Fort Sumter / Teacher Pages

Rationale / Prior Knowledge /MCREL Standards

A. Rationale

Charleston, South Carolina, provides an excellent setting to teach students about several key concepts in the study of slavery and freedom in the United States. In this unit focused on the experiences of African-Americans, and primarily the enslaved population in Charleston and the surrounding area, students will learn:

- There was no uniform African American experience of life before and during the Civil War. Most people of color were enslaved, and others were free, but even free black people were subjected to many forms of discrimination and violence. Slavery was experienced very differently in different parts of the South — in cities, on small farms or large plantations, in factories or work camps.
- Slavery was a system of control and resistance. Slaveholders and the legal authorities tried to control everything enslaved people did, but African American people resisted in many different ways. The approach of the Civil War led Southern authorities to try to tighten control, but wartime disruptions ironically encouraged many new kinds of resistance, especially the opportunity to escape to Union Army lines.
- Enslaved and free African-Americans often tried to join or support the military forces of the Union, and eventually their participation was enormously important to the North's victory. But African Americans faced resentment and prejudice from many Union supporters.

Within a role-playing activity in this unit, students will be introduced to a rational decision-making structure that will help them think about processes individuals use to make important decisions in their lives.

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B. Prior Knowledge for Students

Students need to understand and know the following in order to have a context for the activity. Some of the highlights of the following should be included in the introduction

1. By the beginning of the 19th century, slavery had already existed in North America for nearly 200 years.
2. Slavery in America was race-based. In addition to the basic premise that it was somehow morally permissible for one human being to regard another as property, the treatment of enslaved Africans and the conditions under which they lived was often but not always cruel and inhuman.
3. Historically, there was a great range of experiences of slavery (physiological needs, relationships, setting, kinds and conditions of work, etc.). NOTE: This point is reinforced in student's work in Part II of the unit.
4. An awareness of the implications and conditions of slavery grew among the white population because of a variety of events (Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner uprisings, publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* the publication of Garrison's *Liberator*, the appearance of Douglass's autobiography, the Amistad case, news of the Underground Railroad and other abolitionist activity, etc. Some of these should be referred to just to give the learner the sense that there was some momentum to the anti-slavery cause.)
5. The thirteen original states were allowed to decide for themselves whether slavery would be legal or not within the state.
6. Over the course of the first few decades of the 19th century, many of the states that did *not* depend on enslaved Africans to do the bulk of the work to create wealth gradually abolished slavery. By the time the Civil War began, the fifteen states in the North had ended slavery.
7. The states on the border of the North and the South decided to fight on the side of the Union, but they maintained their systems of slavery.

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B. Prior Knowledge for Students (cont'd)

8. People in the slave states wanted to make sure their destiny wouldn't be determined by people in the free states and vice versa. The country was divided into two camps: pro- and anti-slavery. It was important to people to maintain a balance between the two groups of states. No one on either side of the issue wanted the opposing group to be able to outvote them in Congress. No one wanted the opposing section to make rules for the whole nation.

9. Lincoln's election in 1860 provided the spark for the South to take political action. Shortly after that, eleven states seceded from the Union.

10. In April 1861, Confederate (rebel) forces fired on Fort Sumter, which was still being held by Union forces. After a few days, the Union withdrew and the fort fell into the hands of the South. The war was on.

11. Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which took effect in January 1863. It declared free the slaves in the states in rebellion and promised them refuge and work with the Union Army. It allowed slavery to continue in the Border States.

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Educational Standards Linked to Fort Sumter Curriculum for **Content Standards** (from MCREL site)

	Grades 5-6	**Grades 7-8**	**Grades 9-12**
United States History: Era 5, Standard 13 Understands the causes of the Civil War	Knows the locations of the southern and northern states and their economic resources (e.g., the industries and small family farms of the industrial North, the agricultural economy and slavery of the South)	Understands the economic, social, and cultural differences between the North and South (e.g., how the free labor system of the North differed from that of the South)	
United States History: Era 5, Standard 14 Understands the course and character of the Civil War and its effects on American people	Understands the impact of the Civil War on social and gender issues (e.g., the roles of women on the home front and on the battlefield; the human and material costs of the war; the degree to which the war united the nation; how it changed the lives of women, men, and children)	Understands the circumstances that shaped the Civil War and its outcome (e.g., differences between the economic technological and human resources of both sides; the impact of the Emancipation Proclamation on the outcome of the war). Understands how different groups of people shaped the Civil War (e.g., the motives and experiences of Confederate and white and African American Union soldiers, different perspectives on conscription, the effects of divided loyalties)	Understands the influence of Abraham Lincoln's ideas on the Civil War (e.g. the Gettysburg Address, how the Emancipation Proclamation transformed the goals of the war). Understands how the Civil War influenced Northern and Southern society on the home front (e.g., the New York City draft riots of July 1863, the Union's reasons for curbing civil liberties in wartime, Lincoln's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus during the war) Understands how the Civil War influenced both military personnel and civilians (e.g., the treatment of African American soldiers in the Union Army and Confederacy, how the war changed gender roles and traditional attitudes toward women in the work force)

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Educational Standards Linked to Fort Sumter Curriculum for **Skills Standards** (from MCREL site, cont'd)

	Grades 5-6	**Grades 7-8**	**Grades 9-12**
Historical Understanding: Standard 2 Understands the historical perspective		Understands that specific individuals and the values those individuals held had an impact on history. Knows different types of primary and secondary sources and the motives, interests, and bias expressed in them (e.g., eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos; magazine articles, newspaper accounts, hearsay)	Uses historical maps to understand the relationship between historical events and geography.
Language Arts: Writing Standard 4 Gathers and uses information for research purposes			Uses a variety of primary sources to gather information for research topics

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Educational Standards Linked to Fort Sumter Curriculum for **Skills Standards** (from MCREL site, cont'd)

	Grades 5-6	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12
Language Arts: Reading Standard 7 Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts	Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks; biographical sketches; letters; diaries; directions; procedures; magazines; essays; primary source historical documents; editorials; news stories; periodicals; bus routes; catalogs; technical directions; consumer, workplace, and public documents)	Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks; biographical sketches; letters; diaries; directions; procedures; magazines; essays; primary source historical documents; editorials; news stories; periodicals; bus routes; catalogs; technical directions; consumer, workplace, and public documents)	Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, catalogs, job-related materials, schedules, speeches, memoranda, public documents, maps)