



**GOAL 5 | LESSON PLAN | MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## **The Home Front**

**GRADES:** Middle School

**APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TIME:** 50 minutes

**GOAL:** Students will be able to discuss what life was like for those on the home front and methods of communication between the front and civilians.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Students will be able to discuss the impact of the Civil War on families and describe the challenges faced by those on the home front during the Civil War.
2. Students will be able to describe how news traveled to the home front during the Civil War, listing communication methods of the period.
3. Students will be able to address questions concerning what actions an individual might take in a typical Civil War era scenario.
4. Students will be able to conduct content specific research and apply their findings to address a specific problem.

**COMMON CORE:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1

Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**NCSS STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES:**

- 1—Culture
- 2—Time, Continuity, and Change
- 3—People, Places, and Environment
- 5—Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

**MATERIALS:**

1. Communications
2. The Home Front PowerPoint
3. Civil War Letters Pack
4. Jigsaw States
5. Jigsaw State Activity

## 6. 1860 Blank U.S. Map

**ANTICIPATORY SET/HOOK**

Hand out a *Communications* page to each student. On a piece of chart paper or on the board, draw a vertical line creating two columns for lists. As a class write down ways in which we communicate or spread news today (examples: mobile phones, e-mail, newspapers, television, online news sources, Twitter, Facebook, blogs...). Leave the other side blank; this will be filled out by students later in the class.

**PROCEDURE:**

Print out the PowerPoint with notes prior to class. There are notes included with the slides that will be on the printed slides, but won't be seen by your students during the presentation.

## Activity 1

1. As a group, view *The Home Front PowerPoint* presentation, asking discussion questions as you go. (Discussion questions can be found in the notes on the PowerPoint)
2. The PowerPoint will direct students to read the *Civil War Letters Pack* on the last slide.
3. As a group read and discuss these letters.

## Activity 2

4. Students will complete the *Jigsaw State Activity*
5. Set the students up in small groups of at least 3
6. Print-off and hand-out one of the state slides from the *Jigsaw States* for each group, as well as a copy of the *Blank 1860 U.S. Map*—all the states do not need to be completed for this activity.

## Activity 3

7. Go back to the *Communications* page. Students can review their responses to the types of communication they have available to them today and list in the other column the types of communication methods that were available at the time of the Civil War.
8. At the bottom of the page, students should answer the following questions: What were some of the difficulties in communication during the Civil War? How did these affect people on the home front?

**CLOSURE:**

Discuss the Question: Why do you think the Civil War touched the lives of every American? Give three examples of how it affected citizens' day-to-day lives.

**ASSESSMENT IN THIS LESSON:**

1. Completed *Communications* page
2. Completed *Jigsaw State Activity Sheet*, informal assessment through group discussions, collected written responses, and small group presentation.
3. Informal assessment through discussion of the closure question.



AMERICAN  
BATTLEFIELD  
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## Communications

<b>Today's Means for Communication</b>	<b>1860s Means for Communication</b>

What were some of the difficulties in communication during the Civil War? How did these affect people on the home front?

