In the first two years of the war, neither side gained a decisive victory over the other.

A long war can cause much death and destruction and leave a bitter legacy.

Ulysses S. Grant
Battle of Shiloh cavalry
Seven Days' Battles
Battle of Antietam

In the summer of 1861, President Lincoln gave George McClellan command of the Union army in the East. The army had recently been defeated at Bull Run. Within months, McClellan restored the soldiers’ confidence and organized and trained an army that could defeat the Confederates. But while Lincoln kept urging him to attack Richmond, McClellan kept drilling his troops.

Lincoln said McClellan had “the slows.” While McClellan was stalling in the East, another general was winning victories in the West.

That victorious Union general in the West was Ulysses S. Grant. In civilian life, he had failed at many things. But Grant had a simple strategy of war: “Find out where your enemy is, get at him as soon as you can, strike at him as hard as you can, and keep moving on.”

In February 1862, Grant made a bold move to take Tennessee. Using ironclad gunboats, Grant’s forces captured two Confederate river forts. These were Fort Henry on the Tennessee and Fort Donelson on the nearby Cumberland. (See map on next page.) The seizure of Fort Henry opened up a river highway into the heart of the South. Union gunboats could now travel on the river as far as northern Alabama. When the people of Nashville, Tennessee, heard the forts were lost, they fled the city in panic. A week later, Union troops marched into Nashville.

**A VOICE FROM THE PAST**

[S]oon as I feel that my army is well organized and well disciplined and strong enough, I will advance and force the Rebels to a battle on a field of my own selection. A long time must elapse before I can do that.

General George McClellan, quoted in *Civil War Journal: The Leaders*

**MAIN IDEA**

**WHY IT MATTERS NOW**

**TERMS & NAMES**

**Union Victories in the West**

**CALIFORNIA STANDARDS**

8.10.4 Discuss Abraham Lincoln’s presidency and his significant writings and speeches and their relationship to the Declaration of Independence, such as his “House Divided” speech (1858), Gettysburg Address (1863), Emancipation Proclamation (1863), and inaugural addresses (1861 and 1865).

8.10.5 Study the views and lives of leaders (e.g., Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee) and soldiers on both sides of the war, including those of black soldiers and regiments.

8.10.6 Describe critical developments and events in the war, including the major battles, geographical advantages and obstacles, technological advances, and General Lee’s surrender at Appomattox.

CST1 Students explain how major events are related to one another in time.

HI1 Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.
The Battle of Shiloh

After Grant’s river victories, Albert S. Johnston, Confederate commander on the Western front, ordered a retreat to Corinth, Mississippi. Grant followed. By early April, Grant’s troops had reached Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River. There he waited for more troops from Nashville. Johnston, however, decided to attack before Grant gained reinforcements. Marching his troops north from Corinth on April 6, 1862, Johnston surprised the Union forces near Shiloh Church. The Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee turned into the fiercest fighting the Civil War had yet seen.

Commanders on each side rode into the thick of battle to rally their troops. One Union general, William Tecumseh Sherman, had three horses shot out from under him. General Johnston was killed, and the command passed to General Pierre Beauregard. By the end of the day, each side believed that dawn would bring victory.

That night, there was a terrible thunderstorm. Lightning lit up the battlefield, where dead and dying soldiers lay in water and mud. During the night, Union boats ran upriver to ferry fresh troops to Grant’s camp. Grant then led an attack at dawn and forced the exhausted Southern troops to retreat.

The cost of the Union victory was staggering. Union casualties at Shiloh numbered over 13,000, about one-fourth of those who had fought. The Confederates lost nearly 11,000 out of 41,000 soldiers. Describing
the piles of mangled bodies, General Sherman wrote home, “The scenes on this field would have cured anybody of war.” Congressmen criticized Grant for the high casualties and urged Lincoln to replace him. But Lincoln replied, “I can’t spare this man—he fights.”

**The Fall of New Orleans**

The spring of 1862 brought other bad news for the Confederacy. On April 25, a Union fleet led by David Farragut captured New Orleans, the largest city in the South. Rebel gunboats tried to ram the Union warships and succeeded in sinking one. Farragut’s ships had to run through cannon fire and then dodge burning rafts in order to reach the city. Residents stood on the docks and cursed the Yankee invaders, but they were powerless to stop them.

