Sunken Road

- **Road to Refuge**

- Refugees passed along the Sunken Road in an attempt to find safety and escape the horrors of battle. Travel was arduous and often led to uncertain conditions and the need to rely on the hospitality of others.

- **Road as Refuge**

- For Confederate soldiers, the Sunken Road offered relative safety because of its iconic stone wall. Thus, it provided shelter for Confederates and further difficulty for Union soldiers.



5. Innis House

- **Caught in the Crossfire**

- The Innis House serves as a tangible reminder of the civilian cost of war. Fredericksburg, its homes, and its residents found themselves caught between two warring armies, and the devastation left behind endured for years to come. Residents returned to shattered homes, businesses, and lives.

- **A Home that Speaks: Lingering Evidence of War**

- The Innis House also testifies to the intensity of the fighting at the base of Marye's Heights. Though it is often hard to picture the horror of battle on what are today idyllic fields, the Innis House stands as a visible reminder that this was once a place of chaos.

6. Marye's Heights

- **Determined to Fight: Motivations and Consequences of War**

- Though today the attack at Marye's Heights seems futile and misguided, Union soldiers saw it in a variety of ways. Some believed their attack doomed, others sought to find a way to overcome the obstacles in front of them. All, however, we motivated by a variety of ideals and faced, at Fredericksburg, the grim reality of lofty ideas confronting massive devastation.

7. Kirkland Memorial

- **Commemorating Valor**



- Richard Kirkland, known as “the Angel of Marye’s Heights,” gave water and care to his wounded enemies. His actions remind us how the horrors of war bring out both the best and the worst of humanity.

8. Fredericksburg National Cemetery

- **Life in a Ravaged Country: Battling the Consequences of War**
 - Fredericksburg, like many communities throughout the South, faced unfathomable devastation when the Civil War came to an end. Confronting this reality in the midst of defeat proved heartbreaking for its shattered citizenry.
- **Forgetting Strife: Reuniting a Divided Nation**
 - As the Civil War faded into historical memory, veterans and civilians alike sought to reunite the country by forgetting the divisive and yet still undetermined elements of the Civil War, such as slavery and equality. Instead, they chose to glorify the valor of soldiers on both sides and celebrate the shared sacrifice of Americans throughout the United States.

Common Core:

Anchor Standards: Speaking & Listening

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Speaking & Listening (Grade 5)

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1c Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

History/Social Studies

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Virginia SOLs:

United States History to 1865

- USI.1.b: make connections between past and present
- USI.1.i: identify the costs and benefits of specific choices made, including consequences, both intended and unintended, of the decisions and how people and nations responded to positive and negative incentives
- USI.9.a: describing the cultural, economic, and constitutional issues that divided the nation
- USI.9.d: describing the roles of Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, and Frederick Douglass in events leading to and during the war
- USI9.f: describing the effects of war from the perspectives of Union and Confederate soldiers (including African American soldiers), women, and enslaved African Americans

Virginia and United States History

- VUS.1.i: identify the costs and benefits of specific choices made, including consequences, both intended and unintended, of the decisions and how people and nations responded to positive and negative incentives



- VUS.7.a: evaluating the multiple causes of the Civil War, including both the role of the institution of slavery as a principal cause of the conflict
- VUS.7.b: identifying the major events and the roles of key leaders of the Civil war Era, with emphasis on Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, and Frederick Douglass
- VUS.7.c: analyzing the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation and the principles outlined in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address
- VUS.7.e: examining the social impact of the war on African Americans, the common soldier, and the home front, with emphasis on Virginia

Virginia Studies

- VS.1.b: determine cause and effect relationships
- VS.1.e: make connections between past and present
- VS.7.b: describing Virginia's role in the war, including identifying major battles that took place in Virginia
- VS.7.c: describing the roles played by whites, enslaved African Americans, free African Americans, and American Indians
- VS.8.a: identifying the effects of Reconstruction on life in Virginia



Fredericksburg Battlefield



Lesson Modules

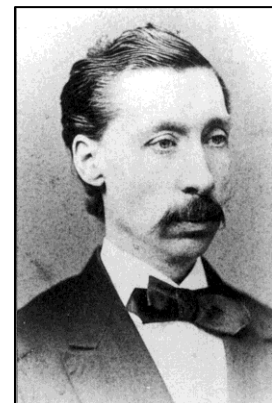
Slave Experience: Fighting for Freedom

- **Key Topics:** *slavery, emancipation, United States Colored Troops, citizenship, childhood, primary sources, geography of 19th century travel, historical research & critical thinking, choices*
- **Objectives:**
 - Compare and contrast the realities of childhood as a slave with experiences of children in modern times
 - Identify the opinions available to slaves during the war and explore the choices of specific individuals in Fredericksburg
 - Explore a variety of primary sources and explain how historians uncover the experiences of people who did not leave behind a written account of their lives
 - Compare and contrast the experience of United States Colored Troops with white soldiers in the Union Army
- **Themes:** Slaves did not experience the same realities and their choices to run, stay, or enlist in the army were not predetermined. Slaves were, however, tied together by their common state of bondage. Though it is often difficult to piece together the fabric of slaves' lives, historians utilize a variety of primary sources to learn about their experiences and illuminate the choices they made on the road to freedom.
 - Antebellum slavery: slave life in Fredericksburg with emphasis on the Chatham Plantation as a case study
 - Emancipation: the choice to run away from slavery and the complicated realities of freedom
 - Gaining citizenship & fighting for freedom: choosing to enlist in the United States Colored Troops



