

A Personal Report

Name:

Date:



Interesting Homework

In the following text, you will read the beginning of a story in which a very special homework assignment is given. Read it carefully, then answer the questions below.

It was a humid afternoon in Richmond, Virginia, in the year 1915. The bell rang, signaling the start of Mr. Thompson's history class at Jefferson High School. Thomas, a seventeen-year-old student with a head full of dark curls and a mind always yearning for knowledge, settled into his seat near the back of the room. He watched as Mr. Thompson, a man in his late forties with a neatly trimmed mustache and a passion for storytelling, made his way to the front of the classroom.

"Good afternoon, everyone," Mr. Thompson began, his voice carrying a mix of authority and enthusiasm. "Today, we will be discussing a defining moment in our nation's history—the American Civil War." The room grew quiet, the gravity of the topic sinking in. Thomas felt a surge of curiosity. The Civil War was a subject that had always intrigued him, filled with stories of bravery, sacrifice, and the quest for freedom.

Mr. Thompson continued, "For your homework, I want each of you to find and talk to someone who was directly affected by the Civil War. This could be a family member, a neighbor, or anyone who experienced it firsthand. Your task is to interview them and write a detailed report on their experiences and how the war impacted their lives."

Thomas's mind buzzed with possibilities. The assignment seemed daunting but also incredibly important. He glanced around the room, noticing the mixture of expressions on his classmates' faces—some looked anxious, others puzzled. He, however, felt a spark of determination.

As the class drew to a close, Thomas gathered his books and made his way out of the room. He knew just the right person to talk to about the Civil War—his great-uncle, Benjamin. Benjamin had been a young boy during the war and had often hinted at stories he had yet to fully share. Thomas realized that this assignment would be the perfect opportunity to delve deeper into his family's past and the events that had shaped their lives.



Prior knowledge

Think about these questions: What do you already know about the topic? Can you think of any questions you would like to ask regarding the topic?

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Making contact

Read the next part of the story.

Thomas hurried home, the excitement of the assignment propelling his steps. His modest house, with its creaking wooden porch and well-tended garden, stood a few blocks away from the school. Richmond still bore the marks of its past, with many families like his carrying stories that reached back to the Civil War.

He burst through the front door, greeted by the familiar scent of his mother's cooking and the sound of his younger siblings playing. He quickly greeted his mother, who was busy in the kitchen, and then made his way to the small room at the back of the house that served as a study.

Thomas knew his great-uncle Benjamin lived just a few streets away. The elderly man was known for his vivid recollections and often spent his afternoons on his porch, watching the world go by. Thomas grabbed his notebook and a pencil, then set out for Benjamin's house.

As he approached the old, weather-worn home, he spotted Benjamin sitting on a rocking chair, a thoughtful expression on his face. Thomas hesitated for a moment, gathering his thoughts, then walked up the steps.

"Good afternoon, Uncle Benjamin," Thomas greeted, his voice filled with respect and a hint of nervousness.

Benjamin looked up, a warm smile spreading across his face. "Thomas, my boy! What brings you here today?"

Thomas explained his history assignment, detailing how Mr. Thompson had tasked them with interviewing someone who had experienced the Civil War firsthand. "I thought you might be the perfect person to talk to," Thomas finished, looking at his great-uncle hopefully.

Benjamin's eyes twinkled with understanding. "Ah, the Civil War... Those were indeed times that shaped this nation and many lives, including our family's. I'd be happy to share my experiences, Thomas. It's important for young people like you to learn about these events from those who lived through them."

Thomas felt a wave of relief and gratitude. "Thank you, Uncle Benjamin. I really appreciate it."

Benjamin nodded, gesturing to the empty chair beside him. "Come, sit down. We have much to discuss."

Thomas took a seat, his notebook at the ready. Benjamin leaned back in his chair, his eyes growing distant as memories from decades past began to resurface.

"It all started when I was just a boy, not much older than you are now..." Benjamin began, his voice steady and filled with the weight of history. Thomas listened intently, pen poised, ready to capture every detail of his great-uncle's remarkable journey through one of America's most turbulent times.

