

It's often said that history is written by the victors. Have you ever wondered what was left out of your lessons on the American Civil War? Listen to the episode [The Takedown](#) from Gimlet's *Uncivil* podcast. This episode is a live taping hosted by Chenjerai Kumanyika and Jack Hitt featuring speakers Christy Coleman, Al Letson, and Nikole Hannah-Jones, discussing pervasive myths about slavery and the Civil War. As you listen to the podcast, use this guide from Kalyani Kannan, who works in Diversity, Inclusion & Social Justice at UNI. The guide will help you process the information, engage in discussion with others, and apply the concepts to the Cedar Valley.

Your Tasks

- Listen to *The Takedown*, an episode of *Uncivil* from Gimlet Media
- Together with 1 or 2 other Quest participants, have a discussion using one or more of the questions below. If you are questing on your own, choose 2-3 questions and journal about each question
- Finally, make a pledge to identify other historical myths and do your own research to develop a more complete understanding of the relationship between the past and present.

Questions:

- The guiding purpose behind this *Uncivil* series is to interrogate popular Civil War narratives. *What beliefs were you brought up to hold about the Civil War? (i.e., What was the war about? What was the role of enslaved labor in the early United States?)*
- One of the biggest and most pervasive Civil War myths is that the war didn't have anything to do with slavery. In 2011, [Pew Research](#) found that close to 50% of Americans believed that the main cause of the Civil War was the issue of states' rights-- and a majority of those folks were people 30 years old and younger. This effort to focus on the American ideal of liberty and rights, rather than on the theft and commodification of human lives, brushes over many of the uglier truths of the nation's history. *How would conversations change if we accepted the reality that the U.S. went to war over the purchase, sale, and enslavement of humans?*
- Another myth that is addressed in the podcast is that slavery was an inefficient and unprofitable form of labor. *How does this connect to modern-day myths about the productivity or work ethic of people of different races?*
- As several of the speakers bring up, any conversation about history is not just about the facts that have been left behind, but "a dissemination of the kind of questions that folks are asking." That is, when new questions are brought to the table, we look at history to find answers. *What new questions do you have after hearing this podcast? Where could you look to find answers?*
- *How have these pervasive myths impacted present-day conversations about race in the U.S.?*