Soldier Experience: Trial by Fire

- **Key topics:** *soldier life, Union & Confederate, motivations, realities of war, the experience of battle, leadership, primary sources, political cartoons, secession, slavery, compare & contrast, choices*
- **Objectives:**
 - Identify the differing experiences of Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War
 - Compare and contrast Civil War soldiers with modern soldiers
 - Explain the various choices soldiers confronted at Fredericksburg



- Explore various primary sources to compare and contrast different points of view
- Identify the realities of soldier life on and off the battlefield including camp life and travel
- Describe the experience of battle
- **Themes:** Soldiers on both sides joined the war effort for a variety of reasons but faced similar realities upon enlistment. The experience of battle and army life weighed differently on each soldier and the Battle of Fredericksburg, though often portrayed as a one-sided and one-dimensional battle, left varying legacies in the lives of individual men.
 - Motivations for fighting: the complicated relationship between official policy and personal motivation, exploring various personal motivations
 - Soldier life & seeing the elephant: the harsh and often overlooked realities of life in the army and the terrorizing experience of battle
 - Ties that bind: confronting the common loss of brothers, sons, fathers, and friends throughout the Civil War

Civilian Experience: Surrounded by War

- **Key topics:** *Virginia's secession, primary sources, refugees, women in the war effort, the experience of battle, travel, memory*
- **Objectives:**
 - Explore various primary sources to compare and contrast different points of view
 - Compare and contrast the experiences and perspectives of different civilians
 - Explain the choices left to civilians in the wake of the oncoming tide of war and how the Civil War directly impacted the lives of noncombatants
 - Describe civilians' experience during the Union bombardment of Fredericksburg and the ensuing battle
 - Identify examples of women's contribution to the war effort
- **Themes:** Civilians in Fredericksburg confronted particularly compelling choices, caught in the crossfire of the Civil War from its inception until its end. Their decisions to move, stay, or flee in the wake of battle were complicated and not predetermined in the months, days, and hours leading up to the critical moment of choice.
 - A people besieged: the impact of war on the home front
 - Moments of truth: decisions of loyalty, service, and support
 - Scars of battle: confronting the realities of a shattered city



Common Core:

Anchor Standards: Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.



- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Anchor Standards: Reading

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Anchor Standards: Writing

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Reading: Informational Texts (Grade 5)

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Speaking & Listening (Grade 5)

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1c Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2 Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

History/Social Studies:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Virginia SOLs:

United States History to 1865

- USI.1.a: identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history to 1865
- USI.1.d: interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives
- USI.1.e: evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing
- USI.1.i: identify the costs and benefits of specific choices made, including the consequences, both intended and unintended, of the decisions and how people and nations responded to positive and negative incentives
- USI.9.f: describing the effects of war from the perspectives of Union and Confederate soldiers (including African American soldiers), women, and enslaved African Americans

Virginia and United States History



- VUS.1.a: identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art, to increase understanding of events and life in the United States
- VUS.1.b: evaluate the authenticity, authority, and credibility of sources
- VUS.1.i: identify the costs and benefits of specific choices made, including the consequences, both intended and unintended, of the decisions and how people and nations responded to positive and negative incentives
- VUS.7.e: examining the social impact of the war on African Americans, the common soldier, and the home front, with emphasis on Virginia

Virginia Studies

- VS.1.a: identify and interpret artifacts and primary and secondary source documents to understand events in history
- VS.1.b: determine cause and effect relationships
- VS.1.g: interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives
- VS.1.h: evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing
- VS.7.b: describing Virginia's role in the war, including identifying major battles that took place in Virginia
- VS.7.c: describing the roles played by whites, enslaved African Americans, free African Americans, and American Indians

Virginia and United States Government

- GOVT.1.a: analyze primary and secondary source documents
- GOVT.1.c: analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media
- GOVT.1.g: select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate



Potential Lesson Expansion

Visit the Fredericksburg Battlefield



The Community at War web-based curriculum is designed to work in conjunction with on the ground programming at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Our park offers a variety of different experiences at four major battlefields, four historic homes, and a historic church. New programming at each site highlights parallel themes with Community at War. Most notably, at the Fredericksburg Battlefield, students can visit the sites they learn about online. Afterwards, the “Design an Exhibit” program asks students to synthesize the information they have learned, explore the visitor center’s exhibits, and determine what artifacts they think best tell the story of the Battle of Fredericksburg. Our list of programs is continually growing, check out www.nps.gov/frsp/forteachers/planafieldtrip to learn about current offerings.

