

African-American Military Service During the Civil War

Lesson Question

How did the North and South view African Americans' military service in the Civil War?

Lesson Task

After reading two military recruitment posters, students write a four-paragraph essay about the ways the Union and Confederate armies differed in their view of African Americans in the Civil War. Students cite specific details from the posters to explain the central point of view each poster communicates.

NAEP Era: 5. Civil War and Reconstruction (1850 to 1877)

Focal Skill: Identify how authors convey point of view and purpose, using craft and structure.

Number of Documents: 2

Number of Days: 4-5

Common Core Standards

- CC reading standard (primary): RHSS.6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose
- CC reading standard (secondary): RHSS.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information
- CC writing standard: WHSS.6-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts

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[Suggested time: 1 session]

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[Suggested time: 2 sessions]

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 - Purpose, Process, Discussion

[Suggested time: 1/2 session]

CONNECT 16

- Purpose
- Cross-Document Discussion
 - Re-engage students in historical inquiry
 - Compare big ideas and details across documents
 - Help students articulate own thinking

[Suggested time: 1–2 sessions]

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- Teachers' Roles During Writing
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- Writing Outline
- Set Level of Writing Support
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OVERVIEW

[Suggested time: 5 minutes]

Content Objectives

Students will understand how and why the South and North viewed African Americans differently at this time:

- **The Confederacy** viewed blacks as the property of whites, able to do only menial jobs
- **The Union** came to see blacks as potential citizens, able to fight on their own behalf

Historical Thinking Objective

- Contextualization

Skill Objective

- Identify how authors convey point of view and purpose, using craft and structure.

Instructional Sequence

Before you begin the lesson you should share a brief agenda with students:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| HOOK | Together, we will look at a primary source document that shows some of the jobs African Americans had in the Northern military during the Civil War. |
| CONTEXT | We'll then review some background context about African-American service during this time. |
| DOCUMENTS | On your own, you will read two primary source documents, and we'll have a class discussion after each reading. |
| CONNECT | We'll discuss how the documents connect to the context and the lesson question. |
| WRITE | You'll write a four-paragraph explanatory essay in response to the lesson question. |

THE HOOK

[Suggested time: 10 minutes]

African Americans' Jobs in the Union Army

Purpose

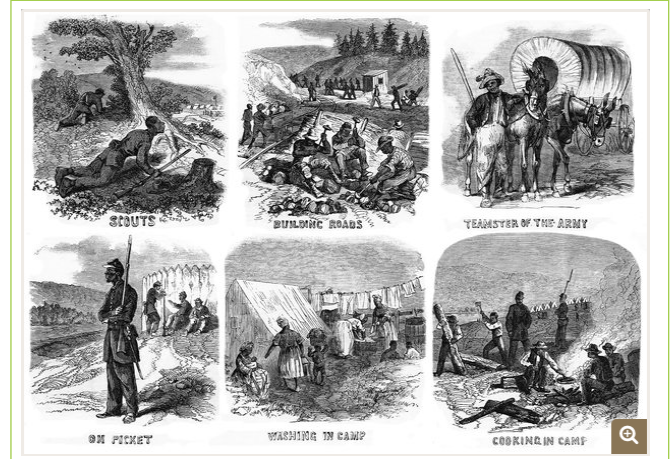
To provoke students' ideas and questions about the work that African Americans did in the Union and Confederate armies.

To give students a sense of the range of work needed to keep armies going during a war. (Students will likely have a one-dimensional view of military service, thinking only of the work of armed soldiers).

Process

- **Project** the image. **Tell** students that this print, from 1864, depicts the work that African-American men did for the Union army during the Civil War.
- **Tell** students to quietly observe the image for a few moments, including:
 - The images (people, settings, tools and artifacts, etc.)
 - The words
- As students share what they see, remind them that they are practicing the skill of “reading” visuals as well as text, a skill they will use with the two main documents in the lesson.
 - You may need to define terms like “Teamster of the army,” “On Picket,” and “Scouts.”
- **Ask** students to discuss, in pairs or table groups:
 - What jobs do you see?
 - Which jobs are directly involved with the fighting?
 - Which are more like support jobs?
- **Ask** students to discuss the **Think About It Question**: Which jobs, if any, do you think African Americans might have had in the Confederate Army?
- Allow a few minutes of open discussion; it is not important that students get to a “right” answer. You can let students know that they will be learning more about this in this lesson. Tell them that the big question they are exploring is: **How did the North and South view African Americans' military service in the Civil War?**

African Americans' Jobs in the Union Army, 1864



TRANSITION TO CONTEXT-SETTING

Transition students to the context slides by letting them know that they are now going to look in a little more detail at African-American military service during the Civil War.

