

Interpretation 1:

The north won the civil war because they had better access to resources. While the south's economy primarily focused on slavery and cotton production, the North had a large industrial sector. Because of the North's wide range of economic sectors, they had much more technological benefits. One of those benefits was the north's expansive railroad system, which was capable of transporting thousands of soldiers and weapons to the battlefield. The Union also had a powerful navy, which they used to block southern coasts and stop the navigation of Confederate ships in western rivers. The northern states also had a larger population than southern states, so they were able to enlist more soldiers. Along with the fact that they had a larger army, they also had enough people who weren't actively serving to continue to work and keep the northern economy afloat.

Historical Evidence:

- April 19, 1861: blockade of the southern coasts
- early 1865: Union conquer Wilmington, North Carolina
- location of battles depended heavily on location of railroads
- April 25: Union gains control of New Orleans
- Battle of Seven Days: Robert E. Lee attempts to attack Army of the Potomac, but they escape via ship

Interpretation 2:

The north won the civil war once they began to target the south's resources ("total war"). During the first couple of years during the war, the North was not as prosperous as they expected. However, after a change in the Union's strategies, they were able to eventually defeat the Confederacy. The Union focused less on winning sporadic battles here and there and more on targeting the south's resources and economy. Union armies began to strive to capture important cities, ports, and railroad locations. In addition, they began targeting the south's means of communication, which eventually contributed to the south's surrender. Confederate armies relied heavily on what few railroads they had, so when the Union captured them the aftermath ultimately caused the south to lose. The Union also focused on attacking major southern cities (Richmond, Petersburg, Atlanta, etc.) in order to cut off major economic centers.

Historical Evidence:

- Battle of Vicksburg (Spring, 1863): Union gains control of Mississippi River, splitting the south in half and making communication more difficult
- Battle of Chattanooga (Nov. 23-25): Union gains control of the Tennessee River, 4 more southern states cut off from the rest of the Confederacy
- Grant moves his army to Petersburg, holds a siege on the city to cut off their communication
- Sherman captures Atlanta, a larger city in the south
- Sherman's March to the Sea: Sherman's army travels through the south, destroying plantations and towns, along with taking the Confederacy's materials/railroad communications.
- April 1865: Potomac Army captures an important railroad junction near Petersburg