

Lesson provided by: Eric Emmett, Ashworth Middle School: Gordon County

## “Sherman's Atlanta Campaign and the Importance of Railroads”

### **Intended Setting**

An eighth grade Georgia social studies classroom utilizing 75 minutes of instructional time per day throughout the year

### **Intended Duration**

One day

### **Standard and Element Addressed**

SS8H6 The student will analyze the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia.

b. State the importance of key events of the Civil War; include Antietam, Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, the Union blockade of Georgia's coast, Sherman's Atlanta Campaign, Sherman's March to the Sea, and Andersonville.

### **Essential Question**

Why were railroads important to the outcome of the Civil, and how did they relate to Sherman's Atlanta Campaign?

### **Materials Needed**

An addition to normal classroom supplies such as pencils and paper/notebook, this lesson requires Civil War Era maps illustrating railroad lines both on the national level and in the South. Copies of these maps may be distributed to students and/or displayed using a video data projector. Copies of the handout that is used in conjunction with the maps. (See below)

### **Procedures**

1) Opening: (Approx. 5 minutes)

After completing normal daily start-up activities such as copying the standard and essential question of the day, students are instructed to activate prior knowledge by writing down the four basic economic needs (food, water, shelter, clothing) as well as other things that a soldier fighting in the Civil War would need (arms, ammunition, other supplies).

2) Recap and Foundational Exercise: (Approx. 10 minutes)

As a whole class, review the students' findings of the opening. Using the Socratic method, the teacher verbally guides the students to an understanding of how railroads were crucial to the logistics of the military action of the war. Some leading questions that the teacher can use include: 1) Why is important for soldiers to be continually supplied? 2) What might happen if they were not well supplied? 3) In the days before modern roads, bridges, and automobiles, what role would railroads have in the transportation of such supplies and the movement of troops themselves? 4) Where do

manufactured goods come from? 5) Where are factories located? 6) Why are factories located in cities? 7) If you were a military commander during the Civil War, why and in what ways would you be concerned about railroad lines?

3) Extension and Refining of Knowledge: (Approx. 20 min.)