The fall of New Orleans was a heavy blow to the South. Mary Chesnut of South Carolina, the wife of an aide to President Davis, wrote in her diary, “New Orleans gone—and with it the Confederacy. Are we not cut in two?” Indeed, after the victories of General Grant and Admiral Farragut, only a 150-mile stretch of the Mississippi remained in Southern hands. The Union was well on its way to achieving its goal of cutting the Confederacy in two. But guarding the remaining stretch of the river was the heavily armed Confederate fort at Vicksburg, Mississippi.

**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER**

1. **Location** Where did most of the early Union victories take place? Where did early Confederate victories take place?

2. **Region** Why did much of the fighting take place in the Virginia-Maryland region?
Lee Claims Victories in the East

Meanwhile, also in the spring of 1862, McClellan finally made his move to try to capture Richmond. He planned to attack the Confederate capital by way of a stretch of land between the York and James rivers. McClellan succeeded in bringing his troops within a few miles of Richmond.

But in June 1862, Robert E. Lee took charge of the Army of Northern Virginia and proceeded to turn the situation around. Lee sent Jeb Stuart and his **cavalry**—soldiers on horseback—to spy on McClellan. With about 1,000 men, Stuart rode around the whole Union army in a few days and reported its size back to Lee. Lee then attacked McClellan’s army. The two sides clashed for a week, from June 25 to July 1, 1862, in what became known as the **Seven Days’ Battles**. The Army of Northern Virginia suffered heavier losses, but it forced McClellan’s army to retreat.

In late August, the Confederates won a second victory at Bull Run, and Union troops withdrew back to Washington. Within just a few months, Lee had ended the Union threat in Virginia.

Lee Invades the North

Riding a wave of victories, General Lee decided to invade the Union. He wrote to tell President Davis of his plan. Lee thought it was a crucial time, with the North at a low point. Without waiting for Davis’s response, Lee crossed the Potomac with his army and invaded Maryland in early September 1862.

Lee had several reasons for taking the war to the North. He hoped a victory in the North might force Lincoln to talk peace. The invasion would give Virginia farmers a rest from war during the harvest season. The Confederates could plunder Northern farms for food.

Lee hoped the invasion would show that the Confederacy could indeed win the war, which might convince Europe to side with the South. By this time, both Britain and France were leaning toward recognizing the Confederacy as a separate nation. They were impressed by Lee’s military successes, and their textile industry was now hurting from the lack of Southern cotton.

Bloody Antietam

Soon after invading Maryland, Lee drew up a plan for his campaign in the North. A Confederate officer accidentally left a copy of Lee’s battle plans wrapped around three cigars at a campsite. When Union troops stopped to rest at the abandoned campsite, a Union soldier stumbled on the plans. The captured plans gave McClellan a chance to stop Lee and his army.
McClellan went on the attack, though he moved slowly as always. On September 17, 1862, at Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg, Maryland, McClellan's army clashed with Lee's. The resulting Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest day in all of American history. A Confederate officer later described the battle.

**A VOICE FROM THE PAST**

Again and again . . . by charges and counter-charges, this portion of the field was lost and recovered, until the green corn that grew upon it looked as if it had been struck by a storm of bloody hail. . . . From sheer exhaustion, both sides, like battered and bleeding athletes, seemed willing to rest.

John B. Gordon, quoted in *Voices of the Civil War*

After fighting all day, neither side had gained any ground by nightfall. The only difference was that about 25,000 men were dead or wounded. Lee, who lost as much as one-third of his fighting force, withdrew to Virginia. The cautious McClellan did not follow, missing a chance to finish off the crippled Southern army. Lincoln was so fed up that he fired McClellan in November, 1862. In the next chapter, you will learn about the historic action Lincoln took after the Battle of Antietam.
Chapter 16 ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES
Briefly explain the significance of each of the following.
1. Fort Sumter
2. Robert E. Lee
3. border state
4. blockade
5. hygiene
6. rifle
7. ironclad
8. Ulysses S. Grant
9. Battle of Shiloh
10. Battle of Antietam

REVIEW QUESTIONS
War Erupts (pages 481–487)
1. How and when did the Civil War start? (HI1)
2. What advantages did the North have at the beginning of the war? (HI1)
3. What were the war strategies of the two sides? (HI1)

