

Interpreting a Chart or Table



A chart or table is another way to place text into a visual format. **Charts** and **tables** are used to categorize data so the information is easy to read and understand. Information that would take many pages to put into a text format can be summarized on a chart that may be one page or less.

When examining a chart or table, students should

- read the title to determine what the subject is,
- read the column headings and labels,
- read the columns from top to bottom,
- read the rows from left to right,
- draw conclusions from the data, and
- try to identify trends.

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To Teach students to interpret charts and tables, use Selection 19 and Graphic Organizer 23. You may want to make a transparency of the chart to use as you lead a discussion of the questions in the left column.

1. Show students Selection 19.
2. Use the questions on Graphic Organizer 23, one at a time, to interpret the chart.
 - a. What is the title of the chart?
 - b. What are the titles of the columns?
 - c. Ask students what information is found in Row 5.
Miles of Railroad Track; 22,000 (North); 9,000 (South)
 - d. Ask students what conclusions they might draw from the data, e.g., “Which region was better prepared to fight. Give reasons for your answer.”
 - e. Ask what trends they can identify from the data.
3. Allow time for discussion of each question.

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1. What is the title of the chart or table?

Differences between the North and South before the Civil War

2. What are the column headings?

Criteria, North, South

3. What is the information contained in the first column?

The areas that are being compared – population, men of combat age, military forces, factories, miles of railroad track, banks/funds, gold, farms, agriculture/grain, and number of draft animals (horses, mules, oxen)

4. Choose between two and four rows and tell what information is found there.

Row ____ *Answers will vary.*

Row ____

Row ____

Row ____

5. What conclusions can you draw from the data on the chart or table?

Answers will vary but probably will say the North was better prepared for war because it had more people, forces, food, and factories.

To apply the strategy, have students look at a variety of charts or tables in the textbook. Have them repeat the process they used in the practice session, using Graphic Organizer 23, to interpret data. (**Note:** Instead of asking them to generally make conclusions or identify trends, you may want to give them specific questions to answer.)

To extend the strategy, have students create charts or tables using material they have read in the textbook. For example, they could create a chart of civil war battles, showing the location, major leaders, casualties, and significance of selected battles.

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Selection 19 - Differences between the North and the South before the Civil War

CRITERIA	NORTH	SOUTH
Overall population	23 states 22 million	11 states 9 million (3.5 to 4 million were slaves)
Men of combat age	4 million	.8 million
Military forces	Trained army and navy	None
Factories	100,000 employing 1.1 million workers	20,000 employing 100,000 workers
Miles of railroad track	22,000	9,000
Banks/Funds	81 percent of nation's deposits	19 percent of nation's deposits
Gold	\$56 million	None
Farms	67 percent of nation's total	33 percent of nation's total
Agriculture/Grain	64 percent of nation's supply	36 percent of nation's supply
Number of draft animals (horses, mules, oxen)	4.6 million	2.6 million

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1. What is the title of the chart or table?
2. What are the column headings?
3. What is the information contained in the first column?
4. Choose between two and four rows and tell what information is found there.

Row _____
Row _____
Row _____
Row _____
5. What conclusions can you draw from the data on the chart or table?