



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 5, WEBISODE 6

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview



Let's Discuss

Even though African Americans had fought in previous wars, the Union army dragged its feet on the issue of using black troops. Enslaved African Americans ran away to Union army camps in record numbers, where they served as laborers, guides, scouts, cooks, nurses, laundresses, and in other occupations. But they longed to prove themselves on the battlefield. Frederick Douglass and others recognized that enlistment of black soldiers on equal footing with whites would demonstrate that the conflict was a war of liberation, and underscore the absurdity of prejudice and slavery. In 1862, Lincoln began to recruit black soldiers, and 200,000 men fought for the Union by war's end. The valor of troops of the 54th Massachusetts under Colonel Robert Gould Shaw convinced skeptics that African American men could fight.

Teacher Directions

1. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.
 - Why were African Americans eager to fight for the Union?
 - How did the Emancipation Proclamation open the door for African American soldiers?
 - How did the men of the 54th Massachusetts change history?
 - How many African Americans fought for the Union?
2. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

African Americans recognized that a Union victory would lead to the abolition of slavery.

After the Emancipation Proclamation declared that all enslaved persons in rebel-held territory were free, the purpose of the war evolved to one to abolish slavery in addition to preserving the Union. The men of the 54th Massachusetts, a black unit, fought bravely at Fort Wagner outside Charleston, South Carolina. Their bravery and military discipline convinced others that African Americans could fight. Approximately 200,000 African Americans fought for the Union.



Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Answering the Call # 1*. Explain that these quotes are from letters written in 1861 in response to Lincoln's call for volunteers.
2. The students work with a team partner to read and discuss the following questions as they relate to the quotations.
 - To whom are these authors writing?
 - Why?
 - Why are they offering to serve as soldiers?
3. Explain that the authors are writing to the War Department or the Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, to offer their services as soldiers. The letters are in response to Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to put down the Southern rebellion. The United States War Department replied to each of these requests, saying that it did not want the help of these men. The War Department denied their requests to form or join a regiment.
4. Working with teammates, students speculate why the War Department refused these offers of service. Write student answers on the chalkboard.
5. Direct students to examine the quotations on the Team Sheet: *Answering the Call #1* again. Discuss the following:
 - What does the series of three dots (...) mean in a quote?
 - Why might words be omitted from a quotation?
 - Why must the three dots (...) be used carefully?
6. Explain to students that a word or words have been omitted from the quotation. The quotation might be too long, the words omitted might not be important or pertinent to the meaning of the quotation, the omitted words might repeat information, detract from the meaning of the quotation, or be confusing. The words omitted must not be essential to the meaning of the quotation or change its meaning.
7. Demonstrate this last point by writing "I will not pay the money!" on the chalkboard, then erase the word *not* and write ... in its place. Explain that the missing word *not* is essential to the quotation, and the meaning of the quotation is changed entirely without that word.
8. Distribute the Team Sheet: *Answering the Call # 2*. Explain that the quotations are now complete. Direct the students to examine the quotations again. Discuss the following questions.
 - What did you just learn about using quotations from primary sources?
 - Why did the War department refuse the offers of these volunteers?
9. Make sure students understand that the War Department did not want these men as soldiers because they were black.
10. Briefly discuss the situation of free blacks in the North including the following information:

