Grades: 8-12  
Subjects: Geography, Geology, Government, History  
Time Required: 1 Class Period (50-60 minutes)  
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**OVERVIEW**

Visitors to the State of Tennessee in the 1960s were probably puzzled at the state border signs that read, “Welcome to the Three States of Tennessee.” Yet, no assertion could better describe the state’s unique geographical qualities. Predestined by forces of nature to be divided, intrastate sectionalism was present from the initial settlement of the region in the early 1760s. Throughout the state’s history, geography and geology played a crucial role in the political and cultural climate. No greater example of this exists than during the American Civil War. Tennesseans’ loyalties were sharply divided along geographic lines. With its unique position as the gateway to the entire Western Confederacy, Tennessee found itself the prime battleground of the West. Tennessee was the last state to secede from the Union, although the vote to do so was not unanimous. Although the government in Nashville was Confederate and over 100,000 men joined the ranks of the Confederate Provisional Army, about 50,000 Tennesseans volunteered to fight for the Federal Army. One might question why a state that seceded still supplied volunteers to the Union Army in such a large number. The answer can be derived from a study of the state’s variegated terrain and the geographic isolationism of Eastern Tennessee.

This lesson will explore how Tennessee’s unique geography affected how the three grand divisions of the state viewed slavery, secession, and the Civil War. Students will examine topographical maps, letters, photographs, and newspaper transcripts in order to understand how politics, policy, and the Civil War were shaped by the state’s variegated terrain.

**UNDERSTANDING GOALS**

Students will:
- Examine and understand the geographic features of a topographical map.
- Compare each of the three Grand Divisions of Tennessee to determine the geographic characteristics of each section.
- Identify the six major geographic regions of the state.
- Understand how physical terrain can impact:  
  - Human Geography  
  - Politics and Policy  
  - State Sectionalism

**INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS**

How and why did Tennessee’s physical geography affect the cultural and political environment of its people during the years leading up to the national secession crisis of 1860-61? How did Tennessee’s unique geography lend itself to an intrastate conflict over secession and the coming Civil War? Moreover, what geographic, economic, and cultural characteristics contributed to East Tennessee’s Unionism?
CURRICULUM STANDARDS

8th Grade Social Studies
8.62 Describe the outbreak of the Civil War and the resulting sectional differences, including economic, geographic, and technological advances, military strategies, roles of President Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, significance of Fort Sumter, and geographical divisions within states.

World Geography Grades 9th-12th
WG.SSP.06 Develop geographic awareness by using the geographic perspective to analyze relationships, patterns, and diffusion across space at multiple scales (e.g., local, national, global), analyzing and determining the use of diverse types of maps based on the origin, authority, structure, context, and validity, analyzing locations, conditions, and connections of places and using maps to investigate spatial associations among phenomena, examining how geographers use regions and how perceptions of regions are fluid across time and space, analyzing interaction between humans and the physical environment

Sociology Grades 9th-12th
S.12 Analyze how culture influences individuals (e.g., ethnocentrism, cultural relativity, culture shock, American values, etc.).

Cultural Geography 9th-12th
W.G. 21 Explain how physical geography and economic practices shape the cultural landscapes of various regions.

English Language Arts
Key Ideas and Details 11-12.RL.KID.1 Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw inferences; support an interpretation of a text by citing and synthesizing relevant textual evidence from multiple sources.

Writing: Text Types and Protocol 11-12.W.TTP.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to analyze and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection and organization of content

Johnsonville, Tenn. Camp of Tennessee Colored Battery, [1864]

Lloyd’s official map of the State of Tennessee Compiled from actual surveys and official documents, showing every rail road & rail road station with the distances between each station. Also the counties and county seats, cities, towns, villages, post offices, wagon roads, canals, forts, fortifications, &c. [1863]
Materials Used

Primary Sources from the Library of Congress:
- A preliminary agricultural map of Tennessee based on the distribution of geological formations. [1896]
- Bokum, H. [1863]. Testimony of an East Tennessee Refugee. [pg. 3-6].

Other Resources:
- Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee. Primary Source Set: Tennessee’s Grand Divisions-Middle Tennessee.
- Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee. Primary Source Set: Tennessee’s Grand Divisions-West Tennessee.
- Primary Source Analysis Tool
- Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee. Divided Tennessee: The Coming of the Civil War.
- Twenty-Five Questions To Ask Your Primary Source.
- Computers with access to the Internet
- MS PowerPoint Program
- (Optional) Hard copies of Library of Congress images
- Handouts (included with lesson plan)

Procedure

Step 1  Before class begins, print out copies of the worksheets, including the Primary Source Analysis Tool. Load the PowerPoint presentation and test the slides for correct timing. Read the works cited in the Bibliography section and consider the purpose of the study. Students should be given the following pre-reading materials:
- Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee. Primary Source Sets: Tennessee’s Grand Divisions-East Tennessee, Middle Tennessee, West Tennessee.