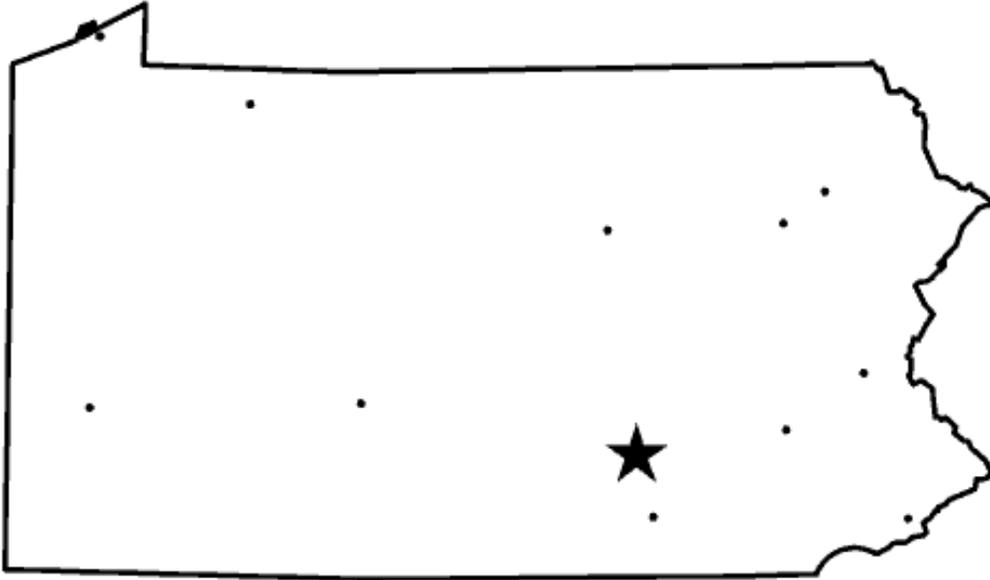


## Jigsaw States

Below are the states for the jigsaw activity. Each group should be given at least one state.

To help students address their particular scenario better, provide additional reference materials such as informational texts on the Civil War or access to [Battlefields.org](http://Battlefields.org).

## Pennsylvania



Emma is a young girl living in Gettysburg; she knows a battle is going to happen soon and even sees Confederate soldiers walking around her town.

What are some of the things Emma has to do to get ready before the battle?

How do you think Emma feels right now? Why?

## Virginia



Claire is a young mother in Richmond with a baby boy and a five year-old daughter. Her husband is off fighting in the war and food is getting scarce; she is running out of bread and has no money left.

What do you think Claire should do to feed her children?

How do you think Claire feels about her husband? Why?

How do you think Claire feels about the war? Why?

## South Carolina



Sam is a 12-year-old slave living in South Carolina. One day the Union Army marches onto his plantation and burns the master's house, slaughters all of the animals, and takes the horses and all the food.

What should Sam do now?

How does Sam feel about the Union Army? Why?

## Ohio

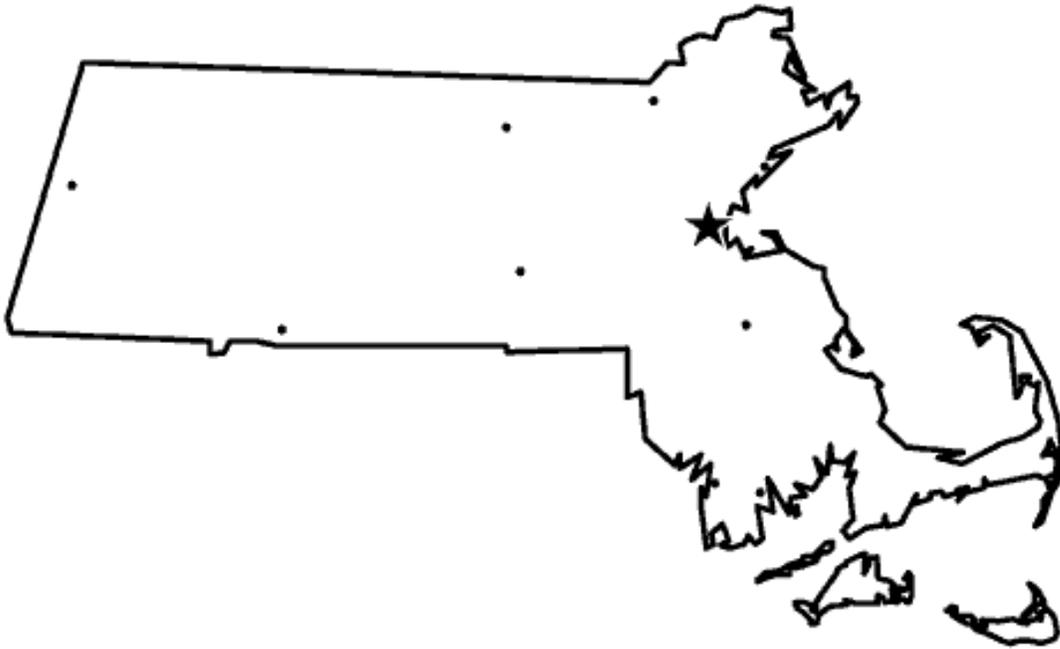


John is a 14-year-old boy in 1862 living in Columbus. His mother has just died. His father died when he was 10. John's older cousin, who is 18, has joined the Union Army. John can play a fife and drum.