- Although slavery had ended in the North, and many Northerners considered slavery morally wrong, racial distrust and inequality were widespread in the North.
 - Most Northern free blacks had a better life than those enslaved in the South, but they did not have rights or opportunities equal to Northern whites.
 - Northern free blacks did not have the right to vote.
 - Many Northern blacks were prohibited from owning land.
 - Often Northern blacks were banned from white churches and other organizations and public buildings. Many could not attend school with whites.
 - Many Northern whites felt that blacks were not smart, brave, or skilled enough to serve as soldiers.
 - Northern whites suspected that if blacks were permitted to dress in the same uniform as whites and taught to drill and fight, they would be equal to the white man, and eventually have all the rights and privileges of whites. To allow the black to be a soldier would be to treat him as a man and an equal. Even blacks themselves believed this. Refer to the quotation of Frederick Douglass in the Overview.
11. Briefly review the actions of African Americans to lift the ban on their serving in the Union army:
- Some wrote letters of protest to newspapers.
 - They wrote passionate editorials, especially to Northern abolitionist newspapers.
 - Many delivered speeches and spoke at public gatherings.
 - Educated, influential African Americans (such as ministers, businessmen, and college students) led the protest against the ban.
12. Discuss with the students: How did African Americans serve the Union cause while they worked to change federal policy against black enlistment?
- Some free blacks organized their own military companies, drilling and preparing themselves for the time when their service would be accepted.
 - A few light-skinned blacks kept their race a secret and joined volunteer units as whites.
 - Thousands of blacks worked for the army in noncombatant roles:
 - cooks
 - servants for white officers
 - laborers who dug latrines and trenches, and cleaned camps and hospitals
 - builders who erected fortifications, repaired equipment, and cut wood,
 - stevedores who loaded and unloaded army supplies, food, and munitions from supply trains and ships

History Sleuth, Cont.



- teamsters who drove wagon trains of food, supplies, and munitions
- gravediggers who buried the dead
- army guides and scouts
- spies

Teacher Directions

1. Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass eloquently expressed this viewpoint:

Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship.

2. Students write a letter to Frederick Douglass responding to this quote.

Teacher Directions

1. Explain that the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln in January 1863, declared all slaves in rebel states forever free and opened the door for African Americans to join the Union Army. Only then were African American volunteers actively recruited. Black soldiers signed enlistment papers and formed segregated regiments with white officers.
2. Ask students to briefly recall some difficulties that white soldiers in both armies faced and share their responses. Record these on the chalkboard.

Explain that many African Americans believed that if they had the opportunity to serve as soldiers they could prove themselves worthy of trust and equal rights. Some thought this would end racial prejudice. But in fact, African Americans discovered that being a soldier was no guarantee of equality, and that not all the fights would take place on the battlefield.

3. Ask the students to speculate.
 - What specific difficulties, in addition to the problems that all Civil War soldiers faced, did African American soldiers face?
4. Add student suggestions to the list. Assist students in recognizing that African American soldiers not only had to face all the difficulties of the white soldiers but additional problems as well.
5. Distribute The Student Sheet: *Inequalities* to each team.

Note to the Teacher: Each sheet should be cut in half to make a 4x5 card.

6. Each team member reads one of the cards, and then shares the information with the team.

Moving Toward Freedom,
Continued.

Note to the Teacher: Depending on class reading levels, the teacher may need to read this information to students. The team summarizes the problems of inequality that black soldiers experienced during the Civil War and decides if the same problems exist today.

7. Introduce the black soldiers' hardest fight for equality. Distribute a copy of the Student Sheet: *Why Can't We Have a Soldier's Pay?* to each student.
8. Students read the Student Sheet and with teammates discuss the following question.
 - How did the black soldiers fight for equal pay?
9. Help students understand that African American soldiers fought for equal pay through petitions, refusing to accept any pay at all, written protests, speeches, and editorial comments in newspapers.

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Language Arts — Students read *Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman* by Dorothy Sterling, or *The Slave Dancer* by Paula Fox. Partner Discussion Guides are available from the Johns Hopkins University Talent Development Middle School Program.

Language Arts — Read *The Underground Railroad* by Raymond Bial or *Undying Glory* by Clinton Cox to the students as a listening activity.

Geography — Students research the routes of the Underground Railroad and create a map showing these routes.

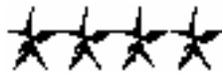
Math — Students research statistics pertaining to black soldiers the Civil War. Students conduct a comparative study with white troops and share their findings in charts and graphs.

Art — Students study the Shaw Memorial to determine: How did the sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, commemorate the heroism of the black soldiers? Students research black soldiers in other works of art.

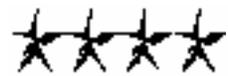
Art — Students design a memorial, including inscription, to the men of the 54th Massachusetts.



