



# **First Battle of Bull Run Integrated Reading and Critical Thought Activities**

**For Grades 5-8**

**7 INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES**  
Perfect for Interactive Notebooks  
Perfect for Morning Work or Assessments

**MR. NUSSBAUM**  
LEARNING + FUN

## ANSWERS

Name	Answers
First Battle of Bull Run	A, C, B, C, A, D, A, B, D, D

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## First Battle of Bull Run Reading Comprehension

The first major battle of the American Civil War occurred on July 21, 1861, in Manassas, Virginia. The battle is known both as the First Battle of Bull Run, after the creek that ran through the battlefield, or the First Battle of Manassas. Union forces under General Irvin McDowell, hoping for a decisive blow against the newly formed Confederacy, planned a surprise attack against the left flank of Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard's forces at the railroad junction of Manassas. Both sides were unseasoned and unprepared for the carnage that would ensue. Hundreds of spectators from Washington lined the hills of the battlefield to cheer on the Union. McDowell, who was skeptical of the Union plan, amassed 35,000 soldiers—the largest land army ever assembled in America at the time—to attack the Confederate positions.

At 2:30 in the morning on July 21, McDowell sent two detachments from nearby Centreville toward Confederate positions. By 5:15, the first shots had been fired. Through the morning, Union forces had slowly pushed Confederate forces back until they broke through the Confederate right flank at about 11:30, sending them into a disorganized retreat. General McDowell elected not to pursue the retreating Confederates, who were able to regroup at the Henry Hill House. At 12:00, Confederate reinforcements under General Thomas J. Jackson arrived on the battlefield. It was at this moment when Confederate General Bernard Bee is said to have uttered the timeless words, "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall." From that point on, Thomas J. Jackson would be known as Stonewall Jackson. Some historians believe Bee was actually angry at Jackson for not sending his troops directly into battle. The tide of the battle soon changed when Confederate forces under Jackson and Cavalry Commander J.E.B. Stuart captured Union artillery around 3:00. Jackson commanded his soldiers to press on, and for the first time in the war, Union forces would be horrified by the "rebel yells" screamed by Confederate soldiers on the attack. At 4:00, more Confederate reinforcements led by Kirby Smith and Jubal Early crushed a Union brigade and caused the collapse of McDowell's Union Army. Union forces began a disorderly and poorly managed retreat, accompanied by screaming spectators who clogged the retreat path. Confederate forces, also in a state of disarray, captured several hundred Union soldiers but failed to pursue the remaining forces back to Washington.

The First Battle of Bull Run proved to be the deadliest battle in American history to that point. Nearly 5,000 total casualties were recorded, with Union forces suffering roughly 1,000 more than the Confederates. The North was shocked and dismayed at the Union defeat, and many feared the Confederacy would move immediately on Washington. At the very least, the First Battle of Bull Run proved the war would be long and violent. President Lincoln was forced to sign a bill that allowed for the enlistment of up to 500,000 additional soldiers.

