



Unit: Soldiers

Lesson 1.2: The Draft (Part 1)

Aim: To understand the concept of the draft as well as its place in local history during the Civil War era.

Objective: Students explore the concept of a draft and read about the Union draft in 1863.

Materials:

1. Overhead shared reading about the 1863 draft in New York
2. Primary source document links
3. “Reading a Primary Source Document” handout for each group
4. Blank paper, pencils

Procedure:

1. Students discuss the following three questions in small groups. Assign each group a **captain**, who makes sure that everyone participates, and a **secretary**, who records the group’s ideas.
 - What is the draft? (guess, if you don’t know)
 - Does the U.S. have a draft today?
 - What are the **pros and cons** (may need to define) of a volunteer army?
2. Share group ideas as a class. At this point, the teacher can clarify any misconceptions. Record the third question on chart paper for future reference.
3. Shared reading on overhead (see below).

A note about shared reading: During a shared reading session, the whole class is on the same “page”—everyone’s attention is focused on the same overhead transparency. The teacher models the initial reading in several ways. In addition to simply reading the passage aloud, slowly and clearly, he or she reveals thoughts and reading strategies for the group. Be it visualizing, making connections, or noticing new or interesting vocabulary, these thoughts are shared so that students see and understand what goes on in the mind of a good reader.

4. Students can paraphrase the reading together, paragraph by paragraph, or generate questions about it for the class to answer.

Group Activity: “Reading” Primary Source Documents

1. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group one of the documents provided. Ask groups to examine the documents carefully before filling out the “Reading a Primary Source Document” sheet. In addition, ask groups to generate a two-column list of observations about the documents. In the first column, they should record only objective observations, prompted by the words, “I see...” The second column is for subjective observations and questions, prompted by the words, “I think... or I wonder...” Again, each group should have a **captain** and a **secretary**.

Document links to draft riot primary documents:

- http://www.vny.cuny.edu/draftriots/DAY1/d1_fr_set.html Draft Rioters, 1863 (Virtual New York City exhibit on New York City Draft Riots, 1863)
- <http://historyproject.ucdavis.edu/imageapp.php?Major=AB&Minor=B&SlideNum=4.00> “Draft Riots, 1863, ‘Sacking a Drug Store in Second Avenue’”
- <http://blackhistory.harpweek.com/7Illustrations/CivilWar/HowtoEscapeTheDraftBI.htm> “How to Escape the Draft”
- www.boondocksnet.com/gallery/cartoons/cw/630829flin_amrr0102.html Political cartoon – “The Naughty Boy Gotham, Who Would Not Take the Draft”
- <http://memory.loc.gov> This is the link for a bounty poster entitled “24 Men Wanted” found on the Library of Congress’s American Memory Web pages.
At the splash page, click on Search.
At the Search page, type in “24 Men Wanted” and click Search again.
Choose the selection “24 Men Wanted” and this will take you to the image page.
Click on the thumbnail for a larger image.

2. Allow 15-20 minutes for groups to record their observations. Then share with class.
3. Ideally, teachers should display each document in turn on an overhead when it is time for whole class sharing. After all the groups have shared, students might reflect on these questions: What do these documents tell us about life in New York in the 1860s? What do they tell us about the draft and attitudes about the draft? How are the documents similar? How are they different?

In 1863 Congress passed a draft law in which President Lincoln ordered 300,000 men to be inducted into the Union Army in July. All men who could vote, between 20 and 35 years of age, as well as unmarried males of 35-45 years, could be drafted. However, draftees were allowed to either provide a substitute to serve their term or pay \$300 to the government for an exemption. The average male at that time only earned about \$300 a year. Most men needed this money to live and care for their families. Only the wealthiest New Yorkers could afford to pay such a large sum. This created a lot of anger and resentment among those less fortunate.

After the first names were drawn, angry mobs of men gathered in lower Manhattan. Three days of violence resulted in 115 lost lives, riots, looting, and more than \$1 million in damages. While some of the anger was directed toward the wealthy, African-Americans, who were exempt from the draft because they did not have the right to vote, were hit hardest by the attacks. They were stoned, beat with clubs, and lynched by the reckless mobs. Though there were also draft riots in the Northern states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Ohio, these were smaller and less violent.

Reading a Primary Source Document

1. Identify the document type. (Newspaper article, letter, map, advertisement, diary entry, photograph, illustration, cartoon, etc.)
2. Identify the date of the document. (When was the document created? How do you know?)
3. Identify the author or creator. (Who created the document? What do you know about him or her?)
4. Identify the audience. (What is the purpose of the document? Who was it written or created for?)
5. List 2-3 things the document tells you about life in Brooklyn or New York City during this period.
6. List 2-3 questions you have about the document. What would you ask its creator if he or she were alive today?