



Making the Blockade a “Ria”lity: How Drowned River Valleys Assisted in Blockading Confederate Ports

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Grade Level 7th
Duration 2 - 3 class periods

National Standards

GEOGRAPHY

Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

3. How to analyze the spatial organization of people places, and environments on Earth's surface

Element 6: Uses of Geography

17. How to apply geography to interpret the past

AZ Standards

ELA

Reading

Key Ideas and Details

7.RI.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

7.RI.2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing

7.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7.W.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

Arizona Social Science Standards

GEOGRAPHY

Global interconnections and spatial patterns are a necessary part of geographic reasoning.

7.G4.1 Analyze cultural and environmental characteristics among various places and regions of the world.

7.G4.2 Explain how the relationship between the human and physical characteristics of places and production of goods influences patterns of world trade.

HISTORY

Economic, political, and religious ideas and institutions have influenced history and continue to shape the modern world.

7.H3.2 Analyze how economic and political motivations impact people and events.

7.H3.4 Explain the influence of individuals, groups, and institutions on people and events in historical and contemporary settings.

Overview

Strategy is a key element when planning a military operation, but when that alone is not enough what else can be used to gain an advantage, or pull off a plan? President Lincoln, his General-in-Chief Winfield Scott, and later the Blockade Strategy Board, were left with the question of how they were going to prevent Confederate trade with Europe

while utilizing a limited navy. As has been the case with many battles and wars in history, the physical geography of the area in question played a significant role in the formulation of their strategy, which came to be known as the Anaconda Plan.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will learn how the physical geography, specifically rias (drowned river valleys) along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, influenced the formulation of the Civil War Anaconda Plan.

Materials

- Computer and LCD projector
- Presentation PowerPoint
- Report #1 Map of Confederate Controlled Coastline
- Report #2 Map of Confederate Controlled Coastline w/Ports and Rivers
- Report – Port at Fernandina, FL
- Report – Port at Mobile, AL
- Report – Port at Savannah, GA
- Report – Port at Wilmington, NC
- Report – Port at Charleston, SC
- Assessment – Making the Blockade a “Ria”lity I am Poem
- Assessment – Making the Blockade a “Ria”lity Essay and Grading Criteria
- Rulers (1 or 2 per group)
- Political cartoon of Anaconda Plan
- South Atlantic Union Blockade Squadron

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Explain the concept of a drowned river valley, and the significance they had on the creation of the Anaconda Plan.
2. Formulate a solution to the problem of blockading Southern ports with a limited navy using the geography of the region.

Procedures

Prerequisite Knowledge: Students have already been exposed to the events at the beginning of the Civil War and know the significant differences between the Union and Confederacy, such as resources.

SESSION ONE

1. Project the Presentation PowerPoint. Show slide two to the class and pose the question to them: “How do you plan to stop the South from trading with Europe?”
 - Allow a few minutes for the class to study the map and formulate their answers.

- Take an additional minute or two to have students turn to a neighbor to share and compare their solutions.
 - Have volunteers share their answers and discuss for a few minutes.
2. Show slide three and discuss the political cartoon of the Anaconda Plan. Discussion could include the following points from Library of Congress Historical Issue-Analysis and Decision Making (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/collections/cwmaps/thinking.html>):
 - Propaganda is a tool used to persuade citizens to the author's point-of-view. The material is designed to have a psychological impact on the viewer.
 - Students can study commercial publisher J. B. Elliott's map entitled Scott's great snake. Published in 1861, this map is a cartoon depiction of Gen. Winfield Scott's plan to defeat the South both economically and militarily - a plan the press ridiculed as the "Anaconda Plan."
 - Students can use this map as an example of one person's point-of-view on the course of the Civil War.
 - Students can determine what opinion this cartographer's map represents. Who was the cartographer trying to influence with this map?
 - Continue this discussion with the students by having them consider what obligation they believe a newspaper might have to support the defenders of the nation? What is gained by periodicals publishing critiques such as Elliott's? What risks does a nation face in being critical of its own military forces, particularly during war?
 3. Show slides 4-6 presenting the class with their task, and limitations.
 - Break class into groups of 3 or 4, review directions, and answer any questions
 4. Show slide 7 - “Report 1” to the class and review the information
 - Give each group Report #1 Map of Confederate Controlled Coastline and instruct them to place 15 pencil point dots on the map in the places they feel would most effectively blockade the South.
 - Once complete, each group should answer the questions that accompany the map.
 - Have groups volunteer to share their solutions and answers to the questions with the class.
 5. Show slide 8 - Report #2 Map of Confederate Controlled Coastline w/Ports and Rivers and instruct them to consider the changes to the map along with limitations stated and make any changes to the 15 dots they placed
 - Again, as before, all groups should answer accompanying questions.