<p><b>1.) Why did the Union Army attack at Bull Run?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) They were hoping to end the war as quickly as it started.</li> <li>b.) They were hoping to prolong the war.</li> <li>c.) They had better generals.</li> <li>d.) They wanted to capture Confederate soldiers.</li> </ul> <p><b>2.) At Bull Run, both the Union and Confederate Armies were...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) battle tested.</li> <li>b.) ready for a long, violent war.</li> <li>c.) Inexperienced.</li> <li>d.) tired from fighting many battles.</li> </ul> <p><b>3.) McDowell's army was...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) small in comparison to other armies.</li> <li>b.) the largest ever assembled in America at the time.</li> <li>c.) fighting for the Confederacy.</li> <li>d.) smaller than Beauregard's.</li> </ul> <p><b>4.) If the Battle of Bull Run had ended at 11:30 A.M., then...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) the Confederacy would have been destroyed.</li> <li>b.) Washington DC would have been attacked.</li> <li>c.) the Union would have been considered victorious.</li> <li>d.) the Confederacy would have been considered victorious.</li> </ul> <p><b>5.) Who coined the nickname “Stonewall” Jackson”?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) Bernard Bee</li> <li>b.) Union soldiers</li> <li>c.) Thomas J. Jackson</li> <li>d.) Confederate prisoners</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.) When was the turning point in the First Battle of Bull Run?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) 2:30 A.M.</li> <li>b.) 11:30 A.M.</li> <li>c.) When Stonewall Jackson arrived</li> <li>d.) About 3:00 P.M.</li> </ul> <p><b>7.) Which of the following do you think is a major reason why the Confederates won the First Battle of Bull Run?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) They received many reinforcements.</li> <li>b.) They had many more soldiers.</li> <li>c.) Their soldiers were more experienced.</li> <li>d.) They had better weapons.</li> </ul> <p><b>8.) The First Battle of Bull Run proved...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) the Confederacy would ultimately win.</li> <li>b.) the Civil War would be long and violent.</li> <li>c.) President Lincoln would ultimately be assassinated.</li> <li>d.) the Union would lose the will to fight.</li> </ul> <p><b>9.) What happened first?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) 4:00 P.M.</li> <li>b.) Stonewall Jackson arrived with reinforcements.</li> <li>c.) Kirby Smith arrived with reinforcements.</li> <li>d.) Spectators from Washington lined the hills to view the battle.</li> </ul> <p><b>10.) Which of the following is NOT TRUE about the First Battle of Bull Run?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) It is also called the Battle of Manassas.</li> <li>b.) It was the Civil War's first major battle.</li> <li>c.) It featured Stonewall Jackson, P.T. Beauregard, and Irvin McDowell as military officers.</li> <li>d.) Lincoln became reluctant to request mobilization of more soldiers for the Union cause.</li> </ul>
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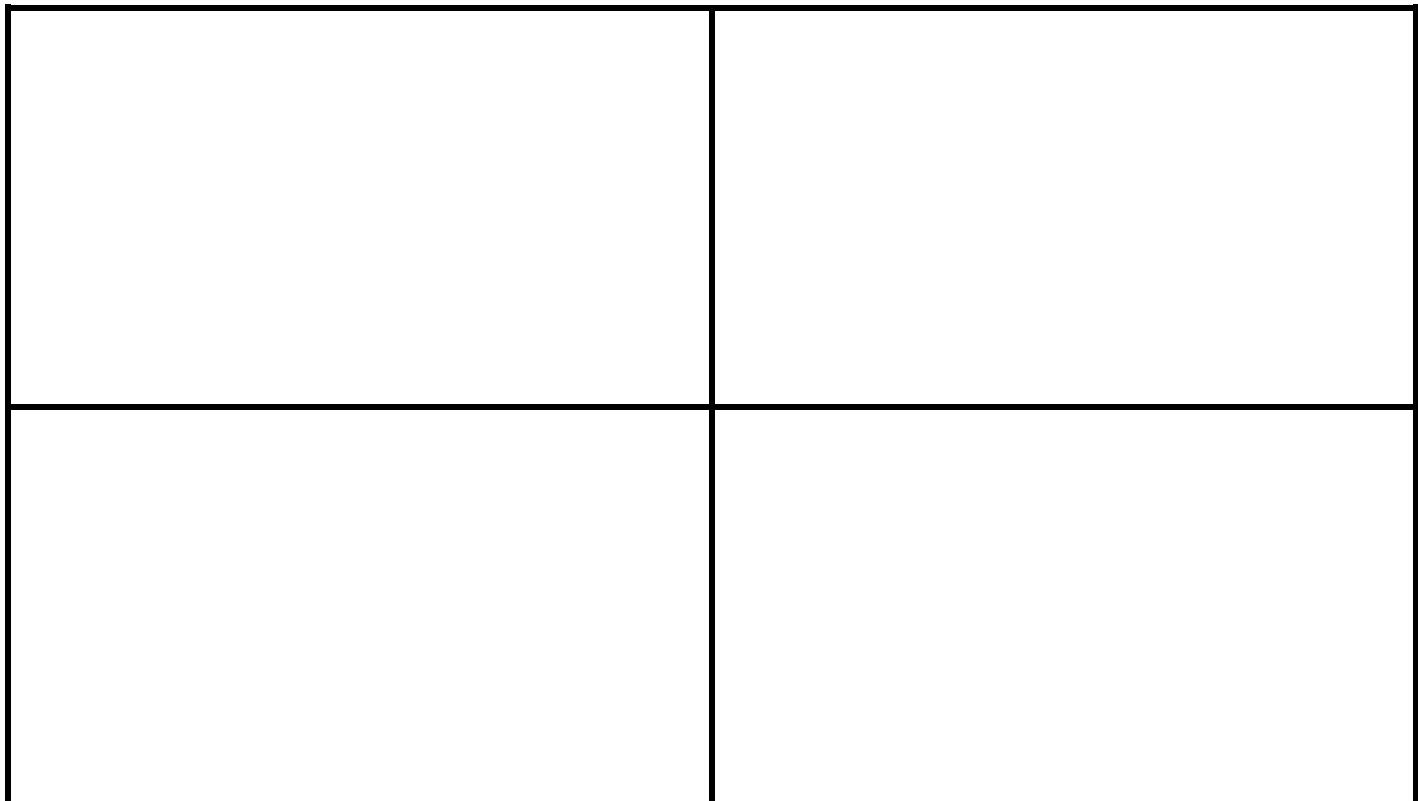


