

## Your Challenge: Running a Business in Civil War Tennessee

**GRADE:** 8 – 12

**LESSON DURATION:** 2 Sessions

### INTRODUCTION:

In this lesson your students will own a business during the Civil War. They will think critically about how the war and the decisions they make will impact their lives and their livelihood. They will consider what they sell, where they live, and for which side they sympathize. All these decisions will influence how they will handle the war and what will happen to them when the war directly affects them. In this lesson, your students will learn that these were issues and circumstances that real Tennesseans faced.

**GOAL:** To gain a historical perspective of the Civil War in Tennessee by sharpening the students' analytical and critical thinking skills.

### OBJECTIVES:

The students will [TSW] make predictions on what will happen to their assigned business during the war.  
TSW simulate the decisions Tennesseans faced during the war.  
TSW work in groups to contemplate decisions in different Civil War scenarios.  
TSW write a letter explaining how the war affected their business and lives.

### CURRICULUM STANDARDS:

8.2.03 Understand the potential costs and benefits of individual economic choices in the market economy.

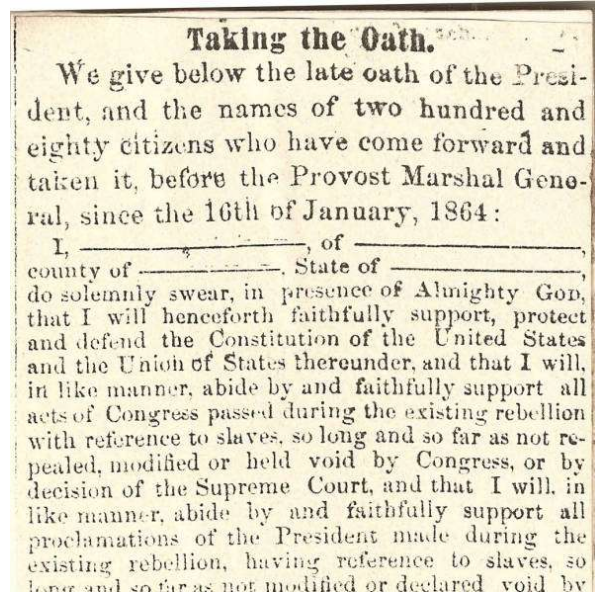
a. Define microeconomic terms such as credit, debt, goods, services, domestic products, imports, and exports.

d. Explain and illustrate how values and beliefs influence different economic decisions related to needs and wants.

8.2.tpi.10. Illustrate how early Americans dealt with economic challenges. (e.g. production, marketing, transportation, and distribution).

8.2.tpi.16. Chart the economic assets of the North and South prior to the Civil War.

8.2.tpi.21. Interpret hypothetical situations that illustrate supply and demand on prices of products.



8.5.18 Recognize the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War.

d. Weigh political, social, and economic impact of the Civil War on the different regions of the United States.

8.5.spi.3. Differentiate between a primary and secondary source.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Divide the class into groups of four or five students per group.
2. Each group now owns a business during the Civil War. Based on what they produce or sell, they will have to navigate their way through the turbulence, confusion, and chaos that the war brings.
3. Distribute their business assignments as follows – cotton plantation owner in Memphis, wealthy widow in Nashville who owned cotton plantations in Louisiana, railroad magnate in Knoxville, and an owner of a mercantile store in Knoxville.

Predictions

4. Spend a little time in a general whole-class discussion, making predictions and developing questions on how each industry will be affected by the events of the war as well as the decisions you make based on those circumstances.

First, will the Civil War be good or bad for your business?

Will the mercantile owner sell goods to the Confederate Army?

Will the plantation owners make lots of money selling cotton for uniforms?

Which business will come out of the war the best? the worst?

Have students make predictions.

5. Before the students are given the scenarios they will face during the war, have them consider their businesses. Write on the board various elements of their business.

Example: Cotton plantation owner

What do you sell/produce?	Who/what is your labor source?	Who is your customer?
Cotton	Slave labor	Northern factories England and other industrial European nations local clothing manufacturers other domestic usage

If you have time, have your students research this aspect of their business. If not, let them talk through it and guess. The teacher may need to help them draw accurate conclusions.

