

## Civil War Causes/Effects Readers Theatre Script

Developed by Ms. Kathleen Riley \* Glen Forest ES \* Fairfax County, VA

- 1 Hey \_\_\_\_\_! Where have you been all day?  
2 I just got back from Manasas.  
3 Manasas... That sounds familiar...  
2 It probably sounds familiar because it was the site of the first major battle of the Civil War.  
3 Right. We're learning about the Civil War in school.  
4 Yeah! We learned about Manasas, also called Bull Run...  
5 And the Confederate victory at Fredericksburg...  
6 And the how Grant's Union troops drove the Confederates out of Richmond...  
All And the iron-clad ships – The Virginia and the Monitor!  
7 And how the Confederates surrendered at Appomattox Court House.  
8 Surrender?  
All You know, surrender. It means to give up. [gesture]  
8 Oh yeah.  
9 Well, all those battles were really exciting to learn about, but there's something I've been wondering.  
All What's that? [gesture]  
9 Why did the Civil War start in the first place? I mean, what were the causes of the war?  
All Hmm... [gesture]  
10 Well it all started out with differences between the Northern United States and the Southern United States.  
1 You mean the North and the South?  
10 Yes. You see, the economy of the North was industrialized, while the economy of the South was agricultural.
- 2 Agricultural?  
All You know, agriculture. It means farming. [gesture]  
2 Right.  
3 Well, why were those differences important? I mean, why couldn't the North go on manufacturing goods while the South went on farming?  
4 I think it had something to do with slavery...  
10 It did. The South relied on slave labor, while the North didn't need it.  
All Slave labor was important to the South, but not the North. [gesture]  
5 Why did that matter so much?  
9 Because some people in the North started thinking that slavery was wrong.  
6 Oh, don't tell me, don't tell me.... The were called.... Ahhh....  
7 [softly] Abolitionists?  
6 Right! Abolitionists! They wanted to abolish slavery.  
All Abolitionists wanted to get rid of slavery. [gesture]  
8 Don't forget, this was during a time when many new states were being added to the country.  
1 And the North wanted them to be free states.  
10 And the South wanted them to be slave states.  
All The North wanted free states and the South wanted slave states.  
2 That's another cause of the war.  
3 Weren't there a whole bunch of events that led up the Civil War? I mean, it didn't just start one day at Manasas, did it?  
4 There sure were. I think they're best summed up with a rap. Ready

*From the web site of Dr. Rosalind M. Flynn, Educational Drama Specialist*

[www.rosalindflynn.com](http://www.rosalindflynn.com)

	everyone? A one, a two, a one, two, three!	10	Ruins. As in destroyed. A wreck. Horrible condition. No good. A big mess.
All	Nat Turner was a slave who led a revolt,	2	Oh.
	He made plantation owners really want to bolt.	1	What does "economy" mean again?
	Then there was John Brown at Harpers Ferry, V-A,	9	Doesn't it have to do with money?
	He tried to start a rebellion. Did it work? No way.	8	It sure does. It is the way that money is made and exchanged within a community. For example, the economy in Virginia was dependent on agriculture. The agriculture was dependent on slave labor. When the slaves were freed, Virginia's economy was in trouble.
	Abolitionists wanted to put slavery down,	9	Thanks for the clarification.
	Harriet Tubman led the railroad underground. [gesture]	4	This, too, I'd like to sum up with a little rhyme. What do you say?
	In 1860, Lincoln was elected, [gesture]	All	Sure!
	The Southern slave states really were affected.	4	Uno, dos, uno, dos, tres. Hit it!
	They started seceding, that means splitting away, [gesture]	All	The war was over and the battles were done,
	Eventually Virginia even called it a day.		But the economy of Virginia was ruined.
	The Confederacy formed, and the Union was warned, [gesture]		Money had no value and the banks were closed.
	The Civil War was starting and the country was torn.		Destroyed were plantations, crops, and railroads.
3	Oh, right. Now I remember all of those events. It really helps me see that the Civil War didn't just start over night.		The former slaves had no jobs, homes, or land.
5	And it didn't just end overnight, either. There were lots of effects of the Civil War.		The Freedman's Bureau was formed to give these folks a hand.
6	Well, the Union won, so the slaves were free, right?		Some people who were jobless were able to sharecrop,
5	Yes, that's the most obvious effect. But there were others.		They would work really hard, but never make it to the top.
6	Like what?		The Civil War caused a lot of chaos and destruction,
5	Well, there were millions of freed slaves who needed housing, clothing, food, and jobs.		The time of rebuilding was called Reconstruction!
10	And Virginia's economy was in ruins.	9	Well, I guess that just as important as remembering all of those Civil War battles is remembering the causes and effects of the war.
2	Ruins?	10	That's for sure.