## Wilmer McLean

One of the great ironies of the Civil War regards the story of a grocer named Wilmer McLean. It is often said that the Civil War “started in his front lawn and ended in his front parlor.” On July 21, 1861, the first major battle of the Civil War took place on McLean’s farm in Manassas, Virginia. In the battle, a cannonball tore through his roof, and Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard made the house his headquarters. Concerned about the welfare of his family and business, McLean moved everything to Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, a place he believed would be safe from warfare and battles. To his dismay, however, on April 9, 1865, the war returned to the residence of the McLean family when Lee surrendered to Grant in his front parlor. Following the surrender, Union officers made off with nearly all of McLean’s furniture as souvenirs.

Below are four cells. Make a short (and funny) comic showing the following scenes:

- 1.) Wilmer McLean living happily in his old brick home in Manassas, Virginia.
- 2.) Wilmer McLean assessing the damage to his kitchen after a Union cannonball smashed through the ceiling.
- 3.) Wilmer McLean living happily away from the fighting in remote Appomattox Courthouse
- 4.) Wilmer McLean angrily watching as Union officers take his furniture as souvenirs.



## A Perfect Day for a Picnic?

In July of 1861, Union supporters lined the gently rolling hills of Manassas, Virginia, to witness what would become the first major battle of the Civil War. Citizens from Washington brought their families, blankets, and picnic baskets to celebrate what they thought would be a Union victory, bringing a quick end to southern foolishness. Dressed in their finest clothes, they were excited to cheer their boys on, in what must have, in some way, resembled a modern-day sporting event.

Based on your knowledge of what happened at the First Battle of Bull Run, and your knowledge of the advantages the North had over the South in the war, pretend you are a newspaper reporter interviewing one of the spectators who came to cheer on the Union. Think of how such a spectator might respond to the questions below and pen creative answers.

**Reporter: It's a beautiful day! What's in the picnic basket?**

**Spectator:**

**Reporter: So, you came all the way from Washington. What do you hope to see here at the hills of Manassas?**

**Spectator:**

**Reporter: Why don't you think the Southerners have any chance?**

**Spectator:**

**Reporter (Make your own question):**

**Spectator:**

## Battles of Bull Run Text Structure

Read the paragraphs below and identify the text structure:

**Compare and Contrast | Problem-Solution | Chronological | Cause-Effect**

1. The first and second battles of Bull Run were two of the most important battles of the Civil War. Both battles took place in Manassas, Virginia, and both were decisive Confederate victories. Although the result of each battle was the same, the second battle proved far more deadly with over 17,000 combined casualties. Furthermore, it proved of greater importance from a tactical perspective and the Confederate victory prompted Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the North.

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2. Because the Union government wanted to bring a quick end to what was becoming the Civil War, and because a large Confederate force was encamped at the critical railroad junction of Manassas, Virginia, only 35 miles from Washington, President Lincoln ordered Union Commander Irvin McDowell to conduct a massive strike on the Confederates. On July 21, 1861, McDowell attacked. While the battle started out well for the Union Army, the Confederates would gain the advantage when thousands of reinforcements began arriving in the early afternoon. Soon, the Confederates broke through Union lines, sending them fleeing back to Washington by the thousands. The Confederate victory at Manassas proved a crushing blow to Lincoln and the Union and proved the war would be long and violent. As a result, Lincoln requested the mobilization of 500,000 additional soldiers for the purposes of subduing the South.