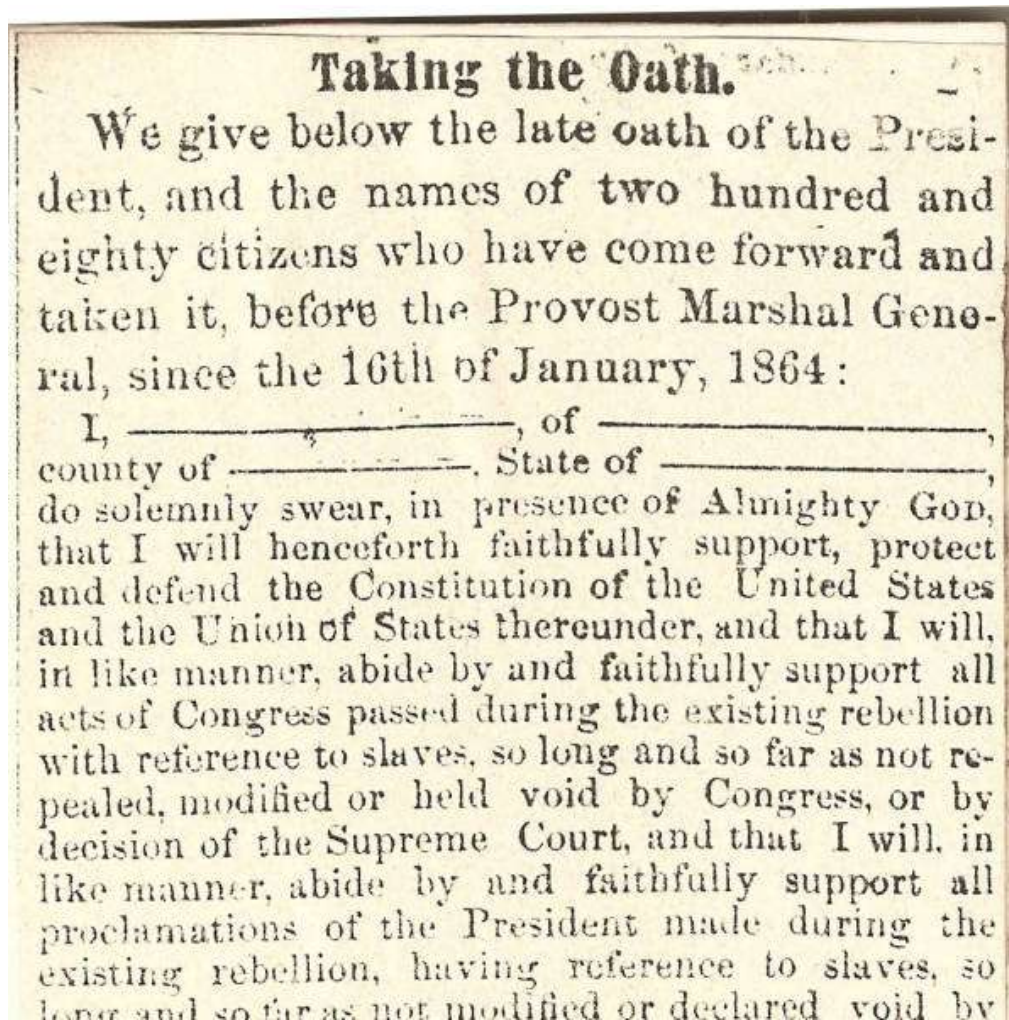
6. Next, you'll need to distribute their Business Profile, and allow students time to read it, and discuss, ask them if they want to change their predictions.

#### Critical Thinking Decisions with Civil War Scenarios

7. Provide each group with their Civil War scenarios. After each scenario is given have students decide their course of action.

8. Allow the groups to go over each scenario. Stop and discuss what was going on throughout the war before each new scenario. This will provide more information from which to make decisions.

9. After scenario 4, poll the class to see which groups decided to take the oath. For those that decided to take the oath, ask them to stand, raise their right hand and repeat the oath below after you.



Click here for the entire oath.

[http://content.mtsu.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=%2Fshades&CISOPTR=199&DMSCALE=57.97101&DMWIDTH=600&DMHEIGHT=600&DMMODE=viewer&DMFULL=0&DMOLDSCALE=4.78011&DMX=0&DMY=0&DMTEXT=&DMTHUMB=1&REC=1&DMROTATE=0&x=29&y=26](http://content.mtsu.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=%2Fshades&CISOPTR=199&DMSCALE=57.97101&DMWIDTH=600&DMHEIGHT=600&DMMODE=viewer&DMFULL=0&DMOLDSCALE=4.78011&DMX=0&DMY=0&DMTEXT=&DMTHUMB=1&REC=1&DMROTATE=0&x=29&y=26)

10. After each scenario ask probing questions about each. Have students explain their thought process for each scenario.

#### Wrap-Up /Closure:

11. After a brief discussion. Provide each group with their real historical person, Perez Dickinson, John Pope, and Adelica Acklen.

John Pope: <http://www.civilwarshades.org/taking-care-of-business/john-pope/>

Perez Dickinson: <http://www.civilwarshades.org/taking-care-of-business/perez-dickinson/>

Adelicia Acklen: <http://www.civilwarshades.org/taking-care-of-business/adelicia-acklen/>

12. After reading their bios from the Civilwarshades.org web site. Have students revisit their predictions from the procedure 4. Were their predictions accurate or were they off. Were they surprised at what happened to each individual? How were their predictions different from what really happened? What did the students not anticipate? What surprised them?

#### **SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT:**

Have students write a letter to their business partner explaining what happened to their business during the war and why they made the decisions they made.

#### **EXTENSION ACTIVITY:**

Have students research the cotton economy in pre-Civil War Tennessee. How much did a bale of cotton sell for in 1860? 1870? Convert that amount to today's dollars to give students a sense of how much people lost not just in death and destruction of property but also financially.

Take John Pope for example, his plantation held \$20,000 in cotton in 1860. When it was burned in advance of the Union army he lost it all. According to this web site, <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>, he lost \$479,000.