

Robert E. Lee

7
A

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes



What Have We Already Learned?

5 minutes

← Show image 6A-1: Battle scene

Ask students what happened in the last read-aloud. Prompt further discussion with the image and the following questions:

- What is a civil war?
- Who was fighting in this civil war?
- Who won the first battle?
- Is the war over yet?
- Who was president of the United States during the Civil War?
- Why might President Lincoln have said “easier said than done” after the first battle of the Civil War?

Vocabulary Preview

5 minutes

General



← Show image 7A-6: Lee greeting his soldiers

1. In today’s read-aloud you will hear about a famous *general* for the Confederate Army named Robert E. Lee.
2. Say *general* with me three times.
3. [Show images of generals.] A general is a military officer of high rank or position. A general makes decisions during battle. A general has many soldiers under his or her command.
4. General Lee made good decisions during the war and helped his army win several battles.
5. How would you describe General Robert E. Lee in this drawing? What do you think are some characteristics of a good general?

Purpose for Listening

Tell students that they have heard about the first battle of the Civil War. Tell them to listen to find out more about the many battles to come and to learn about the man who was chosen to take command of the Confederate Army, and what might have happened after that.



- 1 What do you see in this picture?
- 2 [Show Gettysburg on a U.S. map.]
- 3 A wasteland is an area that is devastated, or destroyed. Why was Gettysburg now a wasteland?



- 4 or weak
- 5 A general is a military officer in charge of soldiers. General Lee was in charge of the Confederate Army.



Robert E. Lee

← Show image 7A-1: Gettysburg wasteland¹

After two days of fighting, the cornfields around Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, were all destroyed, so that one could hardly tell that there had been crops there at all.² Green, grassy pastures trampled by so many boots and horse hooves were now nothing but mud. The trees in the forests had lost their leaves, and many were burned or simply blown to bits by cannonballs. In short, all around Gettysburg was a **wasteland**, but the battle was not over yet.³

← Show image 7A-2: Lee studies map

It was past midnight. The date was July 3, 1863. Two Confederate soldiers stood guard outside the door of a small stone farmhouse at the edge of the battlefield. Several Confederate officers paced back and forth in the yard.

“Should we see if he is ready to issue orders?” asked one of the officers.

“No, don’t bother him. The Old Man will let us know when he is ready,” said another.

Inside the house, a man stood hunched over a table, studying a map by candlelight. He was not a very old man—just fifty-six-years old—but constant war and worries had brought new wrinkles to his face. He was far more thin and **frail**⁴ than he had been just two years before. But all the soldiers loved **General** Lee as though he were their own father. They called him “The Old Man” out of respect.⁵

← Show image 7A- 3: Lee family home

General Lee’s full name was Robert E. Lee. General Lee was born in 1807. He was the son of a hero from the Revolutionary War, who had fought bravely alongside George Washington to

6 What was the Revolutionary War?
Who was George Washington?

7 He had the second-highest scores
in his class, which means he did
very well in school.

8 What does *secede* mean?

9 or promise

10 As a soldier, he made an oath to
do what was best for the United
States.



11 Remember, Jefferson Davis
was elected president of the
Confederacy. He is the man seated,
with a paper in his hand.

12 Why do you think General Lee
refused both offers?

13 [Point out Jefferson Davis and
Robert E. Lee.] Advisors are people
who give advice.

make America free from Great Britain.⁶ Robert E. Lee joined the army at age seventeen, and graduated second in his class from the United States Military Academy.⁷ Then Lee served in the U.S. Army during the Mexican-American War.

Lee was proud to serve in the U.S. Army before the Civil War. But Robert E. Lee was born and raised in Virginia, a Confederate state. Lee married Mary Custis, a great-granddaughter of George and Martha Washington. After they married, Robert and Mary lived in Mary's plantation home known as Arlington House. This is a photo of Arlington House in Virginia. Lee did not think the South should secede from the Union.⁸ Like many other people, he wanted to find a peaceful way to end the disagreement, and he swore he would never break the **oath**⁹ he had taken to uphold the U.S. Constitution.¹⁰

← Show image 7A-4: Jefferson Davis's cabinet with Lee

At first, Lee refused to join the Confederate Army when President Jefferson Davis asked him to take command.¹¹ Then, just before the Battle of Fort Sumter, President Lincoln asked Lee if he would agree to take command of the entire Union Army. Lee refused that offer, as well.¹² Only when his home state of Virginia decided to secede and join with the Confederacy did Lee finally make up his mind. He hated the thought of fighting against the United States, but—even more—he hated the thought of fighting against his home state of Virginia.