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3. The first battle of the Civil War occurred on April 12, 1861, at Fort Sumter, South Carolina. Although not a major battle, it set the stage for the violence and carnage to come. Just a little more than two months later, on July 21, 1861, the first major battle of the Civil War occurred at a small railroad junction near Manassas, Virginia. Known as the First Battle of Manassas, or, the First Battle of Bull Run, the Confederate victory crushed any hope of a short, protracted war. On August 28, 1862, Manassas would be the site of the much larger and bloodier Second Battle of Bull Run, which resulted in more than four times the casualty numbers as the first battle.

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4. In the Second Battle of Bull Run, Robert E. Lee found himself and his Army of Northern Virginia in a precarious position. Union General George B. McClellan and his Army of Virginia was recalled from its Peninsula Campaign to combine with the newly formed Army of Virginia under John Pope. The goal was for the new colossal army to strike at the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia. Lee knew that both his army and capital would be vulnerable to such an overwhelming force. Luckily, he had an idea. Lee called a preemptive strike on Pope's army before it could combine with McClellan. Lee split his army into two divisions, which confused Union generals, leading to poor communication, poor decisions, faulty intelligence, and ultimately, the defeat of the Union Army (again) at Manassas.

Answers:

1. Compare-Contrast
2. Cause-Effect
3. Chronological
4. Problem-Solution

**Fact or Fiction?**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Below is a passage on the First Battle of Bull Run. On the following page is a chart with ten statements. Indicate whether each statement is fact or fiction.

## **A Nice Day at the Battlefield!**

The first major battle of the American Civil War occurred on July 21, 1861, in Manassas, Virginia. The Battle is known both as the First Battle of Bull Run, after the creek that ran through the battlefield, or, the First Battle of Manassas. Union forces under General Irvin McDowell, hoping for a decisive blow against the newly formed Confederacy, planned a surprise attack against the left flank of Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard's forces at the railroad junction of Manassas. Both sides were unseasoned and unprepared for the carnage that would ensue. Hundreds of spectators from Washington lined the hills of the battlefield to cheer on the Union. McDowell, who was skeptical of the Union plan, amassed 35,000 soldiers - the largest land army ever assembled in America at the time, to attack the Confederate positions.

## **"Stonewall" Saves the Day**

At 2:30 in the morning on July 21, McDowell sent two detachments from nearby Centreville toward Confederate positions. By 5:15, the first shots had been fired. Through the morning, Union forces had slowly pushed Confederate forces back until they broke through the Confederate right flank at about 11:30, sending them into a disorganized retreat. Gen McDowell elected not to pursue the retreating Confederates, who were able to regroup at the Henry Hill House. At 12:00, Confederate reinforcements under General Thomas J. Jackson arrived on the battlefield. It was at this moment, when Confederate General Bernard Bee is said to have uttered the timeless words "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall." From that point on Thomas J. Jackson would be known as Stonewall Jackson. Some historians believe Bee was actually angry at Jackson for not sending his troops directly into battle. The tide of the battle soon changed when Confederate forces under Jackson and Calvary Commander J.E.B. Stuart captured Union artillery around 3:00. Jackson commanded his soldiers to press on and for the first time in the war, Union forces would be horrified by the "rebel yells" screamed by Confederate soldiers on the attack. At 4:00, more Confederate reinforcements led by Kirby Smith and Jubal Early crushed a Union brigade and caused the collapse of McDowell's Union Army. Union forces began a disorderly and poorly managed retreat, accompanied by screaming spectators who clogged the retreat path. Confederate forces, also in a state of disarray, captured several hundred Union soldiers but failed to pursue the remaining forces back to Washington.

## A Grim Reality

The First Battle of Bull Run proved to be the deadliest battle in American history to that point. Nearly 5,000 total casualties were recorded, with Union forces suffering roughly 1,000 more than the Confederates. The North was shocked and dismayed at the Union defeat and many feared the Confederacy would move immediately on Washington. At the very least, the First Battle of Bull Run proved the war would be long and violent. President Lincoln was forced to sign a bill that allowed for the enlistment of up to 500,000 additional soldiers.

	FACT	FICTION
The First Battle of Bull Run and the First Battle of Manassas actually refer to the same battle.		
Union General P.G.T. Beauregard was hoping to deliver a decisive blow to Confederate forces.		
The battlefield hills were full on spectators who came to watch the battle and cheer for the Union soldiers.		
The Union army that assembled at Manassas was the largest land army in American history.		
From the start, the battle looked grim for the Union army.		
The tide (or momentum) of the battle changed around 3:00 P.M.		
Confederate forces pursued Union soldiers all the way to Washington.		
Combined, there just over 1,000 total casualties at the First Battle of Bull Run.		
The battle caused President Lincoln to call for hundreds of thousands of soldiers to serve in the Union army.		
For the Union army, the defeat at Bull Run was a small setback.		

