

Directions: Analyze the document and answer the questions.

Background: Mary Boykin Chesnut was a Southern diarist who married a successful lawyer and U.S. Senator, James Chesnut, Jr. They lived on a plantation near Camden, South Carolina. James left the Senate and became a general in the Confederate army at the outbreak of the Civil War. They spent much of their time in Columbia and Richmond. Her diary saw publication in 1905; it is considered by many to be the best book on the Civil War by a Confederate author.

1864

August 2d. — Sherman again. Artillery parked and a line of battle formed before Atlanta.

August 19th. — Letters from the army. Grant's dogged stay about Richmond is very disgusting, and depressing to the spirits.

September 2d. — The battle has been raging at Atlanta, and our fate hanging in the balance. Atlanta, indeed, is gone. Well, that agony is over. . . .

The end has come. No doubt of the fact. . . . We are going to be wiped off the face of the earth.

November 28th. — We have lost nearly all of our men, and we have no money, and it looks as if we had taught the Yankees how to fight since Manassas. . . .

Brewster was here and stayed till midnight. He described Sherman's march of destruction and desolation. "Sherman leaves a track fifty miles wide, upon which there is no living thing to be seen," said Brewster before he departed.

1865

February 16th. — So my time had come, too. My husband urged me to go home. He said Camden would be safe enough. They had no spite against that old town, as they have against Charleston and Columbia.

February 22d. — Charleston and Wilmington have surrendered. I have no further use for a newspaper. I never want to see another one as long as I live. . . . Rev. Mr. Martin met me at the door. "Madam," said he, "Columbia is burned to the ground." I bowed my head and sobbed aloud.

April 7th. — Richmond has fallen and I have no heart to write about it. Grant broke through our lines and Sherman cut through them. . . .

De Fontaine, in his newspaper, continues the old cry. "Now Richmond is given up," he says, "it was too heavy a load to carry, and we are stronger than ever." "Stronger than ever?" Nine-tenths of our army are under ground and where is another army to come from? Will they wait until we grow one?

April 19th. — Just now, when Mr. Clay dashed up-stairs, pale as a sheet, saying, "General Lee has capitulated," I saw it reflected in Mary Darby's face before I heard him speak. She staggered to the table, sat down, and wept aloud. . . . Running is useless now; so we mean to bide a Yankee raid, which they say is imminent. Why fly? They are everywhere, these Yankees, like red ants, like the locusts and frogs which were the plagues of Egypt.

April 22nd. — Colonel Cadwalder Jones came with a despatch, a sealed secret despatch. It was for General Chesnut. I opened it. Lincoln, old Abe Lincoln, has been killed, murdered, and Seward wounded! . . . The death of Lincoln I call a warning to tyrants. He will not be the last President put to death in the capital though he is the first.

April 23d. — One year ago we left Richmond. The Confederacy has double-quickened down hill since then. . . . Now we have burned towns, deserted plantations, sacked villages. "You seem resolute to look the worst in the face," said General Chesnut, wearily.

"Yes, poverty, with no future and no hope."

Central Ideas. A central idea is the overall topic of the entire piece.

1. What is the central idea that Mary is communicating to the reader of her diary?
 - E. Lincoln deserved to get shot because he was an evil man.
 - H. The South is losing the war.
 - O. Sherman is destroying the South.
 - Y. The Yankees do not fight fair.

Words in Context. Define words based upon how they are used in the writing.

“Nine-tenths of our army are under ground and where is another army to come from?”

2. What do the words “under ground” mean as it is used in the quote above?
- E. hiding
 - H. far away
 - O. dead
 - Y. deserted

Facts vs. Opinions.

Fact: A conclusion that can be proven true and/or is absolutely accurate to all people involved.

Opinion: belief or preference about something that cannot be proven or accepted by all people.

Mary Chesnut said President Abraham Lincoln deserved to be assassinated for being a tyrant.

3. Identify the statement above as fact or opinion.
- A. fact
 - N. opinion

Textual Evidence. Find evidence from the document and circle all that apply.

4. What examples does the author give showing the Yankees are winning the war?
- E. We have lost nearly all of our men, and we have no money.
 - H. Lincoln, old Abe Lincoln, has been killed, murdered, and Seward wounded!
 - O. Richmond has fallen and I have no heart to write about it.
 - Y. "Now Richmond is given up," he says, "it was too heavy a load to carry, and we are stronger than ever."

Author’s Point of View. Authors sometimes favor one opinion or group over another. This is called bias. The words that an author uses can sometimes reveal a bias in their writing.

“Running is useless now; so we mean to bide a Yankee raid, which they say is imminent. Why fly? They are everywhere, these Yankees, like red ants, like the locusts and frogs which were the plagues of Egypt.”

5. Analyze the quote above, which word(s) show the author might have a bias.
- E. plagues of Egypt
 - H. Yankees
 - O. bide
 - Y. useless