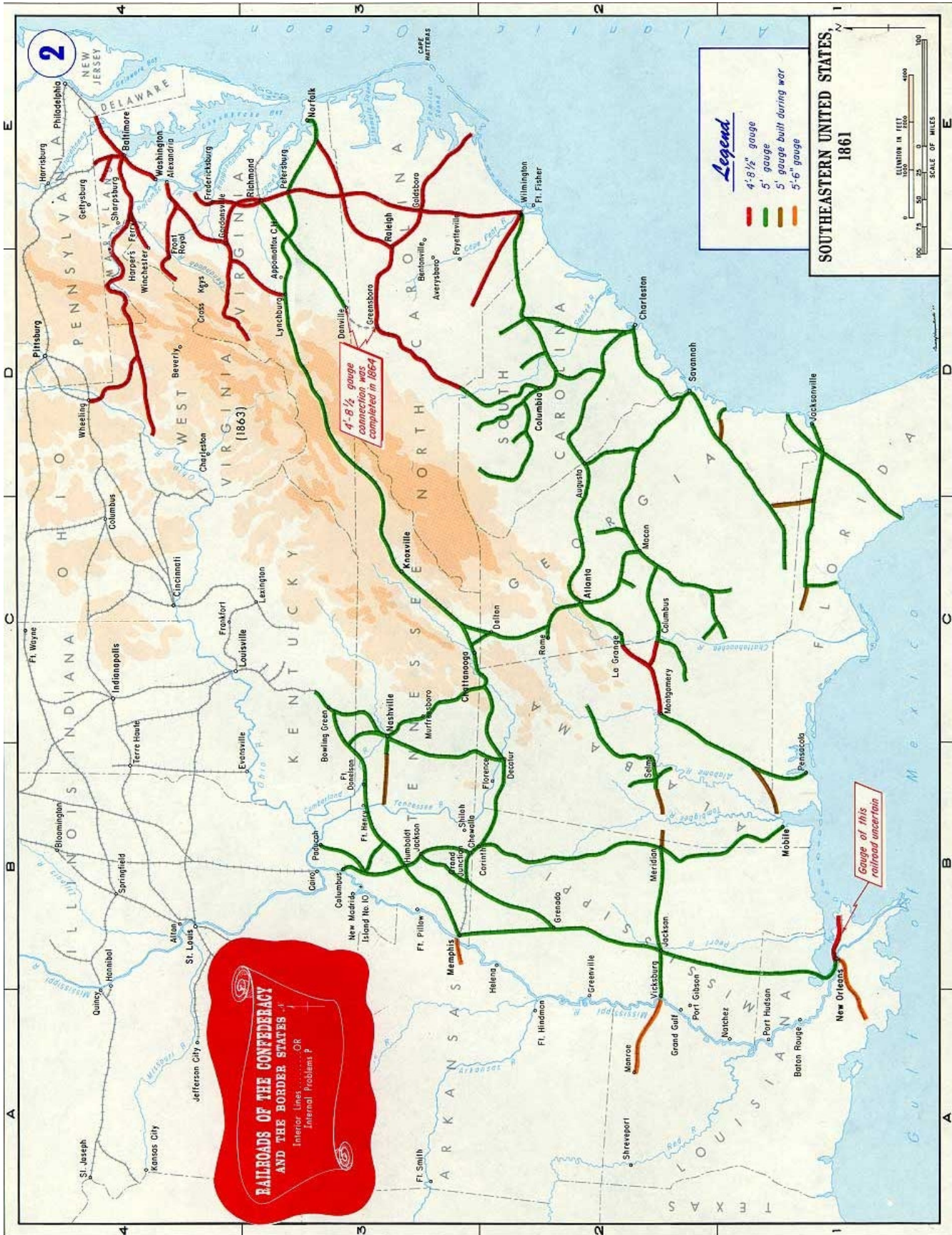
Students are placed into pairs. Each pair is given a set of maps, and each student is given his or her own handout on which to record his or her findings. If available, the maps will also be displayed using a video data projector while the students complete the activity. After the students have had enough time to finish, the teacher leads a whole class discussion of the answers to the questions on the handout.

4) Formal Assessment: (Approx. 35 min.)

Working individually, students write a paragraph that fully answers the essential question. The teacher reminds the students that their paragraph should include information regarding: 1) the needs of soldiers 2) the importance of railroads 3) how this relates to the importance of Sherman's Atlanta campaign. The teacher then asks for volunteers to read their paragraphs to the class and provides constructive commentary and asks clarifying questions as needed. The teacher collects the handouts and later assesses them as he or she sees fit. The language arts teacher may find these writing samples useful in his or her class as well.

5) Wrap-up: (Approx. 5 min.)

The teacher solicits feedback about the day's activities, asks what worked well and what could be improved about the lesson, makes any needed announcements, and briefly previews the next class session's focus/goal.



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**RAILROADS OF THE CONFEDERACY  
AND THE BORDER STATES**  
Interior Lines ..... OR  
Internal Problems F

4'-8 1/2" gauge  
connection was  
completed in 1864

Gauge of this  
railroad uncertain

**Legend**

- 4'-8 1/2" gauge
- 5' gauge
- 5' gauge built during war
- 5'-6" gauge

**SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES,  
1861**

ELEVATION IN FEET  
100 0 1000

SCALE OF MILES  
0 50 100





1870

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Sherman's Atlanta Campaign and the importance of Railroads

#### Map One: Railroads in the United States—1870

Background information to consider: This is a map of railroad lines in the United States in 1870. As you may know, 1870 was five years after the end of the U.S. Civil War. Some of the railroad lines included on this map did not exist during the war, but this gives you a good idea of about how they appeared during the war.

1. Which portion of the United States, north or south, had more railroad lines? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What types of things are railroads used to transport? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Given these two facts, what things differences do you think existed between the North and South?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. When fighting a war, what advantages would the North have had? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What disadvantages would the South have had? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

>>Non-Civil War Review Question to consider: Why would it have been so important to connect California on the West Coast with the rest of the United States?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

