

Slideshow Storyteller

Parent Guide, page 1 of 1

Read the “Directions” sheet for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY

In this activity, children will explore the web to answer their questions about Robert Smalls and the Civil War. Then they will assemble a digital slideshow of their findings.

WHY

The Internet can be a wonderful tool for finding information and creating final products, but many young children benefit from having a prepared list of sites to explore. After seeing rich websites and identifying research strategies, children can become more capable of exploring on their own.

TIME

- 30 minutes

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in 2nd grade through 5th grade.

GET READY

- Read *Seven Miles to Freedom* together. *Seven Miles to Freedom* is a biography of Robert Smalls, a brave man who used his boat-piloting skills to escape slavery and help the Union navy during the Civil War. For tips on reading this book together, check out the Guided Reading Activity (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/smalls/smalls_reading.pdf).
- Read the *Step Back in Time* sheets.

YOU NEED

- *Directions* sheets (*attached*)
- *Step Back in Time* sheets (*attached*)
- *Web Quest Sources* sheet (*attached*)
- Computer with Internet

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/smalls/>

Slideshow Storyteller

Step Back in Time, page 1 of 2

For more information, visit the National Museum of American History website <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/smalls>.

About the Civil War

In the middle of the 1800s, the United States was splitting apart. Factories and business were bringing wealth to the North while the South depended on an economy based on plantations farmed by **slaves**. In the North, most people wanted to stop the spread of slavery, and **abolitionists** wanted to end it altogether. In the South, slaveholders and small farmers feared that their way of life would disappear under the power of the North.



Robert Smalls lived in South Carolina, which was a Confederate state. He escaped and helped fight for the Union.

Image from *Seven Miles to Freedom*.

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected president and seven southern states **seceded** from the United States, creating the Confederate States of America. When President Lincoln refused to remove U.S. troops from Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, Confederate guns fired on the fort. Then four more states **seceded** and joined the Confederacy.

A long and bloody war followed between the South (the Confederacy) and the North (the Union). In 1865, after five years of fighting, the North won the war, slavery ended, and the country was reunited.

For more information on the Civil War, visit the exhibition *The Price of Freedom: Americans at War* (www.americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/).

Slideshow Storyteller

Step Back in Time, page 2 of 2

About the Navy during the Civil War

The Union and the Confederacy had different ways of using their navies. The Union's main goal was to **blockade** Confederate ports to keep the South from getting supplies. The Confederate navy's major goal was keeping supplies moving by sea, using fast ships called "**blockade runners**" to speed past the Union **blockade**.

About Robert Smalls

Robert Smalls (1839–1915) was born a **slave** in Beaufort, South Carolina. He became a skilled boat pilot and on May 12, 1862, he used his skills to steal the ship *CSS Planter* with his boat crew and family, who all were **slaves**. Once his ship reached the Union **blockade**, he offered the Union navy the *CSS Planter*. Having escaped into Northern territory, he was no longer a **slave**. He worked alongside the Union navy until the end of the Civil War. After the war, Robert Smalls worked for the South Carolina state and national governments, and represented South Carolina in the U.S. Congress for five terms.



Robert Smalls learned to navigate the waters near Charleston, South Carolina by studying maps.
Image from *Seven Miles to Freedom*.

abolitionist: a person who wants to stop or abolish slavery

blockade: an act of war in which one side uses ships to stop people or supplies from leaving or entering the other side

seceded: separated from a nation and became independent

slave: someone who is owned by another person and is forced to work for that person without pay

SEVEN MILES TO FREEDOM The Robert Smalls Story Text copyright © 2008 by Janet Halfmann Illustrations copyright © 2008 by Duane Smith. Permission arranged with LEE & LOW BOOKS INC., New York, NY 10016.

Slideshow Storyteller

Directions, page 1 of 2

For adults and kids to follow together.

1. Discuss the story of Robert Smalls together. What parts were most interesting to you? Does the story spark other questions in your mind?

2. Select the topic you're most curious about from the [Web Quest Sources](#) sheet and explore a few of the links.

3. On each website you explore,
 - Look at the top and bottom of the page to find out who created the information you're looking at. For example, note that the page says "Naval Historical Center" at the top.
 - Look for one or more picture that you think tells a story about the topic you're looking into.

4. Now it's time to decide how you will make your slideshow. We recommend either of these options:
 - Create your slideshow online by creating an account with Picnik.com. Accounts are free, but you need an e-mail address. You should also pay attention to which features are free and which are "premium" and require payment. The web application on Picnik.com allows you to pull pictures directly from the web pages, add short captions, and share your final product.

Tip For more help on using Picnik for this activity, watch our short web tutorial (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/v/picnik.html>).

Slideshow Storyteller

Directions, page 2 of 2

- Create your slideshow by downloading pictures and using Microsoft PowerPoint. Microsoft PowerPoint will allow you to add pictures you have saved to your computer. You can add captions and save your final product.

Tip For more help on using PowerPoint for this activity, watch our short web tutorial (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/v/powerpoint.html>).

You can also consider using the free OpenOffice.org program called Impress, which is similar to Microsoft PowerPoint.

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5. As you are collecting images and adding them to your slideshow, write caption with a few words about the website that published this image. For example, write a caption that says “From the Naval Historical Center.”
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6. Share your final product with a friend or family member and explain what you learned about the Civil War.
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Slideshow Storyteller

Web Quest Sources

If you're curious about . . .

OTHER AFRICAN AMERICANS WHO SERVED IN THE CIVIL WAR

- A collection of stories and photographs from the Naval Historical Center
<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/prs-tpic/af-amer/afa-1860.htm>*
- A collection of stories and photographs from the Library of Congress
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart4.html>*

THE NAVY DURING THE CIVIL WAR

- A collection of stories and object from the National Museum of American History
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/printable/section.asp?id=5&sub=5>
(The larger images on this page are hard to copy and the smaller versions can end up a bit blurry.)
- Photographs of the Union navy during the Civil War from the Naval Historical Center
<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/arttopic/stereo/stereogr.htm>*
(Use the first set of links, labeled Stereo Pair images from before the 1890s.)

ROBERT SMALLS AND THE CSS PLANTER

- A Report on the *CSS Planter* from the Naval Historical Center
<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/sh-civil/civsh-p/planter.htm>*
- Robert Smalls's entry from the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*
<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=S000502>*
(short written description with 1 image)
- Robert Smalls's entry from *Black Americans in Congress* -
<http://baic.house.gov/member-profiles/profile.html?intID=15>*
(longer written description with 1 image)

You'll notice that most of the resources on this page have web addresses with .gov, .mil, or.edu. These address extensions mean they are resources from the government, military, and educational institutions (in this case, the Smithsonian Institution).

*- Click on the pictures on these sites to see a bigger version. The bigger version is probably going to look the best in your slideshow!

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/smalls/>

Slideshow Storyteller

Teacher Guide, page 1 of 2

Read the “Directions” and “Parent Guide” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Use historical images to tell a story.
- Use technology to create a presentation.
- Describe an aspect of the story of Robert Smalls in the Civil War.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Slide presentation includes captions for each image.
- Slide presentation includes two or more images.
- Images selected for slide presentation address selected topic.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

- 2H: Draw upon the visual data presented in photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings.
- 4B: Obtain historical data.

K-4 Historical Content Standards

- 4C. The student understands historic figures who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.

21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Media Literacy
- ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) Literacy

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Slideshow Storyteller

Teacher Guide, page 2 of 2

ISTE National Educational Technology Standards (NETS.S)

2. Communication and Collaboration

2A: Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.

3. Research and Information Fluency

3B: Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.