Essential Understanding: Location and topography were critical elements influencing important developments in the Civil War, including major battles.

**Key Events of the Civil War**

**Major battles and events:**

- The firing on Fort Sumter, S.C., 
  began the war.
- The first Battle of Manassas (Bull Run) was the first major battle.
- The signing of the Emancipation Proclamation made “freeing the slaves” the new focus of the war. Many freed slaves joined the Union army.
- The Battle of Vicksburg divided the South; the North controlled the Mississippi River.
- The Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point of the war; the North repelled Lee’s invasion.
- Lee’s surrender to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in 1865 ended the war.

**Influences of location and topography**

- The Union blockade of southern ports (e.g., Savannah, Charleston, New Orleans)
- Control of the Mississippi River (e.g., Vicksburg)
- Battle locations influenced by the struggle to capture capital cities (e.g., Richmond, Washington, D.C.)
- Control of the high ground (e.g., Gettysburg)