What do you think John should do now?

How does John feel about the war? Why?

## Massachusetts

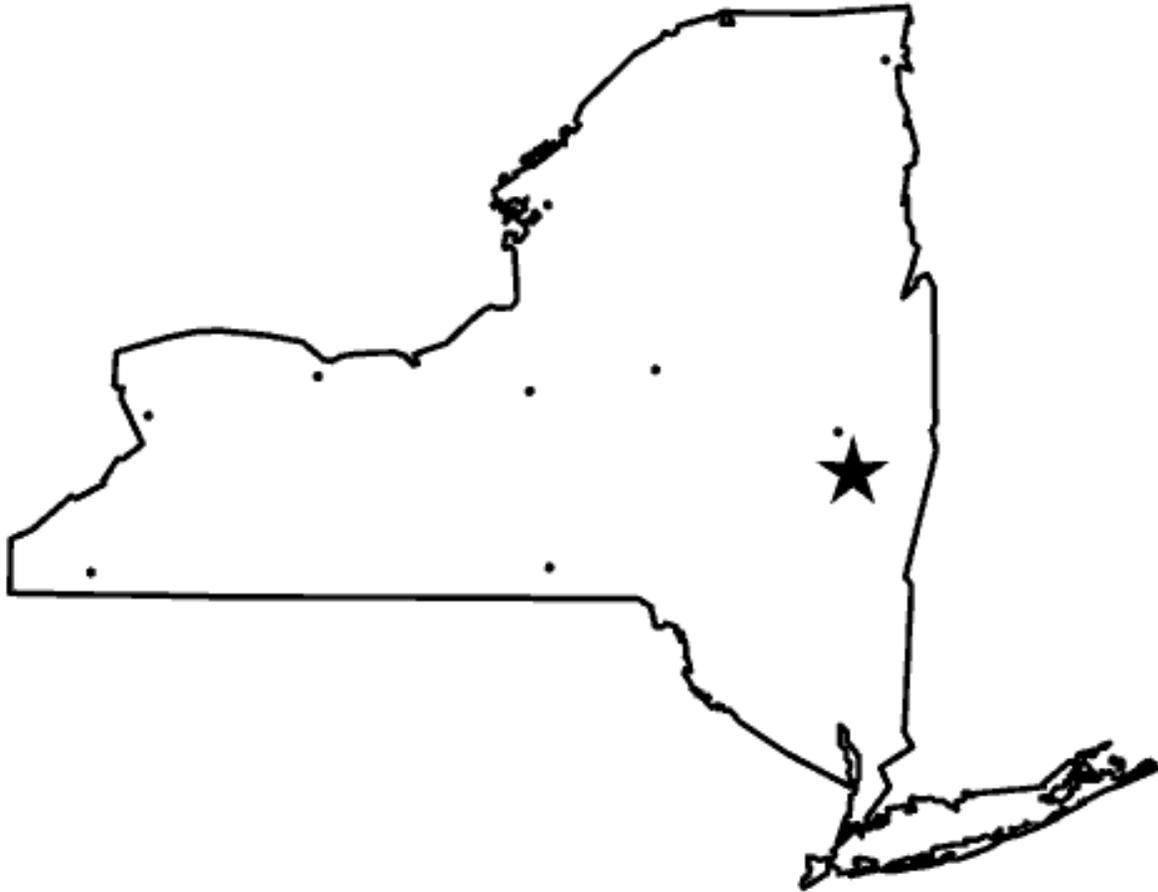


Sarah is a 17-year-old girl living in Boston. Her only brother and her father are fighting for the Union. Sarah and her mother rely upon the men of the family to earn the money for the whole family.