- Share with class, discuss changes and answers to questions.

6. End this session with a closing question, "What is the biggest problem with the plan as it is now?"

SESSION TWO

7. Restate closing question from the previous day and solicit responses from the students.
 8. Show slide 9-10 and advise that their scouts have returned with information on the ports listed on the maps of individual ports. Explain the concept of a drowned river valley, and that each of these ports happens to be located in a ria. Show the internet link of Europe that illustrates as the sea level rose, the river valleys filled in with water and made much narrower areas. Also help the students interpret primary source maps such as the ones used in this lesson. The darkened areas indicate shallow water where ships probably could not navigate. Therefore, ships should stay out of these areas.

- Hand each group a different port report.
- Advise each group is responsible for their own port and has a fleet of 5 ships.
- Using an 1/8 inch long dark and heavy line to represent each ship (or you can use the South Atlantic Union Blockade Squadron ships if you like), how would you position your 5 ships? Each group needs to answer the accompanying questions.
- Once all groups have finished, have them report back with their answers.

9. Share the results of the blockade with the students (slide 11).

10. Read the following description of the effects of the blockade on the Southern cotton industry from the accounts of Edwin Pynchard. (slides 12-13)
"[This?] reminds me of how when I was a boy we had to get our cotton to Brownsville during the war and send it through Mexico to the markets in Europe. From Brownsville and [?], Mexico, it was shipped across the ocean. One could see, the long wagon trains of cotton, drawn by oxen, all through the fall of the year as they slowly mended their way to the Mexican border. The reason for this was that part of the time the Texas ports were blockaded, and all the time enemies were on the watch to confiscate produce of any kind, and especially cotton, as it sold for fifty cents a pound or more, during the blockade.

"There would be from ten to twenty bales to the wagon and a train of wagons from ten to twenty in number. When they camped at night, they were drawn up in a circle to form a breastwork for defense from the robbers and Indians. These trips required from one to three months. If it was during rainy season, then they often had to camp by the creeks

and rivers until they run down, for you must remember this was before the day of the bridge."

10. Introduce assessment to students. (slide 14)

Assessment

Geography and ELA

There are two assessments for this lesson.

One assessment will ask the students to create an "I am" poem, taking on the role of a Union blockade ship, a ria, or one of the southern ports used in the case study. This assessment can be shared with the class on the following day and be graded according to the criteria given.

The second assessment will ask the students to draw on the knowledge and experience gained from the case study to complete an essay question. A 3 or better on the rubric is required to demonstrate mastery of the concepts covered in this lesson.

Extensions

Students could take a specific port and complete additional research about how the blockade was implemented and its effects on that port specifically to report back to the class

The concept of this lesson could be applied to many other military situations throughout history to show how the physical geography of the landscape impacted the battle or war.

For example: The Battle of Apache Pass between Union troops and the Apache Indians occurred in 1862 in the Chiricahua Mountains in Arizona. As a result of this battle, the Union army builds Fort Bowie at the pass of the mountains to keep the pass open for the remainder of the Civil War. This shows how the control of a pass can stop movement of armies or supplies just as the boats in the ria could be used as a blockade.

Sources

http://www.sos.georgia.gov/museum/html/flag_1861-1865.htm

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>

<http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war/1861/october/southern-ports-harbors.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Scott-anaconda.jpg>

<http://flickr.com/photos/strobis/48441030/>

<http://memory.loc.gov/>