Connections



Answering the Call #1



From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron written on April 23, 1861, nine days after the Fall of Fort Sumter:

I know of some three hundred...reliable... citizens of this City, who desire to enter the service for the defense of this city.

Jacob Dodson
Washington, D.C.

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From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron:

I ask permission to raise from five thousand to ten thousand ... men to report in sixty days.

Dr. G. P. Miller
Battle Creek, Michigan

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From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron:

We ask for the privilege of fighting--and (if need be dieing) for the Union cause. We can muster a thousand volunteers from our state.

W. T. Boyd and J. T. Alston
Cleveland, Ohio

+++++

From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron:

I offer the services of our militia company, the Fort Pitt Cadets. We have been training for two years and are quite Proficient in military discipline.

Rufus Sibb Jones
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

+++++

From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron:

I have a ... regiment [that] offers their services in protection of the southern forts.

The Reverend Garland H. White
Canada

+++++

I shall never forget the thrill that ran through my soul when I thought of the coming consequences of that shot. There were one hundred and fifteen of us students at the University, who, anxious to vindicate the stars and stripes, made up a company and offered our services to the Governor of Ohio.

Richard Harvey Cain
Wilberforce University in Ohio

☆☆☆☆ Answering the Call #2 ☆☆☆☆

From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron written on April 23, 1861, nine days after the Fall of Fort Sumter:

I know of some three hundred...reliable colored free citizens of this City, who desire to enter the service for the defense of this city.

Jacob Dodson
Washington, D.C.

++++
From a black doctor to Secretary of War Simon Cameron:

I ask permission to raise from five thousand to ten thousand free men to report in sixty days.

Dr. G. P. Miller
Battle Creek, Michigan

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From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron:

We ask for the privilege of fighting--and (if need be dieing) for the Union cause. We can muster a thousand volunteers from our state.

W. T. Boyd and J.T. Alston
Cleveland, Ohio

++++
From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron from the captain of a black militia group:

I offer the services of our militia company, the Fort Pitt Cadets. We have been training for two years and are quite Proficient in military discipline.

Rufus Sibb Jones
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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From a letter to Secretary of War Simon Cameron from a former slave who had escaped to Canada:

I have a Black regiment [that] offers their services in protection of the southern forts.

The Reverend Garland H. White
Canada

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I shall never forget the thrill that ran through my soul when I thought of the coming consequences of that shot. There were one hundred and fifteen of us students at the University, who, anxious to vindicate the stars and stripes, made up a company and offered our services to the Governor of Ohio; and sir, we were told that this is a white man's war and that the Negro had nothing to do with it. Sir, we returned, docile, patient, waiting, casting our eyes to the Heavens whence help always comes. We knew that there would come a period in the history of this nation when our strong black arms would be needed. We waited patiently: we waited until Massachusetts, through her noble Governor, sounded the alarm, and we hastened to hear the summons and obey it.

Richard Harvey Cain
Wilberforce University in Ohio

Card 1: Segregated army regiments with white officers

After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862, the Union army began to recruit African American soldiers. But the army did not allow these soldiers to be in the same regiments with the white soldiers. The regiments were segregated. New regiments were created called either the Colored Infantry, the United States Colored Troops, or the Infantry of African Descent.

Although all the soldiers in these regiments were African American, all their officers were white. No African American soldier could be a commissioned officer, that is a lieutenant, captain, or general. Commissioning a black man would mean that as an officer he might have authority over white soldiers, and the United States Army was not willing to let that happen. During the Civil War, a few African American soldiers became sergeants and corporals, but that was as high as they could rise.

In the navy, it was different. The navy had a long tradition of African American and white sailors serving on the same ship. During the Civil War black men had been encouraged to join the navy as early as September 1861.

Card 2: Lack of supplies, inadequate training, and ill treatment

Each day black soldiers realized that the government for which they fought valued them less than it did the white soldiers.