What will happen to Sarah and her mom if the men in Sarah's family are killed or injured?

How does Sarah feel while the men are away? Why?

## New York



Kate is the wife of a farmer in Albany. Kate is a 60-year-old woman, and all four of her sons have left to join the army.

How does Kate get news about her sons?

How does Kate keep up with the farm work with all of her sons gone to war?

## Mississippi



Francis is a 10-year-old boy in Vicksburg in 1863. His family lived in a nice home in the center of town. His father and older brother are away fighting for the Confederacy in Virginia. Francis is his mother's only son still living at home, and he has three younger sisters. The Yankees have surrounded the city and are shelling the town. What are some of the things Francis might do to help his mother?

How might Francis protect his mom and sisters?

How does Francis feel about the war at this point? Why?

## Maryland



It is September 16, 1862. Carrie and her family have a farm in Sharpsburg. Carrie lives with her mother, father, brothers and sisters. She is a 13 years old and the oldest of seven children. The Union and Confederate armies are camped all around her family's property. They family knows there will be a battle in the morning.

What are some of the things Carrie might do to get ready for the battle?

What do you think happened to Carrie's family farm the day after the battle?

How do you think Carrie feels about the war at this point? Why?

## Tennessee



Beth is a young wife living in Franklin in 1864. She has a small plantation that she has tried to farm since her husband left to fight for the Confederacy. The Union and Confederate armies have fought a great battle close to her property. Wounded men are streaming across her fields trying to find shelter, food, and care.

What are some of things Beth might do at this point?

How might Beth help the men?

How do you think Beth feels about the war? Why?

## Georgia



Jane is 16 years old and lives on a plantation. Jane and her mother have been trying to grow corn and food with the help of their slaves while her father and brothers are fighting for the Confederacy. The slaves know the Yankees are coming toward the plantation. What do you think the slaves will do?

What do you think Jane will do when the Yankees arrive?

How do you think Jane feels about the Union Army?

## Illinois



Mary is a beautiful, 20-year-old who is unmarried and lives in a mansion in Chicago. Mary is an only child. Her father is a wealthy merchant and has grown even wealthier since the war began by doing business with the federal government. Mary wants desperately to contribute to the war effort. How can Mary help the Union Army win the war?

How does Mary feel about the war? Why?

## Kentucky



James is a 20-year-old living in Lexington with his family. James is the middle son of three boys. He has been attending the university studying law, but now the war has begun. His older brother, who is 21, has left to join the Union Army. His youngest brother, who is 17, is threatening to run away to join the Confederacy and wants James to go with him.

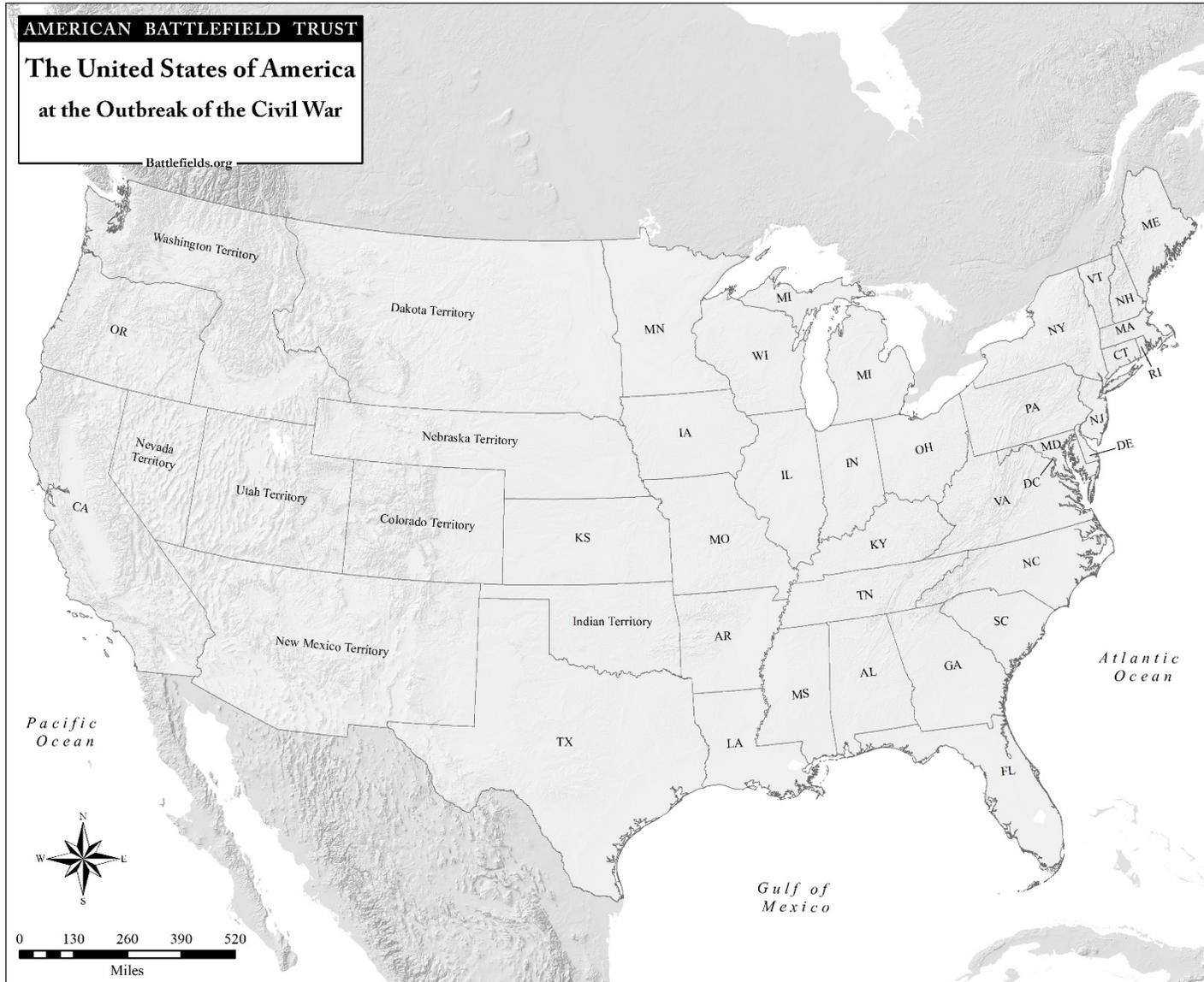
What should James do? Why?

How does James feel about the war? Why?



# Blank Map of the U.S. in 1860

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_





## Civil War Letters

### Letty Barnes Letter

#### **Letter from Letty Barnes to her husband, Joshua, of the Thirty-eighth United States Colored Infantry**

*My dear husband*

*I have just this evening received your letter sent me by Fredrick Finich you can imagine how anxious and worry I had become about you. And so it seems that all can get home once in awhile to see and attend to their family but you I do really think it looks hard your poor old Mother is hear delving and working like a dog to try to keep soul and body together and here am I with two little children and myself to support and not one soul or one dollar to help us I do think if your officers could see us they would certainly let you come home and bring us a little money.*

**She continues in this vein enumerating the various hardships the family is enduring. At the end of her letter she writes lovingly:**

*I have sent you a little keepsake in this letter which you must prize for my sake it is a set of Shirt Bossom Buttons whenever you look at them think of me and know that I am always looking and wishing for you write to me as soon as you receive this let me know how you like them and when you are coming home and beleave me as ever  
Your devoted wife  
Letty Barnes*

**Joshua Barnes received his buttons and was granted leave to visit his family.**

**Rebecca Barrett Letter****Letter written by Rebecca Barrett to her son, William, of the Seventy-fourth United States Colored Infantry**