General Lee became Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, making him one of the most powerful and recognizable figures in the Confederate Army. This image shows Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his closest **advisors**, including General Lee in the middle, discussing their war plan.¹³ Thanks in large part to General Lee's excellent abilities as a general, he commanded the Confederate Army to many victories in major battles on the field before Gettysburg. But still, so many men had died in those battles, and there was no end to the war in sight.



← **Show image 7A-5: Lee telling Venable his plan**

There was a knock on General Lee’s door in Gettysburg. It was Major Venable, Lee’s trusted friend and aide, or helper. “General, I have reports from your field commanders,” said Major Venable.

“Go ahead,” he said, turning his attention back to the maps on the table.

“General Ewell [YOO-uhl] had trouble organizing his men, sir, and General Rodes failed to attack as ordered. General Early tried, but he gave up as darkness approached.”

Lee tapped his knuckles on the table and stared at the maps. There had been nothing but bad news all day. After two days of fighting, the Union Army held the high ground, its soldiers and cannons spread in a tight line atop a long ridge, refusing to budge no matter how fiercely the Confederates attacked.¹⁴ “I have made my decision,” Lee said. “We will strike at the heart of the Union line, at Cemetery Ridge, and divide their forces. Then the rest of our army will attack on the left and right.”

14 The Union Army was on higher ground than the Confederate Army, so they had a better position and ability to see.



← **Show image 7A-6: Lee greeting his soldiers**

In the morning, the Old Man rode out to greet his soldiers. The men cheered and waved their hats whenever Lee rode past, and he waved and smiled confidently, doing his best to keep their spirits high.¹⁵ Later that morning though, things did not go exactly according to Lee’s plans. The Confederate forces attacked, hoping to break through the Union lines and send the enemy retreating from the field. Lee knew that if he succeeded, the South would have a chance to win the war. If he lost, it may not.¹⁶

15 How did the soldiers feel about Lee if they cheered and waved their hats?

16 What do you think is going to happen?



← **Show image 7A-7: Pickett’s charge**

The battle went on all day, but the most important moment came when Lee ordered General Pickett to lead his men in a daring charge across a wide, open field directly at the middle of the Union lines. The move, known as Pickett’s Charge, was a catastrophe for the Confederates.¹⁷ Half of Pickett’s men were

17 A catastrophe is an event that causes great trouble or destruction. So, Pickett’s Charge caused a great deal of trouble for the Confederate side.

killed, wounded, or captured. At the end of that third day, the Union still held the high ground. Lee had lost the battle and had to retreat to Virginia, abandoning hopes of invading deep into the North.



18 From what country did Americans gain independence? (Great Britain)

← **Show image 7A-8: Woman mourning**

The day after the battle was the Fourth of July, a day when Americans normally celebrate their independence.¹⁸ In 1863, however, celebrations were not so cheerful. Even in the North, where word quickly spread that the Union had won a major battle at Gettysburg, a war-torn nation was exhausted from battle. In the three days of the battle at Gettysburg, many, many men had died, were wounded, or had been captured on both the Union and Confederate sides. This battle proved to be one of the bloodiest in all of the Civil War. With all that bloodshed, few people on either side found reason to celebrate.

Discussing the Read-Aloud

15 minutes

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

1. *Literal* Who was the commander of the Confederate Army? (General Robert E. Lee) What was his nickname? (The Old Man) What state was he from? (Virginia)
2. *Literal* How did Confederate soldiers feel about General Lee? (They loved and respected him.)
3. *Literal* General Lee refused President Lincoln's offer to command the Union Army. What was the Union? (the northern states that did not secede) Why did General Lee refuse at first to command the Confederate Army? (He did not agree with the southern states seceding from the United States.) Why did he change his mind? (When his own state of Virginia seceded, he decided he would rather fight with Virginia than against it.)
4. *Inferential* Why do you think the Confederate president needed advisors, or people to give him advice? (Answers may vary.)
5. *Inferential* Why do you think General Lee was chosen to be one of the Confederate president's advisors? (Answers may vary.)

6. *Literal* Did the last movement of this battle, known as Pickett's Charge, go well for General Lee and the Confederacy? (no)
7. *Inferential* The day after the three-day Battle of Gettysburg was the Fourth of July. Why is this day important to Americans? (It is the day America voted to approve the Declaration of Independence and determined to be free from Great Britain.) Why do you think people were not in the mood to celebrate during the U.S. Civil War? (They were in mourning for all of the soldiers who had died.)