Black regiments had great difficulty getting supplies and uniforms; some regiments served for months without uniforms or shoes. Often their uniforms were made of shoddy materials: shoes and clothing fell apart easily and were not replaced by the army. Weapons were defective or old models.

Many of the white officers did not fully train their black troops in the military commands, tactics, and maneuvers they would need on the battlefield.

Some officers struck the men or treated them with contempt during drill, calling them derogatory names and humiliating them. Many black soldiers were used as personal servants by white officers or as laborers to clean the

Card 3: Fatigue duty

Black soldiers were assigned an unequally large portion of military labor, called "fatigue duty." Many worked for eight to ten hours a day at hard, physical labor. They dug trenches and latrines, built corduroy roads and fortifications, and unloaded supplies. Whenever possible, black soldiers were given the jobs no one wanted, like burying dead from the battlefield and hospitals. The army excused this unfairness by saying that they were saving the white soldiers for fighting.

These were the same jobs that black men had done for the army before they were permitted to be soldiers. Many of the black soldiers felt that they were still slaves, even though they were emancipated and wore the blue army uniform. The fatigue duties sapped their strength, their health, and their morale. Many black regiments had no time to drill or keep themselves, their uniforms, and their weapons clean and fit. The black soldiers protested to President Lincoln, who responded by issuing orders for the protection and proper military use of colored troops.

Card 4: Treatment by the enemy

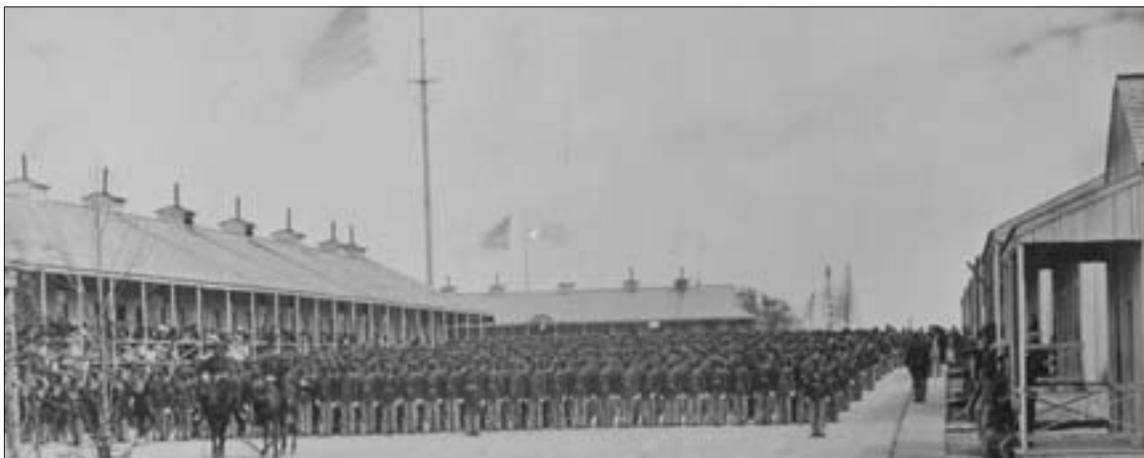
Captured white soldiers were treated as prisoners of war with the possibility of exchange. After the emancipation of slaves in 1863, the Union Army formed regiments of black soldiers. Because of this, Confederate President Jefferson Davis issued his own proclamation: All captured Union black soldiers were to be treated as outlaws and turned over to the authorities of a Southern state. At that time, the laws in every southern state provided for the execution of any black person found with a weapon, whether free or slave.

Davis' proclamation meant that all captured black soldiers could be killed or enslaved. In addition, the Confederate Congress passed a resolution stating that all white officers who led black troops would be considered as inciting slave revolts, and if captured would be put to death or otherwise punished.

Neither the black soldier nor his white officer would be protected under the articles of war. Instead of being prisoners of war, both would be treated as criminals and executed if captured.



U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA



National Archives

26th U.S. Colored Volunteer Infantry on parade at Camp William Penn, PA 1865



Image Archives, York, PA



COME AND JOIN US BROTHERS.

