



HL HUNLEY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

**College Level
H.L. Hunley
Discussion**

The evidence section presents the reader with varying reactions to the Hunley and its operation during the American Civil War. When reading the sources, try to take into account who is speaking and the date of the response. Some of the details concerning the Hunley may be contradictory. Which accounts seem more believable? How do they correspond with what we know today? For example, there are many opinions of why the Confederate vessel never returned to port after sinking the Housatonic. If the Hunley sunk in only 27 feet of water, supposedly in the near vicinity of the Housatonic, why was it not found when W. L. Churchill (source 11) searched the wreck site? After carefully examining the evidence, what is your opinion of the fate of the Hunley? Try to reconstruct what happened the night of February 17th, 1864 by using the sources.

Another topic of debate centers around the success or failure of the Hunley. True, it destroyed the federal blockading ship, and it was the first submarine to sink an enemy vessel in the history of naval combat. But at what cost? How many lives were lost in the process and did submarines ever present a viable option for breaking the Union blockade? As seen in the documents, the Confederacy welcomed the news of the Hunley's success, while northern commanders feared the submarines' potential. Look closely at how both Northerners and Southerners reacted to the Hunley's attack and its use as a weapon of naval warfare to answer the preceding question. On the other hand, the Hunley and other such underwater vessels left a legacy for the future as submarines today have become one of the world's greatest naval weapons. Whichever side you take, try to support your argument with the evidence.