

Strategies, Advantages, and Disadvantages for the North and South

Strategies - Expert Information: To achieve victory in any war both sides must devise a plan or strategy to win. In the summer of 1861, the armies of both the North (the Billy Yanks) and the South (Johnny Rebs) marched off to war. Leaders for both sides created a plan for victory.

Fighting during the Civil War took place on three fronts, the East (east of the Mississippi River), the West (west of the Mississippi River), and the sea.

The **Union (the North)**, planned to blockade all Southern ports, thus keeping the **South (the Confederacy)**, from trading with Europe to cut off the South's supply of manufactured goods. Secondly, the **Union (North)**, would take control of the Mississippi River. This would keep the South from using the river to supply its troops and cut the South in half, keeping Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas from the rest of the **Confederacy (South)**. Finally, the Union would capture the southern capital of Richmond, Virginia where the Confederate government was located.

The **South (Confederacy)**, planned to fight a defensive war. The Confederates wanted to bring the enemy into southern territory that is unfamiliar to them and exhaust them. The Southerners were also counting on help from Europe. They hoped European countries would send money and supplies in exchange for cotton. Like the North, the South wanted to capture the Northern capital of Washington, D.C. where the government of the Union was located.

Both the North and South had **advantages and disadvantages** for winning the Civil War.

Northern advantages

- superior leadership in **Abraham Lincoln**
- **greater population** - 22 million people
- **military power** - a five to two advantage in men who could fight, a navy, war machinery
- **industrial power** - more factories
- **more money**
- **more railroads**
- **more farm land** where food crops, not cash crops were grown

Northern disadvantages

- **weak motivation** - not fighting for a cause, or at least one they could understand
- **officers not aggressive enough** - many failed to press their enemy when they had the advantage, inexperienced
- **fighting on unfamiliar territory** - most Northerners had never been in the South, poor communication, and long supply lines hampered the North
- believed the **war would be over quickly**

Southern advantages

- **outstanding military officers** - most had experience from the Mexican War, they had a strong military tradition and had been educated at military schools
- **strong motivation** - were fighting to keep way of life
- **fighting on home ground** - knew the territory
- **soldiers skilled with guns and horses** because they lived in rural areas

Southern disadvantages

- weak leadership skills of Jefferson Davis
- no navy
- fewer men and supplies
- few factories
- less money
- weaker government