



GOAL 5 | LESSON PLAN | HIGH SCHOOL

The Home Front

GRADES: High School

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TIME: 50 minutes

GOAL: Students will develop a concept of what life was like for those on the home front and evaluate the forms and role of Civil War era communication.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to discuss the impact of the war on families, especially women and children.
2. Students will be able to describe how news during the war was received on the home front and list communication methods of the period.
3. Students will be able to construct a written response in letter form addressing a typical scenario during the Civil War from the point of view of someone on the home front.

COMMON CORE:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

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. Civil War Home Front PowerPoint
3. J. Henry Blakeman Letter

4. Letter Writing Activity
5. Letter Writing Rubric

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 class, view the *Civil War Home Front PowerPoint*, asking discussion questions as you go (the discussion questions are included in the notes on the PowerPoint).
2. Provide a copy of the *J. Henry Blakeman Letter* to each student; this will be read during the lesson.

Activity 2

3. Place students in pairs and hand out the *Letter Writing Activity*. Pairs will work together to compile ideas and responses to the situation. Both students need to keep notes individually on their sheets.
4. Hand each student a copy of the *Letter Writing Rubric*. Students will independently write a letter based on the scenario on their activity sheet, following the rubric criteria.

Activity 3

5. 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.
6. 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:

1. We are technically on the home front of a war today. Have you or do you face challenges in your life because of a military conflict? How are these difficulties similar to or different from those of individuals on the home front during the Civil War?

ASSESSMENT IN THIS LESSON:

1. Informal assessment through PowerPoint presentation discussion
2. Completion of Civil War letters
3. Completed *Communications form*



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PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.



Communications

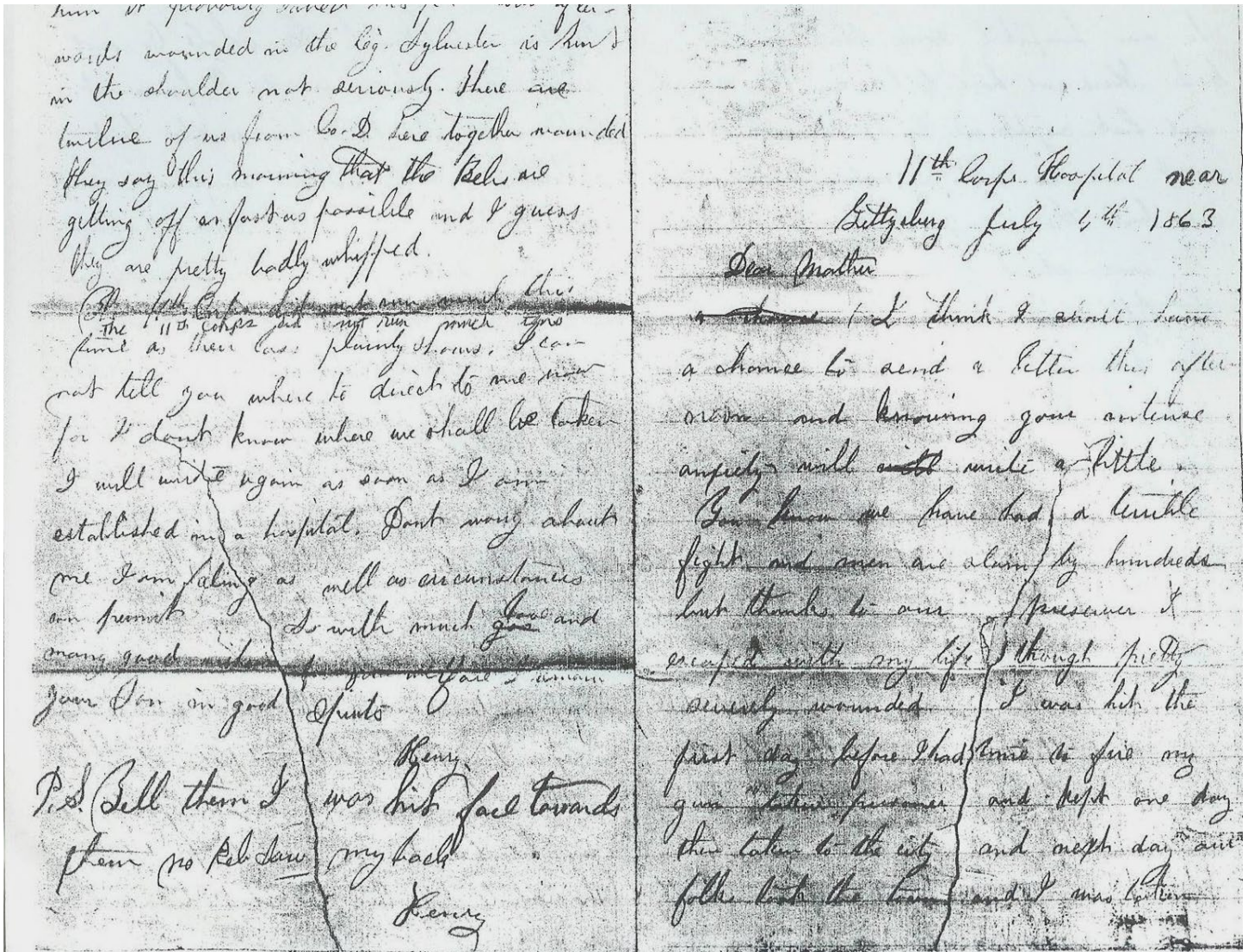
Today's Means for Communication	1860s Means for Communication