Step 2  Explain to the students that they will be participating in a lesson that will help them to better understand the reasons for sectionalism in Tennessee during the Secession Crisis of 1860-61. Inform the students that Tennessee’s unique geography had an effect on how citizens viewed slavery, secession, and the coming Civil War.
PROCEDURE (cont.)

Step 3  Begin the PowerPoint Presentation. Explain slides two and three.

Step 4  Ask the students to locate Worksheet One in the materials they were given for the day. Go to slide four. Ask them to examine their map on the worksheet for a few moments. Then ask the students to consider: (1) date of the map, (2) purpose of the map, (3) who created the map, (4) what does the map show, and (5) is this a topographical map? Ask the students to follow along and fill in the blanks on their worksheet as you progress through slide four. Begin slide five. Ask the students to write down on Worksheet One the six unique geographic regions of the state, and draw lines on their map to help them identify the six areas. As you are explaining the six regions, be sure to include the following information:

**Unaka Mountains**
- Includes the Great Smoky Mountains and a small portion of the Blue Ridge
- Borders North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia
- Pigeon River
- Newport, Sevierville, Gatlinburg

**Great Valley of East Tennessee**
- Borders Kentucky, Virginia, and Georgia
- Clinch, Powell, and Tennessee Rivers
- Knoxville, Chattanooga, Morristown

**Cumberland Plateau**
- Borders Kentucky and small portions of Georgia and Alabama
- Obed, Cumberland, Powell and Clinch Rivers
- Crossville, Oneida

**Highland Rim**
- Borders Kentucky, Alabama, and a small portion of Georgia
- Cumberland, Tennessee, Caney Fork, and Duck Rivers
- Lawrenceburg, Cookeville, Sparta, McMinnville, Linden, Clarksville

**Central Basin**
- Internal borders
- Cumberland and Duck Rivers
- Nashville, Franklin, Spring Hill, Lewisburg

**Mississippi Flood Plain**
- Borders Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Arkansas, and a small portion of Alabama
- Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers
- Memphis, Jackson, Martin, Dyersburg
PROCEDURE (cont.)

Step 5  Ask the students to locate Worksheet Two from the worksheet set that was given to them at the beginning of class. Ask the students to think about the geography of the Three Grand Divisions of the State, and what geographic features make each section unique. Once they have written their own answers, deliver slides six, seven, and eight.

Step 6  Slide nine asks the students to consider how different life would be for those living in East, Middle, and West Tennessee prior to 1860-1861. Using slide ten as a step-by-step guide and allowing the students to use Worksheet Three, consider all the socioeconomic and political factors in the three divisions as listed. Ask the students to consider each division and compare and contrast the differences. Also ask the students to think of any other possible differences. Students may draw from their homework readings to help them.

Step 7  Break students off into groups of four or five. Give each group a copy of the selected text from the primary source document Testimony of an East Tennessee Refugee, and ask them to read the text. Give them a few minutes to read it together as a group.

Step 8  Ask the students to find the Worksheet Primary Source Analysis from the worksheet set that was provided to them. Using slides eleven and twelve, ask the group to consider the document and evaluate it using the worksheet. Give each group ample time to answer the questions. Tell them to keep their answers a secret from the others.

Step 9  Ask each group to share their answers with the class. Write a short summary of each answer on the chalkboard.

Step 10  Worksheet Four is intended to wrap up the lesson as a homework assignment for reflection. Ask the students to take all the information that they received with them so that they can answer the questions on their homework. Briefly discuss homework at the beginning of the next class period.

EVALUATION
This lesson will be evaluated based on:
- Class participation + Worksheet 2 (25pts)
- Worksheet 1 (25pts)
- Worksheet 3 (25pts)
- Homework Assignment (25pts)

EXTENSION
As an additional assignment, provide each student with the entire pamphlet by Herman Bokum. Using a physical map of the United States, ask the students to find all the locations discussed in the text.

For students who enjoy writing, ask them to select one person that is discussed in the pamphlet and write a short biography regarding their association to Tennessee history, politics, and the secession crisis of 1860-61.

The map used in this lesson can be evaluated using the “25 Things to Ask Your Primary Source” tool.

Memphis and vicinity / surveyed and drawn by order of Maj. Genl. W. T. Sherman, by Lieuts. Pitzman & Frick, Topographical Engineers. [186-].