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The report - part 1

Listen to the first part of the report.



Audio Content

To listen to audio content just scan the QR code and listen to it on the digital worksheet.

<https://to-teach.ai/worksheet/IEq7pGNuhahia0jF6rbG>

What do you think of the report so far? What do you find particularly interesting?

Benjamin's voice trailed off, and he let out a deep sigh, his eyes returning from the distant memories to the present moment. Thomas sat there, utterly fascinated, his mind racing with the vivid images his great-uncle had painted. The sounds of war, the fear, and the resilience—it all seemed so real, so immediate.

After a brief pause, Thomas broke the silence, his voice filled with curiosity. "Uncle Benjamin, what exactly caused the Civil War to start? I mean, I know it was about slavery and states' rights, but what was the tipping point?"

Benjamin looked at Thomas, a glint of approval in his eyes. "Ah, the origins of the conflict... That's a crucial part of understanding what happened next. It wasn't just one thing, Thomas. It was a series of events and tensions that had been building for years."

Benjamin leaned forward, ready to delve into the complex roots of the Civil War, as Thomas eagerly prepared to absorb every word.

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The report - part 2

Now listen to the second part of the report and fill in the correct words in the text below.



Audio Content

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<https://to-teach.ai/worksheet/IEq7pGNuhahia0jF6rbG>

Fill each blank with the correct word.

The _____ War's roots lie in a complex web of economic, political, and social issues, with slavery and states' rights being central. The _____ States was divided between the industrializing North and the agricultural South, dependent on enslaved labor for its cotton plantations. This economic disparity led to significant _____ between the regions. The election of Abraham _____ in 1860, who opposed the expansion of slavery, acted as a catalyst for Southern states to secede. The formation of the _____ States of America followed, with secession seen by the North as rebellion. Conflict erupted in April 1861 when _____ forces attacked Fort Sumter, marking the war's beginning. The war was not solely about slavery and states' rights but also about preserving the _____ and democracy. This brutal and bloody conflict fundamentally changed the nation, with effects still evident today.

Union, Confederate, Civil, Lincoln, United, tension, Confederate

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The report - part 3

Read how the story continues and then listen to the last part of the report. Afterwards, answer the related questions.

Benjamin paused, his eyes scanning the horizon as if he could still see the distant battles. Thomas, utterly engrossed, felt a surge of questions bubbling up inside him.

"Uncle Benjamin, this is incredible," Thomas began, his voice filled with awe. "But what about the aftermath? How did the Civil War change things in the years and decades that followed? And what do you think its impact will be on our future?"

Benjamin looked at Thomas, a proud yet solemn expression on his face. He could see the genuine curiosity and thirst for knowledge in his great-nephew's eyes. Taking a deep breath, he prepared to dive into the complex legacy of the Civil War, knowing that understanding its long-term effects was just as important as grasping its causes.

"Well, Thomas, the aftermath of the Civil War was just as transformative as the conflict itself..."



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Thomas sat in awe, absorbing every word his great-uncle had shared. Finally, he spoke, his voice filled with deep gratitude. "Thank you, Uncle Benjamin. I can't express how much this means to me. Your stories have given me a new understanding of our history and our family."

Benjamin smiled warmly, patting Thomas on the shoulder. "I'm glad I could share it with you, Thomas. It's important to keep these stories alive."

With a full heart and a notebook brimming with notes, Thomas returned home. He spent the next few days pouring over his notes, crafting a detailed report for Mr. Thompson's class.

When the day came to present his homework, Thomas stood before his classmates and recounted Benjamin's vivid memories. He spoke passionately about the causes, the war itself, and its lasting impact. Mr. Thompson listened intently, clearly impressed. "Excellent work, Thomas," he said, awarding him a top grade. Thomas felt a sense of accomplishment, knowing he had not only done well but also honored his great-uncle's legacy.

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Describe the economic conditions in the South immediately following the Civil War.

Explain the significance of the 14th and 15th Amendments during the Reconstruction period.

Name some of the challenges faced by the federal government in reintegrating the Southern states back into the Union.
