

## Lesson Plan

# The American Civil War – The First Modern War

*Living history is used to help students understand the role technology played in the war*

**Grades: 6-9**

**Length of time:** Approximately 45 minutes

**Goals:** Students will better understand the effect of enhanced technology used for and on the common soldier.

### Materials Used:

1. A living history presenter dressed in Civil War era clothing with items from the time period.
2. Visuals of new technologies contained on a flash drive (provided) – to be shown using the museum video projector.
3. Music from the CDs (provided) to set the stage for conditions of Southern participants caused by the Union blockade and strategy.
4. Smooth bore and rifled barreled weapons

### Procedure:

1. Play the song “Goober Peas” (1minute, 50 seconds) on the Sons of Dixie CD. Ask students to identify goober peas (peanuts). Explain that total war had reduced Southerners to a diet of peanuts because other food stuffs were in very short supply and the population was starving.
2. Ask students to brainstorm new technologies that made the civil war so deadly. There were over 600,000 Americans killed. (Visuals on Flash Drive)
  - a. railroads
  - b. telegraph (communications)
  - c. balloons
  - d. exploding shells
  - e. optics
  - f. ironclad ships
  - g. steam power
  - h. breach loaders
  - i. submarines (C.S.S. Hunley)
  - j. **rifled barrel** (leave last slide up)
3. Explain the development of the rifled barrel from the smooth bore.
  - a. All early weapons were loaded from the muzzle using several steps.
  - b. Ignition was obtained using flint and flash pan.
  - c. Barrels were smooth – accuracy was poor. Only a front site was needed.
4. In the 1850’s barrel technology used lands and grooves set in a spiral. (last slide)
  - a. Ignition was now accomplished with a cap instead of loose powder.

- b. The “rifling” caused the bullet to spin, increasing accuracy out to 500 yards.
  - c. Bullets could now be prepared for use at a later date and stored in a cartridge box. Caps could be stored in a cap box.
5. Demonstrate the loading of a muzzle loader using props. *No live ammo!*
  6. Allow students to examine the Civil War artifacts.
  7. Choose a student demonstrator or demonstrators to model clothing and hold era weapons.
  8. Explain most Civil War weapons had one shot. The bayonet was used when reloading was not practical. If bayonets were not attached, the empty rifle was used as a club.
  9. Ask for any questions and send them to do the museum timeline.