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



J. Henry Blakeman Letter

This Civil War Letter was written by J. Henry Blakeman, a private in Company D of the 17th 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. See if you can read the letter in Henry's original handwriting before looking at the typed transcript.



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

11th 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 11th 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

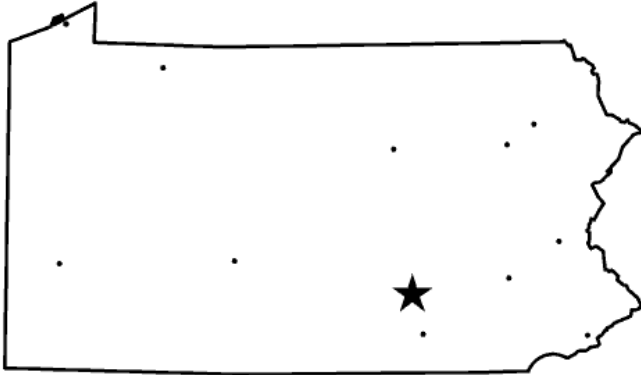


Letter Writing Activity

Notes to the Teacher:

1. Each of the following pages contains a state and a scenario.
2. Place your students into pairs.
3. Hand out two copies of the same sheet to each pair.
4. Each pair will read their situation together and then take about five minutes to discuss.
5. Then each person will independently write a letter concerning their specific scenario.
6. Be sure to provide each student with a copy of the rubric.

Pennsylvania



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are a child living in Gettysburg. You have just experienced the Battle of Gettysburg, a bloody three-day battle that at times spilled into the town. During the battle a Confederate soldier even stayed in your house. Write a letter to your aunt in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Date the letter August 1, one month after the battle.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Virginia



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear...)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly...)

