

American Civil War Battles: Graphic Organizer



Painting by Thure de Thulstrup depicting the Battle of Gettysburg

The American Civil War began in 1861 and lasted four long years, ending in 1865. It was one of the bloodiest wars in United States history. More than fifty battles were fought between the Union and Confederate armies.

Research four key battles of the war: the First Battle of Bull Run, the Battle of Antietam, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the Battle of Appomattox Courthouse. Complete the graphic organizer for each one.

First Battle of Bull Run (also called the Battle of Manassas) **Sample answers**

Date	July 21, 1861
Location	Prince William County, Virginia (just 30 miles from Washington, D.C.)
Key Leaders	Union (North): Irvin McDowell, Daniel Tyler Confederate (South): P.G.T. Beauregard, Joseph Johnson, and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson
Cause	McDowell's Union forces were ordered to capture the Confederate capital in Richmond. Beauregard's Confederate forces stopped the march to Richmond by attacking at Bull Run (Manassas).
Outcome	Confederate forces defeat the Union in this first official battle of the war. Union forces retreat back to Washington D.C. Confederate forces fail to chase them down or cause further damage.

Battle of Antietam (also called Battle of Sharpsburg)

Date	September 17, 1862
Location	Washington County, Maryland (near Sharpsburg, Maryland)
Key Leaders	Union (North): George B. McClellan Confederate (South): Robert E. Lee
Cause	Lee's Confederate forces invaded Maryland hoping to eventually capture Washington D.C. McClellan's Union army wanted to stop the advance and secure a victory for President Lincoln. A victory would help the Republican party win Congressional seats in the upcoming November election.
Outcome	There was no clear winner. Because the Union had stopped another attack on the capital, President Lincoln viewed the battle as a strategic victory. He seized the opportunity to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. This promise to free enslaved people made it difficult for England or France to help the Confederacy without seeming to support slavery.

American Civil War Battles: Graphic Organizer

Keep going! Fill in the details of each battle. **Sample answers**

Battle of Gettysburg

Date	July 1-3, 1863
Location	Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
Key Leaders	Union (North): George Meade Confederate (South): Robert E. Lee
Cause	Lee led his Confederate forces toward a second invasion of the North, hoping to move from Virginia battlefields to northern sites in Pennsylvania. Lincoln ordered the Union armies to pursue Lee and confront the Confederates in Gettysburg to stop their northern advancement.
Outcome	It was a Union victory. The Confederates retreated back toward Virginia. It had been the bloodiest battle of the war. The two armies suffered between 46,000 and 51,000 casualties, with over 3,000 Union soldiers killed and over 4,500 Confederate dead. Four months later, on November 19, President Lincoln honored the fallen in his famous Gettysburg Address.

Battle of Appomattox Court House

Date	April 9, 1865
Location	Appomattox County, Virginia
Key Leaders	Union (North): Ulysses S. Grant Confederate (South): Robert E. Lee
Cause	Lee's Confederate armies were in retreat after defeat in a series of battles trying to defend Petersburg, Virginia. Lee led his troops south hoping to find supply trains along the Danville Railroad. He was stopped and forced to fight on his way to the supply trains.
Outcome	Confederate armies retreating south were trapped and forced to surrender to Union general Ulysses S. Grant in the Virginia village of Appomattox Court House. This event led to Confederate armies across the South surrendering, signaling the end of the war.

Bonus question: Choose a Civil War battle not listed above that you think was particularly significant. Explain why.

Answers will vary.