Context slides are intended to serve as a support for a relatively quick “interactive lecture” with students. The goal is to both provide essential background information and engage students’ prior knowledge and thinking.

While you can certainly slow the process down according to your students’ needs, context is not intended to be a “deep dive” into slide images. Documents in the context slides serve the role of illustrating content, sparking quick observations and reactions, and making abstract ideas more concrete.

CONTEXT

[Suggested time: 25-30 minutes – to be completed in first session]

Context Overview

The purpose of these slides is to provide the background information that students need in order to understand how and why African Americans’ military service differed in the North and in the South. This content will help students connect the overarching goals of each side to their view of African American service, as this table suggests:

	War Aims	View of African Americans
South (Confederacy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form own country Preserve slavery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human property Able to do only menial support jobs in the war
North (Union)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve the Union End slavery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential citizens (eventually) Able to fight for their own freedom

The five Context slides focus on these ideas:

The Civil War Begins—The war aims of each side

Black Men Are Ready to Fight—African-American men’s desire to serve in the Union army

Lincoln and Congress Allow Blacks to Enlist—Changes in Federal law that allowed African-American men to serve as laborers and soldiers

Confederates Refuse to Arm Black Soldiers—Reasons the Confederate Army did not want African Americans to serve as soldiers

From Slaves to Soldiers—The meaning of service to African-American Union soldiers

Slide 1: THE CIVIL WAR BEGINS

Purpose

To give students basic background information that will help them, in their writing, draw some larger conclusions about **why** the North and the South viewed African-American military service so differently. At root: the South wanted to preserve slavery; the North to end it. This information should be review for students.

War Aims of Each Army

War Aims of the Confederacy	War Aims of the Union
To keep the system of slavery	To end slavery
To establish their own country	To keep the United States together

Suggested Process

- **Ask** students what they remember from previous lessons about the larger aims of the North and the South in the Civil War. Use the notes on the slides to jog students' memories and to have a brief conversation about these larger aims.
 - While the Confederate states frequently described the reasons they seceded from the Union in terms of “states rights,” they were motivated by the fear that the federal government would abolish slavery.
- **Ask** students the **Think About It** question: How do you think these war aims might connect to the role that each side wanted African Americans to play in the war?
- Allow a brief discussion; do not worry about getting to a “right” answer. It is OK if there is debate or uncertainty.
 - Remind students they will be reading documents to investigate the question: **How did the North and South view African Americans' military service in the Civil War?** and that they will learn more in the subsequent slides.

Slide 2: BLACK MEN ARE READY TO FIGHT

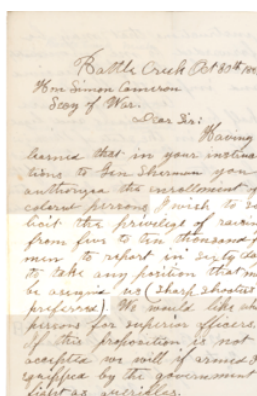
Purpose

To help students understand that as soon as the Civil War breaks out, African Americans throughout the North are clamoring to be allowed to enlist in the Union army.

Suggested Process

- **Point out** that this letter was written by an African-American man shortly after the start of the Civil War.
 - This letter is just one example; as soon as the war broke out, many African-American men clamored to be allowed to enlist in the Union army.
 - A federal law passed in 1792 forbade African Americans from serving in the federal military or

Black Men Are Ready to Fight



"I wish to solicit the privilege of raising from five to ten thousand free men to report in sixty days to take any position that may be assigned us (sharp shooters preferred)."

—Letter to U.S. Secretary of Defense
Simon Cameron from G. P. Miller
Battle Creek, Michigan October 30, 1861

state militias. For black men to serve, Congress needed to change this law.

- The idea of African Americans serving as armed members of the military was controversial to some whites at the time, and even those who supported the idea agreed that African Americans would need to serve under white commanding officers.
- **Read or ask** a student to read the text of the letter.
 - As you read and discuss the letter you may need to support students with some of the language, for example: solicit, sharp shooters.
- **Ask** students to paraphrase what the letter is asking for.
- **Ask** students the first **Think About It** question: How many volunteers does this free black man say he can gather in 60 days?
 - In addition to size of interest, make sure students notice the desire to serve as armed soldiers
- **Ask** students the second **Think About It** question: Why would so many black men be willing to drop everything and go to war? as a means of summarizing the Big Idea of this slide.
 - Help students to connect African Americans' desire to fight with the Union's war aim of ending slavery.

