

Writing Activity: Summarizing the Civil War

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Directions: Imagine you are trying to describe the American Civil War to someone from another country. Write three to five statements that **summarize** this period in U.S. history. You might address the following issues in your summary statements: the main causes, the costs of the war, how the conflict was resolved, and the effects of the war.

Use the following chart to record your summaries. You might find it helpful to first list three or four main points, or key words, you want to cover in each summary statement.

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| Causes | Summary |
|---------------------------|---|
| Opposing views on slavery | The North and South had opposing views on slavery. The North saw it as a moral outrage; the South saw slavery as an economic necessity. |

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| The Costs | Summary |
|-----------|---------|
| | |

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| The Costs | Summary |
|--|---|
| Lives and property President Lincoln assassinated | Many men lost their lives in the war. Homes and entire cities were destroyed. President Lincoln was assassinated by men loyal to the Confederate cause. |

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| How Resolved | Summary |
|--------------|---------|
| | |

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| How Resolved | Summary |
|-----------------------------|---|
| The South lost to the North | Although they fought hard, the South had to concede victory to the stronger, better supplied Northern army. |

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| Effects | Summary |
|---------|---------|
| | |

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| Effects | Summary |
|--|--|
| Slavery outlawed Freed slaves faced prejudice Country divided South ravaged | Although slavery was outlawed, African Americans continued to face prejudice, especially in the South. Much of the South had been ravaged by war and would have to be rebuilt. |

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To Write a Strong Summary

- restate facts and concepts in your own words
- emphasize important events and figures
- avoid storytelling terms such as “and then” and “next”