

Slavery, the Civil War & Reconstruction

The Generals of the Civil War

These are the four main Civil War Generals.

Robert E. Lee (Confederate)

General Lee was the top general of the Confederacy, but he went to war with a heavy heart. He loved the United States. In fact, before Virginia left the Union, a presidential advisor asked Lee to command the army that would defend Washington D.C.! Lee had fought in earlier wars and had gone to the best military school in the country, West Point. But he was loyal to Virginia. In a letter to his sister, he wrote:

“With all my devotion to the Union and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my home. I have therefore **resigned**¹ my commission in the Army. Save in the defense of my native State, with the sincere hope that my poor services may never be needed, I hope I may never be called upon to draw my sword.”

Ulysses S. Grant (Union)

General Grant fought alongside General Lee in the Mexican-American War. He also attended West Point. While Lee was eloquent and **refined**,² Grant was awkward and reserved. But he was a brilliant and fearless soldier. He was not afraid to march his troops into battle. By the end of the war, Grant had ascended to Commanding General of the United States Army. Out of all the Northern generals, Grant had the most success defeating Lee.

T. J. “Stonewall” Jackson (Confederate)

General Jackson earned his nickname “Stonewall” because it was said that he held his position in battle like a stone wall. He would not let the Union army advance on his Confederate troops. During the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863, Stonewall Jackson was accidentally shot by friendly fire, and his arm was **amputated**.³ When Lee found this out he said, “He has lost his left arm but I my right.” Jackson was that important to General Lee. Sadly, Jackson’s wound did not heal, and he died shortly after the battle from pneumonia.

¹ **resign** - to give up or to quit

² **refined** - sophisticated, extremely polite

³ **amputate** - to cut off all or some of a body part, usually a leg, arm, or finger

William Tecumseh Sherman (Union)

The Northern General Sherman is most famous for his “March to the Sea.” Near the end of the war, Sherman successfully captured the strategic city of Atlanta, Georgia. He burned all the Confederate supplies there, along with many of the city’s buildings. From Atlanta, he began his famous march to Savannah, Georgia. He destroyed farms, fields, and people along the way. Sherman hated war. He wanted the Southerners to feel the consequences of a war they had started. He said the famous words, “War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it; and those who brought war on our country deserve all of the curses and **maledictions**¹ a people can pour out.”

¹ **maledictions** - insults or curses

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Lee, Grant, Jackson, and Sherman were all generals in which war?

- A the Mexican-American War
- B the Civil War
- C World War I
- D the Revolutionary War

2. What does the author describe in the passage?

- A reasons why the Union defeated the Confederacy
- B the training necessary to become an army general
- C why General Grant had the most success defeating Lee
- D four men who fought as generals in the Civil War

3. General Lee was devoted to the Union; however, when Virginia left the Union and joined the Confederacy, Lee fought for the Confederate Army.

Based on this evidence, what conclusion can you make?

- A General Lee's loyalty to Virginia was stronger than his loyalty to the Union.
- B General Lee was forced to fight for the Confederacy in the Civil War.
- C General Lee's loyalty to the Union was stronger than his loyalty to Virginia.
- D General Lee had no problem fighting against the Union.

4. Based on the passage, why was Grant promoted to Commanding General of the United States Army?

- A because Lee had resigned from the Army, so the position was open
- B because Grant had fought in the Mexican-American War
- C because Grant was brilliant, fearless, and successful in battle
- D because Grant had attended West Point, the best military school in America

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A why West Point is the best military school in America
- B four of the most important generals of the Civil War
- C how General Sherman helped the Union win the war
- D the most important battles during the Civil War

6. Read the following sentences: "General Jackson earned his nickname 'Stonewall' because it was said that he held his position in battle **like a stone wall**. He would not let the Union army advance on his Confederate troops."

What does the phrase "**like a stone wall**" indicate about Jackson?

- A He was not a strong or steady person.
- B He was unintelligent, or "dumb as a rock"
- C He was easily led and influenced.
- D He was strong-willed and unmovable.

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

General Sherman hated war; _____, he thought that the people who started the Civil War deserved to be cursed.

- A therefore
- B although
- C meanwhile
- D including

8. What was General Sherman's famous "March to the Sea"?

9. Explain why General Lee fought in the Civil War with a “heavy heart.”

10. “Generals Lee, Grant, Jackson, and Sherman each had a different perspective on fighting in the Civil War.” Explain whether or not this statement is accurate using information from the passage. Make sure to mention all four generals in your answer.