Slide 3: LINCOLN AND CONGRESS ALLOW BLACKS TO ENLIST

Purpose

To help students understand that white Northerners only accepted blacks as soldiers after pressure from African Americans and because of military necessity.

Suggested Process

- Read the slide title and **ask** students what they see in the image (an armed African American soldier).
- **Read or ask** students to read the introduction and the text that accompanies the slide image.
 - Black soldiers made up 10% of the Union military forces.
 - Nearly 40,000 black soldiers died over the course of the war (30,000 of infection or disease).
- **Ask** students the **Think About It** question: Why did the Federal government decide to allow African Americans to enlist?
 - Students may identify the pressure put on the government by African Americans as well as a pragmatic need for more armed soldiers.

Lincoln and Congress Allow Blacks to Enlist



A black Union soldier guards a row of 12-pounder "Napoleon" cannons.

- * 1862: U.S. Congress passes Militia Act, which allows African American to serve in the military as laborers or soldiers.
- * In all, 179,000 black men served in the U.S. military during the Civil War.
- * Most black Union soldiers were former slaves.

Slide 4: CONFEDERATES REFUSE TO ARM BLACK SOLDIERS

Purpose

To help students understand the reasons why the Confederacy wouldn't arm black men, even when it was losing the war and needed the additional soldiers.

Suggested Process

- **Read** the introduction.
- Explain that some slave owners had originally made slaves available for unarmed military work, but that they were becoming resistant due to the loss of labor on their plantations.
 - **Say:** While some in the Confederacy wanted to arm slaves to fight, many opposed this idea. Why was this the case?
- **Ask** students, for each reason on the slide, “What does this term mean?” For each reason, be sure the following ideas emerge:

Flight risk: Many believed that slaves would take the opportunity to escape.

Armed revolt/rebellion: Southerners were unwilling to give guns to African Americans because they feared armed revolt against whites.

Ability: Most whites believed that African Americans were only suited to be servants, not independent and brave.

White supremacy/superiority: The Confederacy was fighting the war to preserve its system of slavery and belief that African Americans were inferior to whites—allowing slaves to be soldiers would have contradicted those beliefs.
- To check for understanding **ask** students the **Think About It** question: Why didn't the Confederacy use African-American men as soldiers?

Additional Background

- In the first year of the war, slave owners willingly made their slaves available to the Confederate Army to perform a variety of tasks—grow and prepare food; forge horseshoes, nails, bridles, guns, and ammunition; transport cargo; build fortifications; place artillery; drive wagons; tend horses; and bury the dead. As the war drew on, however, many slave owners came to resent how the loss of slave labor disrupted their plantation production schedules; they also did not want to risk losing their slaves to disease, death, or running away.
- As the Confederate military began to lose more and more battles, some in the Confederacy called on the government to arm slaves to fight. They believed that this would save the lives of white soldiers and give the Confederacy a military advantage. Others vehemently rejected the idea and **the Confederacy never armed any African Americans to fight for its cause.**

Confederates Refuse to Arm Black Soldiers

Some reasons Confederates might have had for not arming black soldiers:

- * Flight risk
- * Armed revolt/rebellion
- * Doubts about their ability
- * White supremacy/superiority

Slide 5: From Slaves to Soldiers

Purpose

To help students understand the wider political and social consequences of African-American military service during the Civil War – specifically, that African Americans felt pride as soldiers, and believed their service earned them the right of U.S. citizenship.

Suggested Process

- **Read** the slide title.
- Point out to students that the two photos are a “before” and “after” of Private Hubbard Pryor, an enlistee in the Union army.
- **Ask** students to compare the two images. Prompt students to notice:
 - The state of Pryor’s clothing as a slave vs. the quality of his uniform
 - The fact that he is armed in the “after” picture
 - His posture and expression in each image
- **Ask:** What does the “after” picture communicate?”
 - Pride, professionalism, responsibility, etc.
 - By serving bravely in the Civil War, black soldiers challenged the era’s racist ideas about African American inferiority (for example, that African Americans lacked courage, intelligence, and ambition)
- **Read, or ask** a student to read aloud, the excerpt of the letter by Frederick Douglass.
 - Help students see that “get upon his person the brass letters U.S.” and “an eagle on his button” refer to a soldier’s uniform.
- **Ask** the **Think About It** question: For African Americans, what was important about being able to serve as a soldier?
 - Students may cite “the opportunity is given us to be men” and “he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States.”
 - After the war, the service of African-American men in the Union army helped to ensure passage of the 15th amendment to the Constitution, granting black men the right to vote.