Freedmen and Southern Society Project, College Park, MD

Why Can't We Have a Soldier's Pay?

Of all the injustices that black soldiers faced, perhaps the worst was unequal pay. In 1863, white soldiers were paid thirteen dollars a month with an additional three dollars clothing allowance for their uniform. Black soldiers had been promised the same pay.

But, when the black soldiers lined up to receive their first pay, they discovered that their pay was only ten dollars a month. Furthermore, the three dollars for the uniform would be taken out of their pay, not added to it! So, the black soldier would actually earn seven dollars instead of the thirteen dollars he had been promised.

Many black soldiers—and their white officers—protested to the army, to the secretary of war, and to President Lincoln. Some wrote editorials and letters to the editors of northern newspapers.

The black soldiers wrote that they did the same army work as the white soldier, lived in the same miserable camp conditions, and faced the same chances of death from bullet or disease.

The black soldiers, as well as the white soldiers, had families at home who depended on their pay. Families were starving, cold, and lacked adequate clothing and shelter without their fathers and husbands at home. Some families were placed in the poorhouse or put out of their homes by landlords. Some family members, especially children, died.

One African American wrote in a letter to the *Christian Recorder*: "Do we not fill the same ranks? Do we not take up the same length of ground in the grave-yard that others do? The ball does not miss the black man and strike the white nor the white and strike the black.... At that time there is no distinction made."

Corporal James Henry Gooding of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts protested to President Lincoln. He wrote, "The main question is, Are we Soldiers or are we Laborers? We have done a Soldier's Duty. Why can't we have a Soldier's pay?"

Members of the 3rd South Carolina Regiment, comprised of ex-slaves, laid down their guns and refused to fight until they were given equal pay. Sergeant William Walker was charged with being the ringleader and executed for mutiny.

The governor of Massachusetts wrote a letter to President Lincoln protesting Walker's execution. "The Government which found no law to pay him [Sergeant Walker] except as a nondescript and a contraband [ex-slave], nevertheless found law enough to shoot him as a soldier."

In other black regiments, soldiers who refused to fight until they had equal pay were arrested, court-martialed, and sentenced to hard labor.

When their protests didn't get any action, a number of regiments refused to accept any pay until it equaled the pay of white soldiers. One of the first regiments to do this was the 54th Massachusetts.

The soldiers in the 54th had been in the army for five months when their first pay day arrived. The men were excited: at last, there would be money to send home. They were called to attention, and all the soldiers lined up eagerly. However, their delight turned to disbelief when the promised thirteen dollars was now only seven dollars!

When the officer in charge asked who wished to receive the seven dollars pay, not one soldier raised his hand. The soldiers said they would wait for their full and equal pay. Twice more over the next few months, the troops were offered the ten dollars, minus three dollars for clothing. Both times the soldiers of the Fifty-fourth refused the pay.

The Massachusetts Legislature voted to add the extra three dollars to the men's pay, but the soldiers still refused. In a letter to the *Boston Journal*, Private Theodore Tilton wrote that they were not holding out for money, but for principle, and that their necessities did not outweigh their self-respect.

The white officers of the Fifty-fourth supported the black soldiers. One officer wrote the governor, "They will refuse to accept any money from the United States until the United States is willing to pay them according to the terms of their enlistment. They would rather work and fight until they are mustered out of the Service, without any pay, than accept from the Government less than it gives to other soldiers from Massachusetts."

Not until August of 1864, only a few months until the end of the war, did Congress pass a law equalizing the pay of black and white soldiers. At last, the men of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts regiment accepted their pay and sent money home to their families.

But other regiments weren't as fortunate. Only men who were free when the war began would receive the pay allowed by law at the time they enlisted. Black soldiers who were slaves when the war started would not get all of the back pay to which they were entitled. Members of regiments who had been slaves in 1861 continued their protest until March 1865, only a month before the end of the war. Finally Congress passed a second law allowing the equal pay for former slaves.

Black soldiers had won one of the longest and most important battles of the Civil War -- the fight for equal pay.