

## ACTIVITY!

## Inquire &amp; Investigate



## RATION OF TRUTH

The Civil War saw 4 million slaves freed, 750,000 people die, and one united nation survive.

To investigate more, consider that recent scholarship suggests the casualty rate of the Civil War has been underestimated by as much as 20 percent. Research this claim. How do scholars calculate the casualty rate of a conflict? What are the arguments of historians who claim the casualty rate for the Civil War was as high as 850,000? Why does it matter if the casualty rate is off?

**THE STATISTICS OF SLAUGHTER**

From 1861 to 1865, 3 million Americans fought in the Civil War and at least 620,000 died. This was 2 percent of the United States' population, the largest death toll of any American war. But the military lost soldiers to more causes than death.

The casualty rate is a number that refers to military personnel removed from service because of death, wounds, sickness, capture, or because they are missing in action or have deserted. The Civil War had the largest casualty rate of all American wars. Do the math to evaluate the human toll this conflict took on a generation of Americans.

- **With an adult's permission, use the Internet to research the casualty rate for the Union and the Confederacy in the Civil War.** How did the following factors influence the casualty rate of both sides in the conflict?
  - Death from disease
  - Death from injury
  - Wounds
  - Captured or missing
  - Race of soldier
  - What state a soldier came from
  - What battle a soldier fought in
- **How can you plot this data?** Can you graph or chart these statistics in a way that educates people about the human toll of the Civil War?
- **Compare the casualty rate of the Civil War to other American wars.** What factors made the Civil War so deadly compared to wars that were larger in scope, such as World War II?