

Civil War Weapons

Subject: Social Studies, Math, and Language Arts

Duration: 1 week

Location: Classroom, Fort Donelson Visitor Center (cannon drill)

Key Vocabulary: field artillery, battery, cannon, limber, siege, garrison, artillerymen, caisson, canister, arsenal

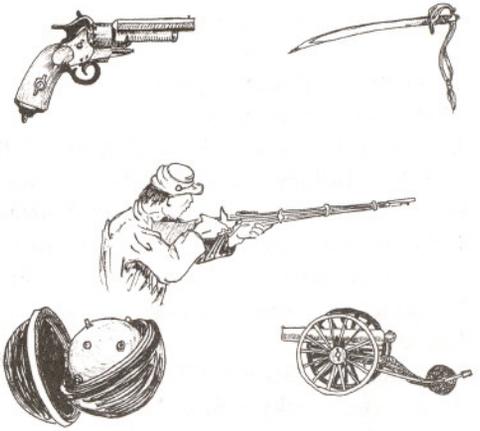
Related Activities: Read about various Civil War battles, the age of the soldiers, and the casualties of this war due to types of weapons and diseases.

Standards:

National: S.S. Strand VIII: Science Technology

State: Kentucky – S.S. 2.18, 2.19, 2.20, Math 2.10, L.A. 1.2

Tennessee – S.S. 5.03, Math 3.3.2



Objectives. Students will research the weapons and military strategies used during the Civil War and will review military terminology.

Method. Students will collect pictures of Civil War weapons and research the purpose of each.

Background. Civil War field artillery was organized in batteries. Although it varied from time to time, a battery in the Union army consisted of six of the same kind of cannons. In Confederate service a battery was normally only four guns and unfortunately for supply officers may have consisted of two or three different kinds of weapons. United States regulations prescribed a captain as a battery commander. Lieutenants commanded two gun sections in battle. A battery would have had a left and right and possibly a center section. One gun and caisson with limbers, made up a platoon under a sergeant and two corporals. The sergeant was the “chief of the piece” and often the gunner. A gun crew consisted of the gunner and seven artillerymen who were assigned numbers for servicing the cannon. In light artillery batteries, cannoneers marched beside the weapon or sat on ammunition chests. Officers, sergeants, buglers, and guidon-bearers rode horses. A full strength battery exceeded 100 officers and men. A limber in the Union army was drawn by six horses and due to the lack of horses, Confederate limbers used four horses.

Materials

- Internet access
- Pictures of Civil War weapons
- Thomas, Dean, *Cannons: An Introduction to Civil War Artillery* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1985).

Suggested Procedure

1. Give students a vocabulary list of terms related to Civil War weaponry and military strategies.
2. Instruct students to locate web sites showing pictures of Civil War weaponry and the functions of each.
3. Plan an on-site visit to Fort Donelson NB to see an official cannon drill.
4. Divide the class into groups giving each group a task to complete in order to illustrate how teamwork was vital for a Civil War gun battery.
5. Students will brainstorm and list reasons that weaponry has changed throughout history. After two minutes, have students pass the list to another person to add ideas. After all students have added ideas, share these with the class.

Evaluation

Students will write an essay about Civil War weapons and their functions. Cite reasons why there were such differences between the Union and Confederate weapons and strategies.

Extension

Research the effects of technology on military weapons and discuss innovations used by modern soldiers.