## Answers:

	FACT	FICTION
The First Battle of Bull Run and the First Battle of Manassas actually refer to the same battle.	X	
Union General P.G.T. Beauregard was hoping to deliver a decisive blow to Confederate forces.		X
The battlefield hills were full on spectators who came to watch the battle and cheer for the Union soldiers.	X	
The Union army that assembled at Manassas was the largest land army in American history.	X	
From the start, the battle looked grim for the Union army.		X
The tide (or momentum) of the battle changed around 3:00 P.M.	X	
Confederate forces pursued Union soldiers all the way to Washington.		X
Combined, there just over 1,000 total casualties at the First Battle of Bull Run.		X
The battle caused President Lincoln to call for hundreds of thousands of soldiers to serve in the Union army.	X	
For the Union army, the defeat at Bull Run was a small setback.		X

## Emphasis – What was the actual meaning of Jackson’s iconic nickname?

Sometimes two sentences take on different meanings depending on what is emphasized. For example, read the sentences below and emphasize the words in bold font.

1. I never said **she** stole my money.
2. I never said she **stole** my money.

In the first sentence, it seems as if money was stolen, but the perpetrator was not “she.”

In the second sentence, it seems as if money might have been given away or lent to “she,” but it was not stolen.

Even though the sentences are the same, the meaning changes as different words are emphasized. Similarly, historians aren’t sure exactly what Bernard Bee meant when he uttered something like, “there stands Jackson like a stone wall.” Some believe he was inspired by Jackson’s presence, and some believe he uttered those words because of Jackson’s inaction. Whatever the case, from that moment on, Confederate General Thomas J. Jackson was known as Stonewall Jackson.

In the chart below, make up two fictional accounts of what Bernard Bee might have said after uttering “there stands Jackson like a stone wall.” You’ll need to make up accounts for both sentences that emphasize different words.

There stands <b>Jackson</b> like a stone wall!	There stands Jackson like a <b>stone wall</b> !

## Answers:

There stands <b>Jackson</b> like a stone wall!	There stands Jackson like a <b>stone wall</b> !
Answers will vary, but in this version, students should write something about how Jackson's figure, strong like a stone wall, inspired Bee and his soldiers to continue fighting.	Answers will vary, but in this version, students should write something that indicates that Bernard Bee was irritated with Stonewall Jackson and implored him to stop "standing there" and move his soldiers into action.

**Battle Breakdown: Bull Run I**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Read the narrative and fill in the chart on the next page.

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<b>What was the cause of the battle?</b>	
<b>What were the roles of each of the following players?</b>	
Irvin McDowell	
P.G.T. Beauregard	
Stonewall Jackson	
Jeb Stuart	
Jubal Early and Kirby Smith	
Which side won the battle?	
<b>What was the effect of the battle?</b>	

Answers:

<b>What was the cause of the battle?</b>	
Union Forces wanted to deliver a decisive blow against the newly formed Confederacy with a surprise attack at Manassas – an important railroad center in the Confederacy.	
<b>What were the roles of each of the following players?</b>	
Irvin McDowell	Irvin McDowell was the Union General in command at the First Battle of Bull Run. McDowell was in charge of the largest land force ever assembled in American history.
P.G.T. Beauregard	P.G.T. Beauregard was one of the Confederate generals at Manassas. Union General Irvin McDowell first planned to attack Beauregard's Army.
Stonewall Jackson	Stonewall Jackson was a Confederate general at the Battle of Bull Run. The momentum of the battle shifted toward the Confederacy when he came with reinforcements around noon. Jackson also received his nickname "Stonewall" during the battle.
Jeb Stuart	Jeb Stuart was the cavalry commander for the Confederate Army at the First Battle of Bull Run.
Jubal Early and Kirby Smith	Smith and Early were Confederate generals that led the attack that ultimately crushed a Union brigade and sent the army into a disorganized retreat.
Which side won the battle? Confederacy	
<b>What was the effect of the battle?</b>	
The First Battle of Bull Run proved the war would be long and deadly. It forced President Lincoln to call for 500,000 additional soldiers.	