From Slaves to Soldiers



“The opportunity is given us to be men. . . . Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters U.S.; let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on the earth or under the earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States.”

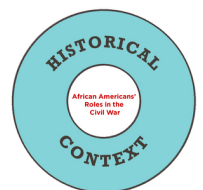
—Frederick Douglass

Slide 6: CONTEXT REVIEW: CIVIL WAR

Purpose

To review and take notes on key Context ideas and information that students will need to draw on in reading, discussion and writing.

Context Review



Process

- After discussing all the slides with students, take a few minutes to have students **write** in response to the two **Review Context** questions on the screen:
 - Why did the North and South need African Americans to serve in their armies?
 - Why did only the North allow them to fight?
- Tell students that their Context notes will be available under “My Notes” when they go to write.
- You may also wish to take notes on the questions in front of the class. Note that if you designate your notes as a ‘Class Note’, it will appear in the students’ view as a ‘Class Note.’

TRANSITION TO DOCUMENTS

After reviewing the Context slides say to students:

Even though the South did not want to arm African Americans, they did want them to play a role in the military. In the next stage of the lesson you will look at two army recruitment posters that were both recruiting African-American enlistees. One is from the Confederate Army and one is from the Union Army. Using close reading and observation, you will figure out the different ways these two armies viewed African Americans and their military service. After you read and take notes, you will write a four-paragraph essay explaining these differences using the details you uncover in your investigation of the posters.

DOCUMENTS

[Suggested time: 2 sessions]

Documents: Overview

Students read and compare two Civil War posters to understand how the South and North viewed African Americans at this time:

**“Wanted! 200 Negroes”
Confederate Poster, 1862**

The Confederacy viewed African Americans as the property of whites, able to do only menial jobs

**“Colored Citizens, to Arms!”
Union Poster, 1864**

The Union eventually came to see blacks as potential citizens, able to fight on their own behalf

The central reading skill is to explore how each poster conveys its author’s point of view and purpose, through both language and imagery.

Note: Students can work on these documents independently while you circulate and support their work. (See PD Doc on Supporting students during document work.)

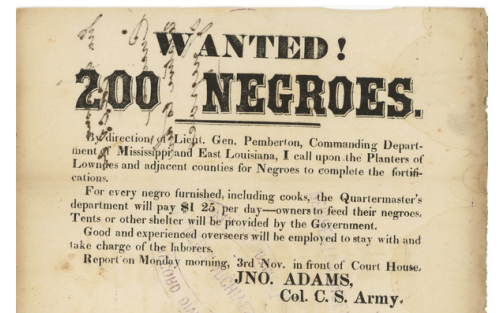
Document 1: WANTED! 200 NEGROES

Purpose

To help students uncover the Confederate perspective on African Americans' role in the military:

- They are slaves, so they labor without pay, at support roles only.
- They are property, so their owners are paid for their labor, not them.
- They are not fully human, with no freedom or dignity.

Confederate Army Recruitment Poster



Key Reading Challenge

- The word 'slave' never appears in the document. Students need to infer that the intended audience is slave owners, and that the creator's purpose is to recruit slave labor.
- You may want to preview with students that they will need to make inferences as well as pay attention to what is not mentioned in the text as they read.

Suggested Process

- Consider reading the document as a whole group, and modeling reading strategies. Use some of the discussion questions below while reading.
- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular passages or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

Document 1: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.



Purpose

Check for and deepen students'

- comprehension of the document
- grasp of the "Big Idea"—i.e., how the Confederate Army viewed African-American labor (as property able only to do menial tasks)
- understanding of how language and imagery convey this perspective

Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- *Zoom In* provides Source It, Read Closely, Gather Evidence, and Big Idea questions and prompts alongside this document. Depending on your class's needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” question, and use them to guide discussion

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students' responses to the “Big Idea” question:
 - What is the Confederacy's view of African Americans' role in the Civil War?
 - What is the strongest evidence in the document that supports your answer?
- Identify student responses that reflect understanding of the Big Idea, and good use of supporting evidence, and those that reflect confusion or misunderstanding.
- Select and project a range of student responses to the summary questions. You can choose model responses as well as responses that need development as a way to spark student discussion. (See the PD document and video on “Discussion Phase 1: Formative Assessment of Student Comprehension of Individual Documents” for more support on using students' responses to analyze their reading strengths and needs.)

Discuss the Source It Questions

Follow-up sourcing questions to **ask** include:

- What do we know about the creator of this poster? The audience?
- Why is knowing who *the audience* is important?
 - The audience was slave owners (not enslaved people themselves) and requires inference-making.
- What do you think the purpose was (to inform, persuade, etc.)?
 - The purpose is to recruit slave labor; that is, to **persuade** slave owners to hire out their slaves to the Confederate Army.
 - Encourage students to share their perspectives and why they think the way they do. **Ask** students: Why do you think the creator wrote the poster for this audience?

