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American Civil War Study Guide

Part I – Vocabulary, Generals and Battles

1. War for Southern Independence - The name Southerners called the conflict, also known as the Civil War. The Civil War was America’s bloodiest conflict.
2. Border States - The name given to the four slave states that did not (secede) leave the Union. Pennsylvania was not a border state.
3. Martial Law - The act of removing power from an elected government and replacing it with the head of the military.
4. Union - The name given to Northern states fighting in the Civil War.
5. Confederate - The name of the new government comprised of the eleven Southern states that seceded from the Union, also called the Confederate States of America.
6. Union Blockade - A Union strategy to cut off trade to Southern ports.
7. Defensive war - Where at least one side is mainly trying to defend itself from another, as opposed to a war where both sides are trying to invade and conquer each other.
8. Ironclad Ships - Ships outfitted with thick metal to withstand and block incoming cannon fire.
9. Siege - A military operation in which enemy forces surround a town or building, cutting off essential supplies, with the goal of forcing a surrender from those inside.
10. Gulf of Mexico - An ocean basin in North America into which the Mississippi River empties.
11. Emancipation Proclamation - An ultimatum given by President Lincoln on September 22, 1862, declaring if the rebels did not end the fighting and rejoin the Union before January 1, 1863, all slaves in the rebellious states would be free.
12. Emancipate - To liberate; set free
13. Income Tax - Tax citizens must pay based on a percentage of earned income
14. Inflation - An economic condition in which a rise in prices leads to a decrease in the value of money.
15. Tax-in-kind - A tax which required farmers to give the Confederate government one-tenth of their crops.
16. Copperheads - Northerners who opposed the war and wanted the South (with their slaves) brought back into the Union were called.
17. Trench Warfare - A type of combat in which opposing troops fight from long narrow ditches facing each other
18. Total War - A war where the “rules” of warfare are disregarded. Armies can use any weapons, destroy territory, and harm civilians.
19. Secede - To leave; break away
20. Experienced generals were a major strength of the South during the Civil War.
21. Civilians - Citizens who do not serve in the army.
22. Gettysburg Address - A famous speech delivered by Abraham Lincoln on November 19, 1863, to dedicate a cemetery for Union soldiers killed at the Battle of Gettysburg.
23. Grant’s Canal - In an unsuccessful attempt to alter the course of the Mississippi River (in which to get around Confederate guns at Vicksburg), General Grant ordered his men to dig what became known as this waterway across the peninsula at De Soto Point.
24. Habeas Corpus - The name given to the Constitutional right given to all United States citizens which requires charges to be filed or a hearing before they are jailed.
25. Draft law - A law passed in 1863, which required all able-bodied males between the ages of 20 and 45 to serve in the military if they were called.
26. Anaconda Plan - A Union strategy to cut off trade to Southern ports.
27. General William Tecumseh Sherman - General ordered by Ulysses S. Grant to wage total war across all of Georgia - Atlanta to the seaport of Savannah.
28. General Robert E. Lee - A brilliant military officer from Virginia who declined President Lincoln’s request to fight for the Union. Instead, he became the military commander for the Confederacy.
29. General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson - A Confederate general who fought in the Battle of Bull Run and stood his ground so defiantly he was given the nickname “Stonewall.”
30. General George McClellan - A general in Lincoln’s Union army who was able to organize and transform inexperienced young men into an army of well-trained soldiers, he was unable to attack aggressively on the battlefield
31. General Ambrose Burnside - In November 1862, Lincoln appointed this general to replace McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac.
32. General Ulysses S. Grant - Served as general to the “Army of the Tennessee” and later promoted to Commander in Chief of the Union army, his efforts in capturing Fort Henry and Fort Donelson helped to seize control of the Mississippi River from the Confederacy.
33. General Albert Sidney Johnston - A Confederate general who led a surprise attack on Grant’s forces at the Battle of Shiloh, where he was wounded in the leg and bled to death while commanding his troops.
34. Admiral David Dixon Porter - This commander of the navy, bravely ran his gunboats past Vicksburg’s cannons in an attempt to seize control of the river south of the city. He successfully provided transport to Grant’s 17,000 soldiers thus allowing them to lay siege to Vicksburg.
35. General George Pickett - Confederate general who ordered his men to charge through an open field and up a steep hill in an unsuccessful attempt to break the Union line.
36. General Philip Sheridan - General ordered by Ulysses S. Grant to wage total war on Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley.
37. Battle of Antietam - A battle occurring near Sharpsburg, Maryland on September 17, 1862, which was the bloodiest single-day battle in American history.
38. Miller’s Cornfield - The site of some of the most savage fighting during the Battle of Antietam and where many Americans lost their lives.
39. Marye's Heights - A fortified ridge above Fredericksburg which Union soldiers tried to take, which resulted in devastating loss of Union life from Confederate rifle and artillery fire.
40. Battle of Fredericksburg - The most one-sided battle of the Civil War beginning on December 11th, 1862, in which Union soldiers suffered twice as many casualties as the Confederates.
41. Battle of Chancellorsville - A battle occurring in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, considered to be General Robert E. Lee's most "perfect battle" because of his risky decision to divide his army in the presence of a much larger Union force, resulting in a significant Confederate victory.
42. Battle of Shiloh - Known as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing, this two-day battle resulted in more Americans killed or wounded than in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War combined
43. Capture of New Orleans - This event, which occurred April 25 – May 1, 1862, resulted in the successful capture of a key city in Louisiana after the Confederates miscalculated where the Union army would strike along the Mississippi River.
44. Siege of Vicksburg - A six-week land and naval campaign lasting from May 18, 1863 – July 4, 1863, where Union General Ulysses S. Grant forced the surrender of Confederate soldiers occupying a town situated on a 200-foot bluff above the Mississippi River.
45. Battle of Gettysburg - A 3-day battle which ended Confederate General Robert E. Lee's second invasion of the North. More than 50,000 men were killed or injured, making it the bloodiest battle of the American Civil War.

Part II – Map Analysis – The Anaconda Plan

* The Anaconda Plan was a Union plan to crush the Confederacy, economically. It is named after an anaconda snake because the Union intended to metaphorically “squeeze the South to death.”
* The “snake” would overtake Richmond, Virginia (the Confederate capitol). The “snake” would then suffocate the South by blockading her seaports, this would prevent weapons and supplies the South desperately needed from arriving from Europe.
* The “snake” would then separate the southern states from Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana by controlling the Mississippi River. Controlling the river would also cut off a major supply route needed by the South.