

## Topic: Lee's Surrender at Appomattox

**Historical Thinking Skills Assessed:** Critical Reading, Corroborating

**Grade Level:** Middle/High

### National History Standards

Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

Standard 2: The course and character of the Civil War and its effects on the American people

**Using the Item:** This item assesses students' critical reading skills and ability to synthesize multiple texts to corroborate information.

**Background:** In April 1865, Union and Confederate forces pursued each other in Virginia. On April 7, Union General Ulysses S. Grant began communication with Confederate General Robert E. Lee that led to a meeting between the two commanders in which the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia surrendered.

### SOURCE 1

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE U.S., 5 P.M., April 7th, 1865.

GENERAL R. E. LEE Commanding C.S.A. [Confederate States of America]:

The results of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion [loss] of blood by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate States army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant-General

### SOURCE 2

April 7th, 1865.

GENERAL: I have received your note of this day. Though not entertaining the opinion you express of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia, I reciprocate [agree with] your desire to avoid useless effusion [loss] of blood, and therefore, before considering your proposition, ask the terms you will offer on condition of its surrender.

R.E. LEE, General.

Sources: Communications between U. S. Grant and R. E. Lee, April 7, 1865. In *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, 730. Unknown: Century Co, 1888. Accessed 1/27/14. Kentucky Digital Library. [http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt79w08w9v75\\_746/text](http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt79w08w9v75_746/text) <<http://nyx.uky.edu/dips/xt79w08w9v75/data/0746/0746.pdf>>

**Based on the sources, Union General Ulysses S. Grant and Confederate General Robert E. Lee agreed that**

- A. the Army of Northern Virginia's situation was hopeless.
- B. the Union Army needed to surrender.
- C. a future battle would take place in Richmond.
- D. any further bloodshed would be pointless. (answer cue)**

### **Explanation**

"A" is not the correct response since Lee explicitly states that he does not share Grant's opinion of the "hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia." "B" is incorrect since no mention is made in either source of the possibility of the Union Army's surrender. Richmond is also not mentioned in either source and both generals indicate a desire to avoid further battles, so "C" is incorrect. "D" is the correct response because it is the only statement corroborated by both sources.

**[Critical Reading, Corroborating]**

*[Clean item follows]*

## HISTORICAL THINKING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

**Directions:** Read the communications below and circle the response that best completes the statement.

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