Discuss the Read Closely Questions

Help students think about who is *providing* the work and who is *doing* the work. **Ask** these follow-up questions to deepen students' thinking about the questions:

- Who were the “planters of Lowndes”?

- What job did overseers have?
 - Watching over slaves
- How might providing overseers persuade owners to provide the army with slaves?
 - Students need to infer that this was meant to reassure owners that their “property” would be safeguarded.
- Who are the “negroes” and “laborers” that this poster is referring to?
 - Enslaved African Americans

Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

Ask students: What do you think the Confederate Army was trying to communicate through the details it included? What do these details mean?

Be sure that students mention the following **key details**:

- Audience: “Planters of Lowndes”; “owners to feed their Negroes”
- Jobs for enslaved African Americans: complete fortifications; cook
- Owners to be paid \$1.25 for every slave they provide

Ask these questions to **deepen students’ thinking**:

- What jobs are not listed for African Americans to do in the army? Why might this be?
- Why are the owners being paid?
- How might the Army’s language and reasons have been persuasive to slave owners?

Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from connecting the specific details in the poster to the Big Idea about how the Confederate Army viewed African Americans and their role in the war. One way to articulate the Big Idea is:

- The Confederate Army viewed African Americans as the property of their owners, and who worked in support roles for no pay.

Anticipate these difficulties that students will have getting to the Big Idea:

- They may focus too much on smaller details (*The Confederate Army viewed slaves as cooks*)
- Or they may articulate ideas quite generally, without staying connected enough to the document details (*The Confederate Army viewed African Americans as slaves*)

Ask these questions to help students **identify and articulate the Big Idea**:

- We noticed a lot of important details. How do these details connect? Is there another way to think about this?
- How would you summarize the Confederate Army’s main perspective about African Americans and their role in the war?
- What seems like the strongest evidence to support this idea? Is there other evidence that is stronger? Why?

The idea here is not to push students towards the “right” answer, there are many possible ways to articulate the Big Idea, but to push them to engage in a rich discussion with one another in which they have to articulate their ideas and ground their thinking in the document.

Have students revise their notes. Allow students time to revise their notes after and/or during the discussion. Students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated the Big Idea.

Document 2: COLORED CITIZENS, TO ARMS!

Purpose

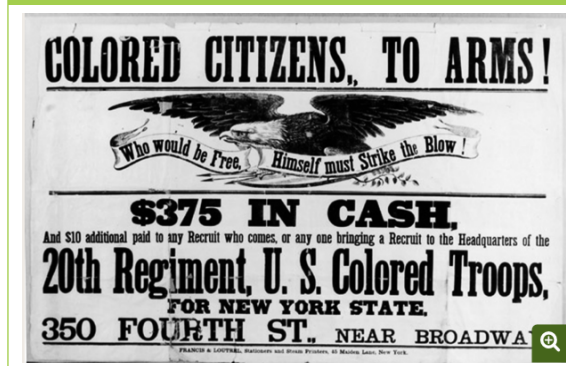
To help students uncover the Union Army’s perspective on African Americans’ role in the military:

- African Americans are potential citizens.
- They are capable of fighting for their own freedom and the freedom of enslaved people in the South.

Key Reading Challenge

While this document addresses its audience very explicitly (“Colored Citizens, to arms”) students still need to draw some inferences. For example, the poster seeks to recruit as soldiers free African Americans living in the North by telling them that they can help to end slavery for African Americans living under the Confederacy (“Who would be free, himself must strike the blow”).

Union Army Recruitment Poster



Suggested Process

- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular passages or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate.
- Draw students’ attention to differences between the Union poster and the Confederacy poster. For example, the Union poster will pay African Americans who enlist, whereas the Confederacy poster says it will pay whites for their slaves’ labor.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

Document 2: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.



Purpose

Check for and deepen students’

- comprehension of the document
- grasp of the “Big Idea”—i.e., how the Union Army viewed African Americans (as potential citizens and fighters)
- understanding of how the poster’s language and imagery convey this perspective

Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- *Zoom In* provides Source It, Gather Evidence and Big Idea questions and prompts alongside this document. Depending on your class's needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” question, and use them to guide discussion

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students' responses to the “Big Idea” question:
 - What is the Union's point of view about African Americans' role in the Civil War?
 - What is the strongest evidence in the document that supports your answer?
- Identify student responses that reflect understanding of the Big Idea, and good use of supporting evidence, and those that reflect confusion or misunderstanding.
- Select and project a range of student responses to the summary questions. You can choose model responses as well as responses that need development as a way to spark student discussion. (See the PD document and video on “Discussion Phase 1: Formative Assessment of Student Comprehension of Individual Documents” for more support on using students' responses to analyze their reading strengths and needs.)

