New Hampshire in the Civil War Lesson Plan

Life during the Civil War


*Topic:* Postcards from the Civil War

*Level:* 8th Grade

**ABSTRACT / SUMMARY**

Students will select a Civil War nurse or soldier from New Hampshire to research for an oral presentation. Taking on the persona of their person, the students will perform a two-minute monologue in which they will describe daily life and challenges.

**QUESTIONS / TASKS**

What was life like for the nurses and soldiers in the Civil War? What were their motivations for joining the war? What were the challenges of daily life? What can we learn from reading the letters written by the nurses and soldiers of the Civil War?

View the various websites containing primary source letters. Select a nurse of soldier and read several of their letters written during the Civil War. Pretend that you are that person. Create a 30-second monologue for your classmates telling them about who you are, what you are doing in the war, and what your life is like. Feel free to pull quotes from your letter. Perform for your partner to practice before performing for the class.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Learn to use primary sources and secondary sources to answer research questions
- Explore what life was like for soldiers and nurses during the Civil War

**SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES**

1. Select a letter from a soldier and a letter from a nurse.
2. Read both letters with the class as a whole. Show on projector, if possible.
3. Facilitate discussion about who the author was and what we can learn about his or her life, challenges, and worries.
4. Model how to create a 30-second monologue from primary source letter.
   a. Perform monologue.
5. From a prepared list of soldiers and nurses, students choose which person they would like to research and portray.
6. Direct students to read one or more letters written by their person during the Civil War and create a two-minute monologue.
   a. Explain that students need to take on the persona of their person and talk about what their lives were like, based on the information they read in the letters.
7. Assign partners. Students will practice monologue with partner before performing to the class.
8. Students perform monologues for class.
**ASSESSMENTS**

20 points total
0-5 points: diligently working in class to read letters, gather information about person.
0-5 points: Monologue—took on persona.
0-5 points: Monologue—included facts from letters.
0-5 points: Monologue—good summary in two minutes to reflect character of person.

**PROJECT DURATION**

In-Class Time (estimated): 4 class periods
Out-of-Class Time (estimated): 30 minutes to revise monologue and practice performance

**RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

*Archives and Special Collections:*
- Albert Aspinwell Correspondence, 1865 2011.031 (m)
- Albert A. Buxton Correspondence, 1862–1875 2011.018 (m)
- Captain George W. Gordon Papers, 1860–1864 2014.002
- Charles H. Phelps Papers, 1840–1863 2012.006 (m)
- George Hamilton Perkins Papers, 1837–1902 1982.068
- George E. Whitman Correspondence, 1863–1864 1997.048 (m)
- Harriet Patience Dame Papers, 1866–1897 1995.002 (m)
- J. M. and Esther Hawks Letter, 1861 1995.128 (m)
- J. W. Kingman Correspondence to N.S. Berry, 1862–1863 1994.078 (m)
- John Gilbert Correspondence, 1862 1990.001 (m)
- Joseph Gilmore Papers, 1842–1866 1926.006
- Kate Sanborn Correspondence, 1864–1879 1995.053 (m)
- Ladies Civil War Aid Society Records, 1861–1866 1927.004
- Morrison Family Papers, 1861-1865 2012.023
- Olof Jewett and Alonzo Jewett Correspondence, 1862–1863 2010.061 (m)
- Rodney H. Ramsay Correspondence, 1862 1990.031 (m)
- Sarah Low Papers, 1844–1965 1965.010
- Theodore V. Nutting Correspondence, 1858–1864 2008.065 (m)
- Thomas B. Leaver Letterbooks, 1861–1862 1915.006
- William W. Fish Correspondence, 1862–1863 2012.070 (m)

*Library Collections:*


Kelsey, D. M. *Deeds of Daring Both by Blue and Gray: Thrilling Narratives of Personal Adventure, Exploits of Scouts and Spies, Forlorn Hopes… During the Great Civil War*. Boston: D. L. Guernsey Publisher, 1883–84. 973.78 K29d


Leslie, Frank. *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Famous Leaders and Battle Scenes of the Civil War*. Concord: Frank Leslie Publisher, circa 1896. 973.7 L634f


*Museum Collections:*

- Hardtack biscuit, 1865 1969.040
- Cartridge Box, 1863 1966.545.122
- Document Box, circa 1861 1946.037.13
- Bugle, circa 1860 2012.031.05
- Bullet, 1861–65 1956.048
- Canteen, 1862–65 1965.545.01
- Cloth Fragments/ Bandages, 1861–65 1983.002.39
- Military Coat, 1861–64 2005.002.01
- Portable Writing Desk, 1864 2013.012.01
- Drum, 1863 1966.544.02
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Primary Sources:


Secondary Sources:


