**Turning Points**

**Section 1**

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| 00:00:02 | TEACHER: So we've already learned that the Union faced a |
| 00:00:04 | series of defeats at the beginning of the war. What we're going to explore now is how does the Union turn the tide of war in its favor. We're going to start off by talking about how the war in the West was very different from the war in the East and how a key figure in this shift from defeat to victory was Ulysses S. Grant. Then we'll move on to talk about the importance of the |
| 00:00:30 | battles at New Orleans and Vicksburg. We'll wrap up by talking about the battle at Gettysburg and why this was a major turning point. But let's begin by talking about the war in the West and how this helped the Union win its needed victories. |

**Section 2**

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| 00:00:01 | TEACHER: So the war in the Western Theater was mostly |
| 00:00:03 | fought around key rivers in the region. These rivers, as we see on the map here, included the Ohio River, which we see kind of goes along here; the Tennessee River, which goes in a U-shape there; and then the Mississippi River, which stretched all the way from the north down into the south. Now the US ultimately wanted control of the Mississippi River, because the hope was that in taking control of this |
| 00:00:33 | river, they would ultimately be splitting the Confederacy and half, and thus taking away a major supply and transportation route from the Confederacy. Now for their part, the Confederacy thought that control over states like Missouri and Kentucky, which is kind of in this area, would give them control over the border areas. Now in the West, a face-off begins when Confederates who |
| 00:01:04 | controlled key river forts, including the major fortress of Vicksburg in Mississippi, are facing off against a fleet of armored Union gunboats. And we see a sketch of gunboats here, which were boats that moved very quickly along the rivers. And they would attack forts with cannon fire. The Union had about 90,000 troops in the West, which outnumbered the Confederacy by about 20,000. |

**Section 4**

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| 00:00:01 | TEACHER: Ulysses S. Grant serves as an influential Union |
| 00:00:04 | general, as he is responsible for turning the tide of the war to the Union's favor. Now he was a graduate of West Point Academy and did serve in the Mexican-American War, though as a soldier, not as a leader. And before the Civil War begins, he's working in his family's store. Once the conflict does start, he's given the role as a |
| 00:00:27 | low-level general but quickly moves up through the rankings because of his success in the western theater. He was given command of the entire Union Army in 1864. And he was so popular that, by 1868, he was elected president and serves two terms. Now as a commander, Grant was determined, aggressive, and willing to learn from his mistakes. In 1862, he's responsible for capturing Fort |
| 00:01:00 | Henry and Fort Donelson. And we see in this image here a sketch of the battle at Fort Donelson, which was one of the victories that helps the Union control the border state Kentucky and much of the Confederate-controlled Tennessee. One battle in particular really tested Grant's mettle. This is the Battle of Shiloh, which happens in April of 1862. |
| 00:01:27 | In this battle, the Confederates really strike back hard. They do this by launching a surprise early morning attack on Grant's army. As a result of this surprise, the Union is in really bad shape initially. But Grant refuses to retreat, and Union reinforcements come within a day. |
| 00:01:52 | This advantage pushes Grant's army and forces the Confederates to retreat instead. The battle at Shiloh was very intense. Both sides face casualties of about 10,000. This is as many casualties as any battle has seen to this point in the war. And while both sides do claim victory, it is Grant showing his toughness as a leader that really |
| 00:02:17 | stands out in this conflict. |

**Section 6**

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| 00:00:02 | TEACHER: Now we've been able to get a glimpse at the Union |
| 00:00:04 | success in the Western theater. But these victories were not enough to completely turn the tide of war in the Union's favor. The Union still needed to take control of the Mississippi in order to split the Confederacy. |

**Section 7**

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| 00:00:02 | TEACHER: Now, New Orleans was a key Confederate port located |
| 00:00:06 | at the mouth of the Mississippi River, which made it vital to Confederate trade as it was necessary to carry goods and supplies into the Western Confederate states. Now because of its importance, it was heavily defended by forts. These forts carried as many as 125 cannons in order to protect the city. In April of 1862, flag officer David Farragut makes a |
| 00:00:33 | decision to try to lead a Union fleet past both of the forts that protected New Orleans. The Confederates did their best to send all the ships that they had at hand to stop that fleet, and the fighting was fierce, as we can see in this sketch here. While the Union fleet was badly damaged after the fighting, the Union was able to get into New Orleans and, eventually, force the Confederacy to |
| 00:01:01 | surrender the city. And thus, Union troops were able to take control of New Orleans. Nonetheless, the Union leaders still faced some additional challenges. They needed to capture the Confederate fort of Vicksburg in Mississippi. Now, this fort is located here at the bottom of Mississippi, |
| 00:01:28 | just north of Louisiana, right on the Mississippi River that we see here. Now, this was the last Confederate fort that protected this major supply chain. And so the Union believed that capturing Vicksburg would give them an opportunity to control the entire river supply chain, and thus they would be able to divide the Confederacy. Their goal was to separate these Southern-Western states, |
| 00:01:57 | including Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana, and cut off the Confederacy from being able to ship supplies and people back and forth from the states. |

