

Teacher's Guide for COBBLESTONE: Ulysses S. Grant

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THEME – Heroism

SKILLS: Organizing information, creative and expository writing, oral communication

PROJECTS: Develop a class poster of “Heroic Qualities”.

Getting Ready – Select magazines, books, DVDs about Ulysses S. Grant, the Civil War, West Point for a quiet reading/study area in the classroom. If available, post a map of the Civil War battlegrounds in the area.

Getting Started –

Examine the cover of the issue. What questions do the pictures and text raise? Ask students what they would like to find out about Ulysses S. Grant as they read. Discuss what an “unlikely hero” might be.

Values development:

Brainstorm and list the most important qualities for a hero.

Ask, which of these are most important for a military/soldier hero.

List the five or ten top “Heroic Qualities” on a poster or bulletin board. Plan with students to look for these qualities in US Grant as they read about him.

Then share the “editor’s note” at the beginning and ask class if heroic qualities change as people play different roles in life. If there is time, explore how students consider themselves or their peers or parents to be heroes.

A Passion for Horses, pp. 2-4

Discussion: What’s in a Name? Have students read the article and list how US Grant used his name in different places and with different groups of people. Discuss with students how they might have different names/nicknames for different activities or groups of people. Ask, have you ever had a nickname you hated, using US Grant’s H.U.G. initials as an example.

Journal writing: Have students to write a short paragraph about what their name/nickname means to them.

Summary: Review the heroic qualities that students agreed on and ask whether there are any facts or indications in the article that support US Grant’s potential to be a hero. Have students add these facts to the poster of heroic qualities.

First Combat, pp. 5-6

Divide students into groups and have them read and discuss the article. Ask each group to show how his “first combat” did or didn’t support US Grant’s future role as “military hero”. Encourage each group to choose a different way of sharing the information, e.g., cartoon or comic strip, short play, essay, panel discussion, etc. Add text or graphic information to “Heroic Qualities” Bulletin Board or Poster.

Ulysses and Julia, pp. 7-9

Organizing information: Have students work in small groups to list

FAMILY DIFFICULTIES

FAMILY PLEASURES

Use lists to discuss how Ulysses Grant dealt with difficulties in his life and how he and his family supported each other. Ask students how their families deal with conflict and problems successfully.

Journal writing: Ulysses and Julia Grant disagreed about the ethics of slavery. Write a short fiction or non-fiction piece about a disagreement about values in your family or with a friend. How was the conflict resolved or was it impossible to resolve it?

First in War, pp. 10-15

Reading for information:

1. Which side did US Grant support in the Civil War? *Union*
2. How did he get an appointment to serve in the army? *The Governor of Illinois helped him in 1861 to become a colonel in the Illinois 21st Infantry.*
3. Why were Grant's superiors attracted to him? *He was aggressive in battle and respected by his men.*
4. What were Grant's first two military successes? *The capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in February, 1862*
5. How did his initials come to stand for "Unconditional Surrender"? *These were the only terms he would accept from General Bolivar of Fort Donelson.*
6. For what two faults did his critics attack Grant? *Drinking and butchery*
7. How was Grant rewarded for his successful attacks and sieges and his ability to turn around defeats like Shiloh by reattacking? *President Abraham Lincoln promoted him to general in chief of the Union Armies and gave him the highest rank of lieutenant general.*
8. Why did Grant avoid running for the Presidency in 1864? *He was determined to finish the war by winning it on the field.*
9. What huge advantage did Grant have over the Confederate general Robert E. Lee? *More soldiers to replace those injured or killed.*
10. When, where, and how did the Civil War end? *At the Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865, when Confederate General Lee surrounded to Union General Grant.*

Roleplay:

Encourage students to imagine the encounter between the two generals and enact the surrender in a short skit.

Discuss: Which of Grant's qualities revealed in this article seem heroic? Which seem as though they don't belong to a hero? Why? Add heroic qualities to poster of heroism.

At the Battle of Shiloh, pp. 16-17

Divide students into groups and have them create a graphic representation of the Battle of Shiloh, marking the major events, surprises, failures, and successes. Share the group projects.

Discuss why President Lincoln continued to support US Grant. What heroic qualities did Lincoln want in his general? Add these to the poster of heroism.

Victory at Vicksburg, pp. 18-21

Discuss: Why was the battle at Vicksburg so important to both the South and the North? What was Grant's strategy to win? Why or how was it successful? Was Grant a hero in this battle? Why or why not?

Ely S. Parker, Grant's Military Secretary, pp 26-27

Discuss: What does it mean to be an American? Of the three main people mentioned in this article – Ely S. Parker, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant – who is the most "typical" American? Why?

National Hero, pp. 28-31; Race Relations, p. 32; Horse Sense, p. 33

Discuss: In what ways was US Grant a good president? In what ways was he a bad president? Did some of the qualities that made him a good military leader make him a poor president? Did some of the qualities that made him a good friend affect his leadership as president?

Add any new heroic qualities to the poster.

To Witness These Things, pp. 34-36; Let Us Have Peace, pp. 37-39

Expository Writing:

Review the structure of a paragraph with topic sentence, supporting details, and summary sentence or conclusion.

Have students choose one of the following topics and write a clear paragraph about it.

1. Why US Grant wrote his memoirs
2. The friendship between Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) and US Grant
3. How US Grant's memoirs were sold
4. The reasons for the success of *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*

5. The history of Grant's memorial

Wrap up:

Review the poster of "Heroic Qualities". Discuss with students whether there are any qualities they want to remove or add. Are these qualities necessary to be a hero? Are they relevant to every role in life or to specific roles or phases of life?

Just for fun:

List with class historical or contemporary people that they consider to be heroes. Then have volunteers choose one person on the list to act out and have other students guess who he or she is representing.