Life in the Army (pages 488–492)
4. What was the typical Civil War soldier like? (HI1)
5. Why did so many people volunteer to fight in the Civil War? (HI1)
6. Why was the incidence of disease so high among Civil War soldiers? (HI2)
7. How did the use of rifles and minié balls change war tactics? (HI2)

No End in Sight (pages 493–497)
8. What goal of the Union strategy did Grant further, and how did he do it? (HI1)
9. Why did the North have such a hard time capturing Richmond, Virginia? (HI2)
10. How did Lee’s appointment to head the Army of Northern Virginia affect the course of the war? (HI2)

CRITICAL THINKING
1. USING YOUR NOTES: COMPARING AND CONTRASTING
Using your completed chart, answer the questions. (HI2)
a. Which side seemed likelier to win the war? Why?
b. Which side followed more closely its original strategy in the first two years of the war?

2. ANALYZING LEADERSHIP
Think about the leaders discussed in this chapter. Choose one. What character traits helped make him an effective leader? (HI1)

3. APPLYING CITIZENSHIP SKILLS
Which individuals or groups of people demonstrated good and poor citizenship during the war? Explain your choices. (HI1)

4. THEME: CITIZENSHIP
How could people on both sides of the Civil War believe that they were being good citizens by fighting? (REPS)

5. MAKING DECISIONS
In your opinion, was Lincoln correct in deciding to go to war to save the Union? Explain your answer. (HI5)

VISUAL SUMMARY

The Civil War, 1861–1862

1861

March 4, 1861
Lincoln inaugurated.

April 12, 1861
Fort Sumter fired upon by rebel forces.

May 1861
Confederate Congress votes to set up capital in Richmond.

July 21, 1861
First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas)

1862

April 6, 1862
Battle of Shiloh

April 15, 1861
Lincoln calls on states to provide 75,000 militiamen.

April 25, 1862
Fall of New Orleans

May 1862
Union forces capture Fort Henry and Fort Donelson.

June 25 to July 1, 1862
Seven Days’ Battles

September 17, 1862
Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg)

November 1862
Lincoln relieves McClellan of command.

How did the consequences and effects of civil war that you predicted before you read the chapter compare with the actual conditions you read about?
1. What does the arrow in the east indicate? (8.10.6)
   A. movement of Union troops toward Richmond
   B. movement of resisting Confederate troops
   C. movement of Confederate troops to take New Orleans
   D. movement of Union troops up the Mississippi

2. Which of the following did the blockade prevent access to? (8.10.6)
   A. border states
   B. Confederate states
   C. Union states
   D. Union troops

3. Which of the following summarizes McClellan’s priority in leading his army into battle? (8.10.6)
   A. He will lead his troops into battle quickly.
   B. He refuses to go into battle without more troops.
   C. He wants to feel confident in his army’s readiness for battle.
   D. He intends to make a surprise attack.

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

[S]oon as I feel that my army is well organized and well disciplined and strong enough, I will advance and force the Rebels to a battle on a field of my own selection. A long time must elapse before I can do that.

General George McClellan, quoted in Civil War Journal: The Leaders

**ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT**

1. WRITING ABOUT HISTORY
   Assume the role of a soldier during the Civil War, either Union or Confederate, and write a letter home to your family. (REP4)
   - Use library resources to find written accounts from soldiers during the Civil War.
   - Use what you learn to write your own letter. Include details about your daily life and your feelings about the war.

2. COOPERATIVE LEARNING
   Work in a small group to develop a compromise that would have resolved the conflict between the North and the South. Have one member of your group take the position of a Northerner, another a Southerner, and a third the mediator between the two. (REP5)

**INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY**

DOING INTERNET RESEARCH

Life in the army training camps during the Civil War was difficult. Use the Internet to research army life. Then create a presentation about an aspect army life. (REP4)
   - Find primary sources about life in the army, such as diaries, letters, photographs, and news articles.
   - Choose a specific topic for your presentation. For example, you might focus on drawings, maps, and photos that show the design of a typical army camp, items used for cooking, lodging, sanitation, military drilling, and recreation, or firsthand accounts of camp life from letters and diaries.

For more about Civil War armies . . .