**Section 9**

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| 00:00:02 | TEACHER: So the Vicksburg campaign was one that was very |
| 00:00:04 | challenging. This is because Vicksburg was a fort that was extremely well defended by the Confederacy. As you can see in the image here, it's high above the river. And it's surrounded by swamps and trenches. And it was very well protected by a Confederate army. And while the Union navy had tried and failed to take |
| 00:00:23 | Vicksburg in 1862, and General Grant and his armies also failed to take Vicksburg in early 1863, Grant did understand just how vital this fort was. And thus, he decides that a new plan of attack is needed. And this plan of attack comes in a siege on May 22 of 1863, where Grant's army begins to block people and supplies from coming and going from the city. As a result of the siege, living conditions in the city |
| 00:00:55 | were very, very hard. This is because the number of civilians and soldiers crammed into the region forced many people to dig hillside caves for homes, as we can see in the image here. Very soon after the siege begins, the Confederacy finds itself running out of food and supplies, and thus decides to surrender on July 4 of 1863. |

**Section 11**

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| 00:00:01 | TEACHER: So the Union's capturing of Vicksburg proves |
| 00:00:04 | to be a turning point in the war for a number of reasons. First of all, it helps the Union win the war in the west, which gives it an opportunity to start focusing more of its efforts into the eastern theater. As well, the Union's able to take control of the Mississippi River, and thus divide the Confederacy and take control of the vital supply chain that they depended on. |
| 00:00:28 | It also results in raising Union morale and severely hurting the Confederacy's morale. And finally, it leads to Grant taking control of all of the Union armies, which for the first time gives Union forces a successful leader with a proven track record. |

**Section 13**

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| 00:00:00 | TEACHER: Now, we know that the union wins the war in the |
| 00:00:02 | West, they succeed in dividing the Confederacy by capturing Vicksburg. But at the same time that Vicksburg was falling, there was another major turning point happening in a battle in Pennsylvania. Let's move on to talk about why this battle was so important. |

**Section 14**

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| 00:00:02 | TEACHER: So at this point, all of the Eastern battles have |
| 00:00:05 | been fought in the Confederate territory. And so in June of 1863, General Lee decides that the time has come to invade the Union's territory. He does this for a few different reasons. He primarily wants to remove Union pressure from Virginia. His goal is to take Union troops out of Virginia, and therefore protect his territory by threatening the North. |
| 00:00:35 | He also hoped that a victory on Union soil would break down some of the North's morale. He hoped that in succeeding in a victory in a Northern territory, that would convince European nations to recognize the Confederacy is an independent nation, as the South needed allies. Finally, this was all happening as Vicksburg was simultaneously under siege by the Union, and he hoped to |
| 00:01:00 | relieve some of their pressure. And thus we see the beginning of the Battle of Gettysburg, which happens in the southern part of Pennsylvania, Union-controlled territory. And this territory was controlled by the commander of the Army of the Potomac, George Meade. On July 1, 1863, these two sides meet in Gettysburg. On that first day of fighting, the Confederates were able to |
| 00:01:31 | drive the Union troops back into a defensive position. But all of that changes once Union reinforcements arrive. On July 2, General Lee tries and fails to break Union lines by attacking the defensive positions at Cemetery Ridge and Little Round Top. The fighting was fierce and both sides suffer extreme losses. On July 3, the Confederate army tries one more time to |
| 00:02:00 | attack the strongest part of the Union lines. This becomes known as Pickett's Charge, which was named after the man who led the charge, George Pickett. Here the Confederates were defeated and faced heavy losses. Of 14,000 troops, not even half came back. And on July 4, when the Union had lost about a quarter of its total troops, compared to about a third of the total |
| 00:02:26 | forces lost by the Confederacy, General Lee finds himself forced to retreat. And this proves that Gettysburg is his greatest defeat thus far in the war. |

**Section 16**

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| 00:00:00 | TEACHER: Let's talk a bit about the significance |
| 00:00:02 | of the Battle of Gettysburg, which is known as a major turning point in the American Civil War. The Battle of Gettysburg and the battle of Vicksburg, which occurs just a few days later, would prove to be significant union victories. Now, Gettysburg would once and for all end hopes of Europe allying with the Confederacy. |
| 00:00:23 | Many European countries at this point believe that the Union was going to win the war and so they were more likely to ally or support the Union. This is going to combine with the weakening of Lee's army during this particular battle. And that the weakening of the Army, the support of Europe kind of going into the Union, is going to have an effect on both the Union |
| 00:00:49 | and on the Confederacy. In the Union, we're going to see increased morale-- meaning increased kind of psychological support. But Confederate morale is going to be severely damaged. Up to this point, many people in the south believed that Lee's army was unbeatable. And here at Gettysburg it is proven that Lee is definitely beatable and now it's actually looking |
| 00:01:13 | like Grant is the one that's unbeatable. And so Gettysburg is going to be a significant battle that is recognized by President Lincoln in 1863 when the Union dedicated a cemetery at Gettysburg. President Lincoln gave a very short but very powerful speech that is known as the Gettysburg Address. And since then, this has become one of the most famous presidential speeches in US history. |
| 00:01:42 | So now let's check your understanding of the significance of the Battle of Gettysburg. |

**Section 18**

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| 00:00:01 | TEACHER: Today the Gettysburg battlefield is a national |
| 00:00:04 | military park that's preserved by the National Park Service, which also maintains other parks that have Civil War ties, including the battlefield at Antietam. Thousands of guests, including many students like you, visit this park each year to learn more about the Civil War. |