Lesson 1: Civil War and Reconstruction Unit  
Class Notes 1 (Teacher Edition): The Civil War Begins

I. 1860 Election

The Democratic Party split into 2 separate parties over the issue of slavery. Republican Abraham Lincoln defeated the three other candidates even though he was not even on the ballot in most Southern states!

II. Secession

Just weeks after the election, South Carolina seceded from the Union. Several other southern states soon followed: Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas. They seceded because they feared that a Republican-led federal government would force an end to slavery, the economic way of life for the South. For them, secession was the only way to preserve their way of life. These states formed the Confederate States of America (C.S.A.) and soon elected Jefferson Davis as their president.

III. Ft. Sumter

Confederate soldiers began to take over FEDERAL buildings like courthouses and post offices. On April 12, 1861 Confederate troops opened fire on a federal military fort near Charleston, South Carolina. This fort was called Ft. Sumter. Eventually the Union troops surrendered to the Confederate troops. The Civil War had begun. After this Confederate victory, most southern states seceded from the Union: Tennessee, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Virginia. Not everyone in Virginia was happy about secession. Western parts of the state were opposed to this and as a result broke off from Virginia and formed their own state, West Virginia, which remained loyal to the Union.

Four other slaves states remained loyal to the Union: Maryland, Kentucky, Delaware, and Missouri.