Discuss the Source It Questions

Follow-up sourcing questions to **ask** include:

- What do we know about the creator of this poster?
 - Make sure students understand that the United States Army was the Union Army (the North).
- Why is knowing who *the audience* is important?
 - This poster recruited African Americans directly.
- What do you think the purpose was (to inform, persuade, etc.)?
 - The purpose of this poster is to persuade African Americans to join the U.S. Army

Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

Ask students: What do you think the Union Army was trying to communicate through the details it included? What do these details mean?

Be sure that students mention the following **key details**:

- “Colored citizens, to arms”
- “recruit”
- “U.S. Colored Troops, FOR NEW YORK STATE”
- \$375 in cash
- \$10 more dollars to any recruit who reports to the headquarters, or brings a recruit in

Ask these questions to **deepen students' thinking**:

- What does it mean that the Union Army is looking for “troops”? What kind of job would that be?
 - You want students to be able to identify that African Americans would serve as armed soldiers.
- Who is getting paid here? Why do you think this is different from what we saw in the Confederate poster?
- How might the language, images and design of the poster have been persuasive to African Americans?
 - Engage students in a broader discussion about content, form, persuasive language and design as tools for conveying a perspective. (E.g. The eagle is a symbol of the United States)

Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from connecting the specific details in the poster to the Big Idea about how the Union Army viewed African Americans and their role in the war. One way to articulate the Big Idea is:

- The Union Army viewed African Americans as U.S. citizens who could fight for the army.

Anticipate these difficulties that students will have getting to the Big Idea:

- They may focus too much on smaller details (*The Union Army viewed African Americans as recruits*)
- Or they may articulate ideas quite generally, without staying connected enough to the document details (*The Union Army viewed African Americans better than the Confederate Army*)

Ask these questions to help students **identify and articulate the Big Idea**:

- We noticed a lot of important details. How do these details connect? Is there another way to think about this?
- How would you summarize the Union Army's main perspective about African Americans and their role in the war?
- What seems like the strongest evidence to support this idea? Is there other evidence that is stronger? Why?

The idea here is not to push students towards the “right” answer, there are many possible ways to articulate the Big Idea, but to push them to engage in a rich discussion with one another in which they have to articulate their ideas and ground their thinking in the document.

Have students revise their notes. Allow students time to revise their notes after and/or during the discussion. In particular, students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated the Big Idea.

CONNECT

[suggested time: ½ session]

Purpose

Before students write in response to a historical question, they need opportunities to talk. They need to clarify their understanding of the documents and how they connect with the larger context and the question they are answering. Your job as a *Zoom In* teacher is to create these discourse opportunities.

Cross-Document Discussion

In this discussion the main goal is to help students to synthesize their learning across documents and connect back to the context and the larger historical question under investigation. This supports the historical thinking skills of corroboration and contextualization.

Three major moves should happen here:

- Re-engage students in the historical inquiry
- Support students in comparing big ideas and details across documents
- Support students in articulating their own thinking, while listening and responding to their peers

A) Re-engage students in the historical inquiry

Begin by reminding students of the lesson question and the larger historical context. Do an initial informal assessment of what “big picture” students have walked away with. **Say** to students:

- “You’ve had a chance to examine recruitment posters from the Confederate and the Union armies. Remember that we are thinking about the question: **How did the Northern and Southern armies view African Americans’ military service in the Civil War?**”
- “Before we look at how these posters help us answer this question, let’s remind ourselves about what was going on around the time these posters were made.”
 - What did the Union and Confederate armies need? Why? Would it make sense for them to go about filling this need in the same way?
 - How did African Americans’ service in the military change during the Civil War? Why did this change happen? Did it happen everywhere?
 - > Spend just a few minutes having students refresh their memories about the content from the context slides.
 - How does all of this help us think about the differences in perspectives that the Confederate and Union Armies had about African-American service?
 - What was your big takeaway from these posters?
 - > Discuss briefly; you will revisit this in greater depth using the t-chart.

The purpose of this initial phase is to prime students’ thinking and to give you an initial assessment of their general level of understanding. You do not need to spend a long time on these questions because you will dig in deeper in the next phases.

B) Support students in comparing big ideas and details across documents

Display the Connect Tab.

