ESSAY QUESTION Unit 3:

Describe the flow of battle and the results of the Siege of Vicksburg
From Antietam to Vicksburg--McClellan replaced with Burnside

December 1862, Lincoln's Cabinet Crisis

December 1862, President Davis visits Vicksburg

December 1862, Fredericksburg

Burnside immediately replaced with “Fighting” Joe Hooker

December 31, 1862-January 2, 1863, Stone’s River Campaign

May 1-4, 1863, Chancellorsville, (Jackson dies May 10)

Hooker is brutally defeated and replaced by George Meade

May 18 – July 4, 1863, siege of Vicksburg
FREDERICKSBURG

Battle of Fredericksburg
Ambrose Burnside (USA) v. Robert E. Lee (CSA)
Confederate victory
USA lost 12,653; CSA lost 5,377

A terrible decision by Burnside to attack Lee’s dug in forces around Fred. VA resulted the most lopsided victory in the war.

Burnside, again, was to capture the CSA capital, Richmond.

He planned to cross the Rappahannock before Lee’s troops but delays waiting for pontoon’s allowed Lee to dig in. Burnside attacked anyway and after some initial success, Burnside order repeated assaults on Longstreet’s Marye’s Height's position and was beaten badly.

After failing for four days, Burnside withdrew Dec 15, 1862.
River scene at Fredericksburg.
Burying Union dead, Fredericksburg.
Lincoln had a win at Antietam, but he badly needed a follow up win. He ordered Grant to be more aggressive in the west, and then he permanently removed McClellan from command, replacing him with Ambrose Burnside. At first Burnside did not want command but took it and was ordered to take the field in an unusual fall campaign.

He telegraphed his battle plan to General in chief Henry W. Halleck saying he would provide a diversionary force, then move quickly to strike Fredericksburg. Lincoln and Halleck debated Burnside’s plan at length and Lincoln objected to it—but too late—the plan was in place.
Between Nov 15 as Burnside moved out until the initial battle.

Everything went wrong, Lee had indeed thought Burnside might beat him across the river, but between Nov 23-29, Lee had Longstreet in place in force at Fredericksburg. Some CSA soldiers force marched twenty miles a day.

Burnsides’ first pontoons arrived Nov 25—too late—forced to build bridges under fire.
Pontoon bridge at Fredericksburg.
CSA Gen William Barksdale’s sharpshooters kept Burnside from constructing his bridge.

To build the bridge the 7th Michigan and the 19th Mass landed amphibiously and fought one-on-one in the first urban warfare of the war to gain a beachhead and secure a bridge.

Vicious fighting took place Dec. 12-13...leading to the charges into Mayre's Heights.

Several USA Generals tried to convince Burnside to back off—to no avail. Then Burnside announced he would personally lead the charge—but was talked out of it.
Pontoons
As a testament to the extent of bloodshed during the battle—Richard Kirkland, a Confederate Army sergeant was appalled at the cries for help among Union wounded.

Throughout the night of December 13, 1862, Kirkland gathered canteens and in broad daylight, without the benefit of a cease fire or a flag of truce, provided water to numerous Union while Union soldiers held their fire.

Kirkland was nicknamed the “Angel of Marye’s Heights”.
Marye’s Heights Hospital
Looting Fredericksburg
In the streets of Fredericksburg.
Negative Reaction

The Richmond Examiner, “a stunning defeat to the invader”

Northern newspapers pounced on Burnside and Lincoln...

“The pres is a weak man, too weak for the occasion...”
Burnside replaced with Hooker
Stone’s River Campaign

Between December 31 and January 2, the Union forces held off Confederates in a series of battles for middle Tennessee.

While no victory was evident, the Union could, at least, claim it had stopped the South after Fredericksburg.
Chancellorsville.

Newly appointed Hooker went into action against Lee at Chancellorsville, April 30-May 6, 1863.
Plank road, Chancellorsville
Siege of Vicksburg
May 18-July 4, 1863

USA, Grant v. CSA John C. Pemberton

Grant loses 4,835. Pemberton only loses 3,202 but 29,495 Confederate are captured.

Grant had twice the men on the fields
Part of larger campaign...
Defenses....
Grant crossed the Mississippi R. & pushed Pemberton into defensive positions—Grant then makes two bloody assaults, both repulsed with heavy Union losses.

From May 25-to July 4, the CSA garrison holds, but then runs out of supplies, and surrenders.

A few days later, Port Hudson is captured and with it complete control of the Miss River!
Pemberton, with William T. Sherman flanking him, had no choice but to retreat into the fortified city of Vicksburg. Pemberton burned bridges behind him only to have the larger Union forces rebuild them. Expecting reinforcements that never came—Pemberton refused to surrender the city.

Confederate command was strained here. President Davis demanded that Vicksburg be held; but commanding generals thought the western outpost worthless. Pemberton was also indecisive as well as caught in the middle of this debate.

“Vicksburg is the nail head that holds the half's of the South together.” (Davis)
Grant was also foolish at first—for he attacked one of the most well defended cities in the South.

Vicksburg defenses included large gun trenches, earthen three-sided redoubts (or forts) capable of firing down on attacks; and lunettes—smaller arrow shaped fortifications placed before the main fort.

It was these massive defenses that Grant and Sherman charged and failed to eliminate. When these failures came at great costs, Union morale sunk. But Grant rallied his troops—primarily with some extra rations, and planned for a massive effort May 22.

“Vicksburg is the key. The war can never be brought to a close until the key is in our pocket.” Lincoln.
First frontal attack--Rear Admiral David Porter, in the river was prepared to fire 220 cannons.

Bombs fell for four hours then Grant struck...Sherman asked for 150 volunteers with ladders (called the Forlorn Hope Detachment) but failed.

By 1pm it seemed hopeless, yet Grant’s forces made assaults at 2pm and 3pm. The redoubts were holding—losses were terrible.

Grant wrote in his memoirs, "I now determined upon a regular siege—to 'out-camp the enemy,' as it were, and to incur no more losses."
After frontal attacks fail Grant reluctantly agreed to a truce to recover the massive Union losses from the field. As they dug in Grant asked for reinforcements south of Vicksburg to bottle up the only remaining escape route—Pemberton’s fate was sealed.

By June 30 one-half of Pemberton’s men were sick or near death—scurvy, malaria, dysentery and diarrhea brought on by the lack of rations...

It is estimated that USA cannons fired 22,000 shots into the besieged city. Residents dug over 500 caves in the hillside to survive as living quarters turned to ruble. Grant accepted the CSA surrender and “paroled” the rebels.
Cave dwelling in Vicksburg
This never happened—note the date...
Vicksburg levee and docks.
Engraving celebrating V victory
1. Grant’s hold on upper Mississippi & Tennessee allows staging & movement of troops south.
2. Grant crosses river below Vicksburg to come in behind the city.
3. The Union fleet supports and, Grant’s forces win from Fort Gibson Big Black River Bridge.
4. Grant twice throws his larger numbers against the city & fails, May 22.
5. Grant begins his siege from May 25-July 5.
June 1863, Meade becomes fifth commander of Army of the Potomac
HARPER'S PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR

JULY, 1863.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN GRANT AND PEYTON.
Conclusions:

The war had given Lincoln his excuse for the Emancipation Proclamation...and his “Key”—Vicksburg.

Grant was rising quickly to become a force in the Union Army.

But the war was far from over. No Union victories in the East yet threatened the Confederacy.

And Lincoln faced mounting political opposition.