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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2012 Volume II: The Art of Biography

The Biographies of April 1861

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.02.10
by Jesus Tirado

This unit encapsulates a belief that students can achieve a deep understanding of the Civil War while enhancing understanding of their world. The activities start with an investigation of the trends that make April 1861 such an exceptional month in American history. The unit then shifts to the people that formed those trends. Finally, students will re-enact the month, acting as the historical personas they've researched. These exercises will provide students with an opportunity to think like historians and at the same time encourage them to relate their conclusions to their own lives. These higher-order tasks will provide students with an opportunity to push their understanding of the Civil War and what it means for America and themselves.

(Recommended for U.S. History, grade 10)

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