*My Dear Son*

*It is with pleasure I now embrace the opportunity of penning you a few lines to inform you that I am received your most welcomed letter for I had despaired of your writing. We are both sick pap is prostrated on his bed and has been so for three months and three weeks he got a little better but it did not last long I am very sorry that you have enlisted again for I wanted to see you once more You say you will send me some money do my son for God sake for I am needy at this time the Doctors are so dear that it takes all you can make to pay thier bill I work when I am able but that is so seldom God only knows what I will [do] this winter for I dont. Everything is two prices and one meal cost as much a[s] three used to cost when the rich grumble God help the poor for it is a true saying that (poverty is no disgrace but very unhandy) and I find it very unhandy for if ever a poor soul was poverty stricken I am one and My son if you ever thought of your poor old mother God Grant you may think of her now for this is a needy time. No more but remain Your mother Rebecca Barrat*

**William Barrett did send his mother some money.**

## **J. Henry Blakeman Letter**

**This Civil War Letter was written by J. Henry Blakeman, a private in Company D of the 17<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers. He wrote it to his mother the day after the Battle of Gettysburg. The original letter is in the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.**

**From an 11<sup>th</sup> Corps Hospital near Gettysburg (probably the Spangler Farm), on July 4, 1863, J. Henry Blakeman would write home to his mother in Stratford, Connecticut:**

### **11<sup>th</sup> Corps Hospital near Gettysburg July 4, 1863**

Dear Mother,

I think I shall have a chance to send a letter this afternoon and knowing your intense anxiety will write a little. You know we have had a terrible fight and men are slain by hundreds but thanks to our preserver I escaped with my life though pretty severely wounded. I was hit the first day before I had time to fire my gun, taken prisoner and kept one day and then taken to the city and the next day our folk took the town and I was taken to our hospital some three miles back. Here we have to lie on the ground and last night we had a terrible rain so I am as wet as water can make me but that is good for the wound. I was struck by a rifle ball in the left side between the hip and ribs passing through the flank. Dr. says he thinks it did not enter the cavity and if not it will heal soon. Do not worry about me for it will do no good. I don't mind it much can get up and walk around quite spry and have a good appetite. I can hardly bring my mind to tell you that Stephen was killed by the same volley that wounded me. He was within three feet of me and was shot through the head and killed instantly. Stephen was liked by the whole company and will be much mourned. I know it will almost kill his mother but reality is better than suspense and what I tell you can depend upon. I saw Selah yesterday morning for a few minutes he escaped unhurt. Our Regt is badly cut up they numbered only eighty yesterday. Co. D. only five besides Lieut. Peck. Col. Arrived yesterday morning and had command of the Brigade. Col. Fowler is killed Maj Brady is wounded and Capt Burr in command of the Regt. I lost everything I had but my canteen and little water. Even lost my cup. I got this sheet of paper of Stiles Wells. It was in a small portfolio in his breast and a ball passed through the whole fifty thickness but did not hurt him it probably saved his life. He was afterwards wounded in the leg. Sylvester is hurt in the shoulder not seriously. There are twelve of us from Co. D here together wounded they say this morning that the Rebs are getting off as fast as possible and I guess they are pretty badly whipped. The 11<sup>th</sup> Corps did not run much this time as their casualties plainly show. I cannot tell you where to direct to me now for I don't know where we shall be taken. I will write again as soon as I am established in a hospital.

Don't worry about me I am feeling as well as circumstances can permit. So with much love and many good wishes for your welfare I remain your Son in good spirits.

Henry

P.S. Tell them I was hit face toward them no reb saw my back. Henry



## Jigsaw State Activity

Your teacher has provided you with a specific state and scenario:

1. In your group, identify a presenter, recorder, and reference authority.
  - a. The presenter will present the final work.
  - b. The recorder will record your answers and ideas.
  - c. The reference authority will be sure to identify when research material is being used and note where it is coming from.
  - d. Everyone in the group must work together to formulate the final product.
  
2. Color in your given state on their *Blank 1860 U.S. Map*
  
3. Read your scenario and answer the related questions.
  - a. Base your answers on the information on the PowerPoint Presentation and the letters from the *Civil War Letter Pack*.
  - b. You can also use [battlefields.org](http://battlefields.org) to conduct research more specific to their state or topic.
  - c. Provide direct quotes or references to the material used to support your response.
  
4. When completed each group will present their state, scenario, questions, and responses.