Tell students:

- Let's look across these two documents at the Big Ideas you identified.

The Connect tab will display the key discussion question about the main difference between the two armies view of African-American service during the Civil War.

Connect will also display a t-chart labeled “Confederacy (The South)” and “Union (the North)” that displays student notes on the Big Idea question, and their supporting evidence. You can choose one student’s work to project to guide the discussion, or you can project notes you’ve ‘starred’ while using the Teacher Dashboard to review students’ Big Idea notes.

CONNECT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These posters show differences between the Union and Confederate armies’ view of African-American service during the Civil War. What was one main difference, and why is that difference important? 	
Confederacy (The South)	Union (The North)
<p>Big Idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> African Americans were the property of their owners. They worked in small jobs for no pay. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Confederate Army wanted slaves to build defensive walls and cook for soldiers. The owners were paid \$1.25 per day instead of them. 	<p>Big Idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Union saw African Americans as troops who could fight for the army. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York’s 20th regiment was for black troops, and everyone who signed up was paid \$375.

Be sure to follow up on student responses by Pressing for Evidence:

- How do you know? What evidence do you have for that?

We recommend that you give students time to discuss these questions with each other in small groups or partnerships before engaging with them as a whole group.

These questions are intended to support students in both synthesizing the documents and reflecting on their larger historical significance. This may be difficult for some students who get stuck at the level of very concrete differences (such as differences in pay). The idea here is to support deeper historical thinking about what bigger ideas the details reveal.

Ask these questions to **deepen students’ thinking**:

- Do we agree that this is a main difference? What are some other differences between the two points of view? Which seem most important? Why?
- How does what you learned from looking at these posters connect back to the context we learned about? How does it connect back to the reasons for the war?
- What language did these documents use to communicate their message and to be persuasive?

Give students time to **edit** their responses in *Zoom In* based on class discussion.

C) Support students in articulating their own thinking

Finally, be sure to allow students time to speak with each other about their own thinking. This can happen at any stage of the discussion through turn-and-talks or small group discussion. Questions to support this kind of thinking include:

- So, what do you think about this?
- What ideas were new for you and why?
- Was anything surprising in what we read/discussed?
- What do you think is most important here, and why?
- Why do you think historians study artifacts like this?

WRITING

[suggested time: 1-2 sessions]

In this four-paragraph essay, students must explain how the Union and Confederate armies differed in their views of African Americans during the Civil War. The focal writing skill is for students to identify the creators' point of view and how they used details and language in the poster to persuade their audience. In their conclusion, students are asked to summarize the differences between the two armies and to draw a conclusion about the significance of this difference.

Teacher's Roles During Writing

As students are writing, support them in these key ways according to their needs:

- Circulate and observe students' progress through the template or outline. Take some notes to help you think about mini-lessons in writing you may want to teach to the whole class.
- Conference individually with students on their writing. Support their development through asking probing questions:
 - You seem stuck; where might you find that information?
 - If you don't remember what that quote means, where can you go?
 - Tell me why you introduced that evidence that way? What more do you think the reader might want to know?
 - Can you tell out-loud what the Big Idea is here? OK, how could you put that into writing?
- If you see patterns, pull together small groups of students for mini-lessons, or to review instructions.
- Support students in being peer editors.
- Help students move on to polished writing.

Preparing Students to Write

Tell students that the next stage of the lesson will be their writing. Remind them they will be writing a four-paragraph explanatory essay. The key elements of historical essay writing you will help them with are:

- Identify how the creators use language and details in the poster to persuade their audience

- Summarize the difference between the two armies' points of view
- Write a conclusion that explains why the difference between the armies is important

Project the Essay Outline View. Use this to review the writing prompt and preview the essay structure with students. Review explicitly each part of the essay and the role it serves in developing an answer to the historical question. Making these elements of the essay explicit for students will help them to develop the skills to construct essays more independently down the road.

Essay Outline View

Prompt: Write a four-paragraph essay to explain how the Union and Confederate armies differed in their views of African Americans during the Civil War.