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

8. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* Do you think General Lee made the right decision to lead the Confederate Army? Why or why not? (Answers may vary, but if students think General Lee made the right decision to lead the Confederate Army, their answers should reflect information found in the text, such as the fact that he was born in Virginia and did not want to fight against his home state. If students think he did not make the right decision, their answers should reflect information found in the text, such as the fact that he had been trained at a U.S. military school and should have been loyal to his country.)
9. After hearing today's read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these questions.]

Word Work: Advisors

5 minutes

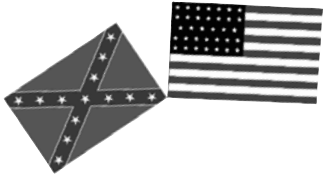
1. In the read-aloud you heard, “Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his closest *advisors* [met to discuss] their war plan.”
2. Say the word *advisors* with me.
3. Advisors are people who give advice.
4. Teachers, parents, coaches, and friends can all be advisors.
5. Who do you think of as your advisors? Who do you turn to for advice? Use the word *advisors* or *advisor* in a complete sentence when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase students’ responses: “_____ is/are my advisor(s) who I turn to for advice.”]
6. What’s the word we’ve been talking about? What part of speech is the word *advisors*?

Use a *Making Choices* activity for follow-up. Directions: I am going to read some sentences. If I describe people giving advice, say, “_____ were/was an advisor(s).” If I do not describe people giving advice, say, “_____ were/was not (an) advisor(s).”

1. General Lee helped Confederate President Jefferson Davis to make a battle plan. (General Lee was an advisor.)
2. All of the students sat at their desks in silence. (The students were not advisors.)
3. Meredith and Gabby often talk with each other to see what the other thinks. (Meredith and Gabby were advisors.)
4. My teacher told me I should try out for the spelling bee. (My teacher was an advisor.)
5. The new class president didn’t let students give her suggestions. (The new class president was not an advisor.)



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



Robert E. Lee

7
B

Note: Extensions may have activity options that exceed the time allocated for this part of the lesson. To remain within the time periods allocated for this portion of the lesson, you will need to make conscious choices about which activities to include based on the needs of your students.

Extensions

20 minutes

Somebody Wanted But So Then (Instructional Master 7B-1)

Put the following blank summary chart on chart paper:

Somebody	
Wanted	
But	
So	
Then	

- Explain to students that they are going to retell—first with their partner, and then together as a class—how Robert E. Lee came to be the commander of the Confederate Army.
- Tell students that they are going to retell Lee’s story using Instructional Master 7B-1, a Somebody Wanted But So Then worksheet.

Note: Have students work in pairs to orally fill in the chart together, while one person acts as the scribe.

- Students who participated in the Core Knowledge Language Arts program in Kindergarten and Grade 1 should be very familiar with this chart and will have seen their Kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers model the activity.
- If time allows, have students share their charts with the class. As students retell the read-aloud, be sure to use complete sentences and domain-related vocabulary to expand upon their responses.

For your reference, completed charts should follow these lines:

Somebody	General Robert E. Lee
Wanted	to keep his oath to the Constitution and do what was best for the United States.
But	his own state of Virginia seceded from the United States.
So	he decided to lead the Confederate Army.
Then	he helped the Confederate Army win several battles.

✈ Above and Beyond: You may wish to have students use Instructional Master 7B-1 to fill in their own charts.

A Picture Gallery of the U.S. Civil War: Robert E. Lee (Instructional Master 7B-2)

20 minutes



← Show image 7A-6: Lee greeting his soldiers

- Tell them that they will write about Robert E. Lee.
[Review Flip Book images of Robert E. Lee. You may wish to ask the following questions to prompt students:

What important job did he have? (led the Confederate Army)

What kind of person was Robert E. Lee, according to the read-aloud? (skilled general, loyal to his home state)

What did the soldiers think of him? Did the soldiers like him? (They respected and loved their general; they called him Old Man out of respect.)

What are some adjectives you can use to describe General Robert E. Lee?]

- First, invite students to look carefully at the image.
- Next, ask students to write two or three sentences to describe Robert E. Lee.
- Then, students should think of an appropriate title for the image and their descriptions.
- Finally, students should share their writing with their partner or home-language peers.