American Civil War

Significant Battles
The first engagement of the Civil War took place at Fort Sumter on April 12 and 13, 1861. After 34 hours of fighting, the Union surrendered the fort to the Confederates. From 1863 to 1865, the Confederates at Fort Sumter withstood a 22 month siege by Union forces. During this time, most of the fort was reduced to brick rubble.
Fort Sumter
Charleston Harbor, South Carolina

Union Commander: Major Anderson
Confederate Commander: General Beauregard

April 12-14, 1861
Casualties: None
Winner: Confederate
Significance:
• First battle of Civil War.
• Raised false hopes for a quick war.
• Lincoln then asked for 75,000 volunteers.
• General Beauregard was a student of Major Anderson while at Westpoint.
First Battle of Bull Run July 1861

Public demand pushed General-in-Chief Winfield Scott to advance on the South before adequately training Union troops. Scott ordered General Irvin McDowell to advance on Confederate troops stationed at Manassas Junction, Virginia. McDowell attacked on July 21, and was initially successful, but the introduction of Confederate reinforcements resulted in a Southern victory and a chaotic retreat toward Washington by federal troops.
First Bull Run
Manassas, Virginia
Union Commander: General Irwin McDowell
Confederate Commander: General Joe Johnston
July 21, 1861
Casualties: Union-2,446, Confederate-1,600
Winner: Confederate

Stonewall Jackson
Significance:

• **First large battle** of the war.
• **Confederates routed** an unprepared **Union** force.
• **Casualties shocked the North and South.**
• They now believed **the war would not be quick nor easy.**
• During this battle, General Thomas J. Jackson earned the name, “Stonewall” by inspiring his troops to stand firm under the Union attack.
Shiloh was a decisive and bloody battle. The South needed a win to make up for defeats in Kentucky and Tennessee. It also needed to stop the Union’s attack down the Mississippi Valley. Memphis and Vicksburg were now vulnerable, and after Corinth there was now doubt that those cities would be the next targets. Johnston and Beauregard made a surprise attack while the Union rested. Grant and his men lost their over-confidence after this near defeat. They now knew that this war was going to be, in the words of a Union Soldier, "A very bloody affair."
The Confederacy caught General Grant by surprise and almost destroyed his army the first day. On the second day Grant was reinforced and forced the Confederates back to Corinth.
Shiloh, Tennessee
Union Commander: General Ulysses Grant
Confederate: General Albert Sydney Johnston
April 6-7, 1862
Casualties: Union-13,047, Confederate-10,694
Winner: Union
Significance:
• This ended the Southern hope of ever regaining Tennessee.
• The first battle with truly large casualties. The casualties were higher than any America had ever seen.
• Grant temporarily lost his position in command.
• This greatly slowed the Union advance down the Mississippi valley.
General Albert Sydney Johnston was considered the finest general in either army before the war began. He bled to death on the first day of Shiloh from a wound to the leg while leading a charge through an orchard. To the right is a monument where he fell.
Antietam
The single bloodiest day of the Civil War

Generals McClellan and Lee
Lee invaded Maryland hoping the state would help the South. Instead, Lee was pinned down at Antietam creek by George McClellan after his plans were discovered wrapped around some cigars.
Antietam Creek
Sharpsburg, Maryland
Union Commander: General George McClellan
Confederate Commander: General Robert E. Lee
September 17, 1862
Casualties: Union-12,410
Confederate-13,724
Winner: Union…barely!
Confederate units:
(JL) = James Longstreet’s Corps
(SJ) = Stonewall Jackson’s Corps
Significance:
• One of only 2 major battles fought in the North.
• The bloodiest day of the war.
• The Union forced Lee back to the South.
• This victory was what Lincoln needed to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.
The Confederacy attempted to break the Union naval blockade.

- Union navy controlled the sea and blockaded southern ports.
- The southern economy was hurt because the South was prevented from selling and receiving goods.
- Some small, fast ships got through blockade, but the number of ships entering southern ports was reduced from 6,000 to 800 a year.
Clash of the Ironclads

- The Confederacy turned to a new type of warship—ironclads, or ships heavily armored with iron.
- The Confederacy Captured Union ship *Merrimack*, turned it into ironclad, and renamed it the *Virginia*.
- Ironclads successfully attacked the wooden ships of the Union.
- Met by a Union ironclad, the *Monitor*, in battle near Hampton Roads, Virginia, in March 1862 and it forced the Confederates to withdraw
  - Designed by John Ericsson
  - Had a revolving gun tower and thick plating
- The *Monitor’s* success saved the Union fleet and continued the blockade.
General Joseph Hooker took control of the Union Army after General Burnside made his blunder at Fredericksburg. One part of his army crossed the Rappahannock south of Fredericksburg, the other crossed the river 12 miles to the north at Chancellorsville. Hooker successfully outflanked Lee. Or so he thought....
At 6 PM on May 2nd, Jackson launched his attack on the unsuspecting Union flank. Meanwhile Jackson himself was wounded by his own men. He died a few days later. Hooker ordered his forces to attack from the south and they were successful in driving back the rebels. This force was ordered to advance and attack Lee's main body from the rear. Unfortunately, the inactivity of Hooker's forces in front of Lee allowed him to turn his army to the rear. The Union forces were forced back across the Rappahannock. Once again Lee's superior generalship and Union incompetence had bested a Union forces twice his size.
Chancellorsville, Virginia