Paragraph-by-paragraph guidance: In your essay you must have the following sections:

- **An introduction in which you describe the context of the Civil War**
 - State the topic of your essay.
 - Provide some historical context about the Civil War, and introduce the fact that you will be exploring the perspective each army had about African Americans.
 - Transition to the recruitment posters, which you will discuss in the body paragraphs.
- **A first body paragraph in which you describe the Confederate view of African Americans**
 - Provide a topic sentence that summarizes the message of the Confederate poster.
 - Provide supporting details that reveal the perspective of the Confederate army on African American military service and describe how these details connect to the point of view.
 - > Detail 1. The poster's audience
 - > Detail 2. The role of African Americans
 - > Detail 3. The poster's use of persuasive language
- **A second body paragraph in which you describe the Union view of African Americans**
 - Provide a topic sentence that summarizes the message of the Union poster.
 - Provide supporting details that reveal the perspective of the Union army on African American military service and describe how these details connect to the point of view.
 - > Detail 1. The poster's audience
 - > Detail 2. The role of African Americans
 - > Detail 3. The poster's use of persuasive language
- **A conclusion in which you explain why the difference in perspectives is important**
 - Restate the main idea you are writing about.
 - Summarize the two points of view—the Confederate and Union armies' views of African-American service in the Civil War.
 - Provide a concluding sentence: Why is this difference important?

Setting the Level of Writing Support

Using the Teacher Dashboard, you can set the level of students' writing support. (Note: Do this before they begin drafting their essays, or essay writing will be lost.) *Zoom In* offers two levels of writing support. High Support (the default) gives all students sentence-level tips, optional sentence-starters, and guidance in selecting and using evidence. As students show progress as historical writers – especially in using evidence from documents to support their ideas – teachers can set writing support for individual students to Low Support. The system will provide these students with paragraph-level tips only, meaning students will shape and support their essays substantially on their own.

Preparing Students to Write with Low Supports

If most of your students are writing with Low supports (meaning with outline only, rather than the detailed Writing Template), you may wish to give them more up-front preparation to write their historical essays. The following outline may help.

Overview

- Let students know that the next stage of the lesson will be their writing.
- Remind them that they will be explaining how the Union and Confederate armies viewed African Americans differently.
- Their final product will be a four-paragraph explanatory essay.

Introduction

- Ask students: What context information could you use to explain what the armies needed, and why they even had recruitment posters?

Body Paragraphs

- Ask students: Based on the lesson question, how do you think the two body paragraphs will be organized? [While this seems clear, middle school students may not automatically see that the organizational structure of the question can drive the organizational structure of their writing].
- Say to students: Your big job here is to use evidence from these posters to show the two different perspectives on military service. What kind of evidence have you gathered? How does this connect to the POV of each side? Here you want to encourage students to identify that they've been taking notes on:
 - Audience
 - Role and pay
 - Use of language
- Students may readily identify similarities and differences, but we anticipate they may still have difficulty connecting these differences to the idea of perspective (and connecting perspective back to some of the larger contextual issues such as war aims). Discussing the evidence they have and what this evidence means within its historical context both prepares them for writing and solidifies their historical thinking and reasoning skills.
- Again, you can spend as much or as little time on the parts of these paragraphs as you feel your students need. For example, some students may benefit from a review of how to write topic sentences.

Conclusion

Finally, let students know that the conclusion is the place in their essay where they will summarize the main ideas, but where they will also think about the larger historical importance of the differences they have been exploring.

Sample Student Essay

During the Civil War both the North and the South needed to get more men to enroll in their armies. The Northern and Southern Armies had very different views of African Americans' military service in the Civil War. One way we know this is through looking at the messages in army recruitment posters.

One Confederate recruitment poster from 1862 was trying to recruit 200 African Americans to work for the southern army. The Confederate created this poster for plantation owners. This is important because their audience was white slave owners, not the slaves themselves. The roles that blacks would play were to build fortifications and be cooks, but their owners would get paid. This means that they were not going to be soldiers and they had to work for free. The Confederate Army used language to persuade their audience such as "overseers will be employed to stay with and take charge of the laborers." This is important because slave owners probably wanted to know that their slaves would not run away.

A Union poster from 1864 used a different message to try and enlist soldiers for a colored regiment. The Union Army created this poster for blacks. This is important because it meant that blacks could make the choice whether to join the army or not. The role that blacks would play would be to join an armed regiment. They would get paid \$375. This shows that they would be soldiers and would be allowed to carry weapons and they would be paid for joining. The Union Army used language to persuade their audience such as, "he who would be free himself must strike the blow." This sent the message that blacks could join the fight to end slavery.

These two posters show different attitudes in the North and the South about African American service during the Civil War. Confederate view of African Americans' military service was that blacks would be free labor to help in the war effort but they would not be soldiers. The Union Army's view of African Americans' military service was that blacks could serve as soldiers in the army and fight for their own freedom. Understanding these two different views is important because it connects to some of the reasons this war was being fought.

Assessing Student Writing with the Essay Rubric

For information on assessing student writing, see these documents:

- "Zoom In Essay Rubric" (PDF)
- "Tracking Students' Progress and Assessing Student Work" (PDF)