Union Commander: General Joseph Hooker

Confederate Commander: Robert E. Lee

May 1-4, 1863

Casualties: Union-17,278 Confederates-12,821

Winner: Confederacy
Significance:
• Hooker was out maneuvered by Lee and Stonewall Jackson.
• Considered the greatest Confederate victory of the war.
• Stonewall Jackson was accidentally shot by his own troops. He died a week later.
At the time of the Civil War, the Mississippi River was the single most important economic feature of the continent. Confederate forces closed the river, which hurt the northern economy. Grant realized that Vicksburg could not be taken by storm and decided to lay siege to the city. Slowly his army established a line of trenches and dirt forts around Vicksburg and cut it off from supply and communications with the outside world.
Starting in May Union forces constructed thirteen trenches aimed at different points along the Confederate defense. In June they dug up to the Confederate line, tunneled underneath, and blew up the tunnels filled with black powder to destroy the rebel trenches. The rebels were out of food, out of ammunition and they were clearly losing. They surrendered on July 4th.
Vicksburg, Mississippi
Union Commander: General Ulysses Grant
Confederate: General Joseph E. Johnston
May 19- July 4 1863
Casualties:
Union Casualties: 10,142
Confederate Casualties: 9,091
Winner: Union
Significance:
• Grant was bogged down for 3 months
• It was the most important victory in the west.
• Vicksburg was the key to the Mississippi.
• The Confederacy was split in two by the mighty river.
Gettysburg

Little Roundtop

Robert E. Lee
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
Union Commander: General George Meade
Confederate Commander: Robert E. Lee
July 1-3, 1863
Casualties: Union-23,049
Confederate-28,063
Winner: Union
After success at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, Lee invades the north again. After trying to break the union lines for 2 days, Lee tries a frontal assault on entrenched union forces. This was known as Pickett’s charge. This attempt failed miserably. Lee ultimately retreats to Virginia.
Significance:
• The turning point of the war.
• This would be the last chance for the South to win the war and threaten the North.
Joshua Chamberlain. Former teacher turned hero at Gettysburg.

Colonel Chamberlain and the 20th Maine held the extreme left flank of the Union line against a fierce rebel attack, and the surrender of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox, when Grant chose Chamberlain to receive the formal surrender of weapons and colors.
During 1864, Union campaigns in the East and South dealt crippling blows to the Confederacy.

- Lincoln was impressed with Grant’s victories; gave him command of Union army.
  - Grant forced Lee to fight series of battles in Virginia that stretched Confederate soldiers and supplies to limit.

- **Wilderness Campaign**: series of battles designed to capture Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, in 1864.
  - Grant kept moving toward Richmond but suffered huge casualties.
  - Failure to capture Richmond by election of 1864 distressed Lincoln.
After burning Atlanta, Union General William T. Sherman cuts loose from his own supply lines. He has his soldiers eat food from Georgia’s farmlands, then destroy the farms and railroads and move on.

The entire South—man, woman, and child—is against us. We are not fighting just an army but a whole people. We must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war. The more awful we make war, the sooner it will end.

Marching 15 miles a day, Sherman’s army destroys an area 50 miles wide and 300 miles long.

Georgia’s farms are defended by old men and teenage boys. They have little equipment. They are no match for Sherman’s army.

Meanwhile, 40,000 Confederate soldiers go north to attack Nashville, Tennessee, to try to distract Sherman. Union troops in Tennessee cut the rebels to pieces.

On December 21, 1864, Sherman captures Savannah, Georgia. Union ships are waiting with fresh supplies.

Savannah is my Christmas present to President Abraham Lincoln. In a few months the Civil War will end near Richmond.
Atlanta, Georgia (Sherman’s march to the sea)
Union Commander: General William Sherman
Confederate Commander: General John Hood
July 20-September 2, 1864
Casualties: Union-31,623
Confederate-35,044
Winner: Union
Significance:
The siege of Atlanta by General Sherman ended with the burning of the city by Union troops. After burning the city, Sherman began his famous march to the sea, during which his troops looted and plundered their way across Georgia, destroying nearly everything in their path.
On April 9, 1865 Robert E. Lee surrendered his army of Northern Virginia in a little village called Appomattox Courthouse. Lee surrendered formally to Ulysses S. Grant. The papers of formal surrender were signed in the home of Wilmer Mclean, whose first house was damaged during the first battle of the Civil War.
Lee surrendered to Grant in this home.