Signature

You are a young mother in Richmond. Food is getting very scarce. You have three little children. You participated in the bread riot on April 2, 1863, because you are so desperate to feed your children. Write a letter to your husband who is serving with General Lee in the Confederate Army telling him about what happened and why you took part in the riot. Date the letter April 6, 1863.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

South Carolina



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are a lieutenant in the Union Army. The army has marched on a plantation and burned the big house, slaughtered all of the animals, and taken the horses and all the food. When your men leave the plantation you take a 12-year-old black boy with you. He is alone and homeless, and you hope to protect him. You write home to your family in Indiana about the event and the boy. Date the letter March 1865.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Ohio



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear...)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

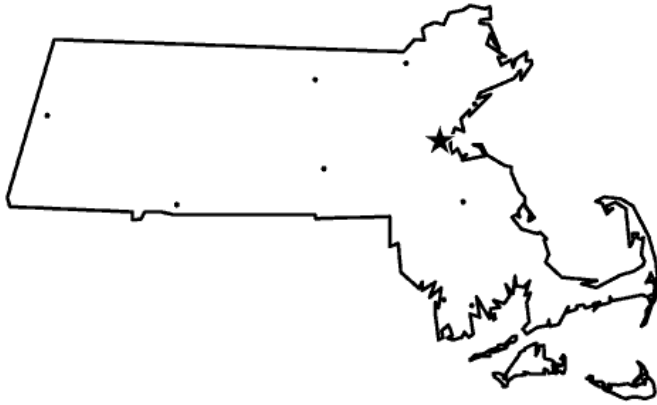
Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are a 14-year-old boy living in Columbus, OH in 1862. Your mother has just died. Your father died when you were 10. Your older cousin, who is 18, has joined the Union Army. You can play a fife and drum. You decide to follow your cousin. Write a letter to your aunt, your cousin's mother, from the army camp about why you made your decision. Date the letter August 15, 1862.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Massachusetts



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

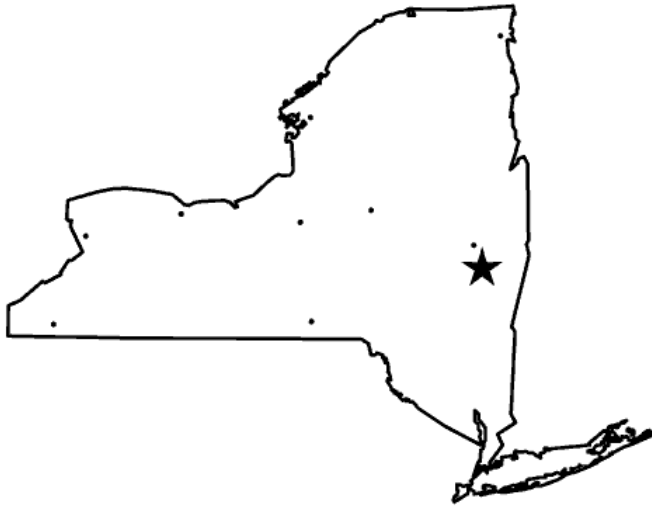
Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are a 17-year-old girl living in Boston. Your only brother and your father are fighting for the Union. You worry about them constantly. Without their support you and your mother cannot pay your bills. You decide to take up work in a munitions plant. Write to your father and explain about your decision which you know he won't like. Date your letter, February 10, 1863.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

New York



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are the wife of a farmer in Albany. You are a 60-year-old woman, and all four of your sons have left to join the army. How do you get news about them? They are all in the same regiment. The Battle of Antietam took place two weeks ago. You believe they were in it. Write to your oldest son and ask for information about him and your other sons. You are desperate to know if they are safe. Date your letter October 1, 1862.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Mississippi



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are a 10-year-old boy in Vicksburg in 1863. Your family lived in a nice home in the center of town. Your father and older brother are away fighting for the Confederacy in Virginia. You are your mother's only son still living at home, and you have three younger sisters. The Yankees are besieging the city and shelling the town. Write a letter to your father about some of the things you do to help your mother and to protect her and your sisters and about the conditions in Vicksburg. Date your letter June 17, 1863.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Maryland

Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

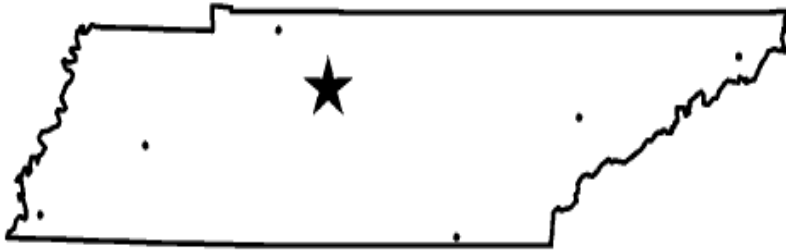
Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

It is September 16, 1862. Your family has a farm in Sharpsburg and you live there with your mother and father and brothers and sisters. You are a 13-year-old girl and the oldest of seven. The Union and Confederate armies are camped all around your property, and your family knows there will be a battle in the morning. Write a letter to your aunt in Baltimore about what your family did during the battle and what happened to your property after the battle. Date your letter September 29, 1862.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Tennessee



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are a young wife in Franklin in 1864. You have a small plantation that you have tried to farm since your husband left to fight for the Confederacy. The Union and Confederate armies have fought a great battle close to your property. Wounded men are streaming across your fields trying to find shelter, food, and care. The battle took place on December 15 and 16, 1864 Write a letter to you mother in Nashville describing the conditions on your plantation and what you had to do during and after the battle. Date your letter December 31, 1864.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Georgia



Formatting your letter:	
	Date
Salutation (Dear....)	
Introduction (why you are writing)	
Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)	
Conclusion	
Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)	
Signature	

You are a 16-year-old girl living on a plantation. You and your mother have been trying to grow corn and food with the help of your slaves while your father and brothers are fighting for the Confederacy. The slaves know the Yankees are coming toward your plantation. Atlanta was burned July 22, 1864. Write to your father, describing the situation and what is happening at home. Date your letter July 31, 1864.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Illinois



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

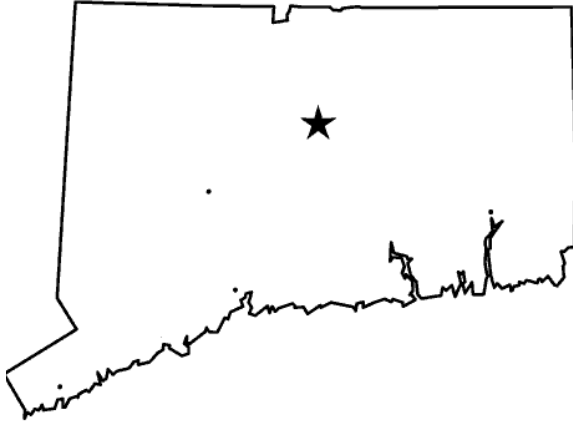
Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are a beautiful, unmarried 20-year-old girl. You are an only child, and you live in a mansion in Chicago. Your father is a wealthy merchant and has grown even wealthier since the war began by doing business with the federal government on war contracts. You want desperately to contribute to the war effort by becoming a nurse, and you take a train to Washington, DC where the casualties from the most recent battles are being sent. Write a letter to your father explaining your decision to leave home. Date the letter August 17, 1863.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Connecticut

Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear....)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events,
information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly....)

Signature

You are a young black man who has enlisted in the 29th Connecticut Volunteers, the state's all-black regiment. You are well educated and can read and write. You left a young wife back home in New Haven. It is the summer of 1864, and you and your regiment are currently involved in siege operations around Petersburg. On July 30 your regiment was involved in the Battle of the Crater. Write home to your wife about why you joined the army, the recent battle, and the fate of many of the black troops. Date your letter August 6, 1864.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

Kentucky



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear...)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly...)

Signature

You are a 20-year-old male living in Lexington with your family. You are the middle son of three boys. You have been attending the university studying law. The war has begun. Your older brother, who is 21, has left to join the Union Army. Your youngest brother, who is 17, is threatening to run away to join the Confederacy. He wants you to go with him. Write a letter to your father, who is away on business, about the situation and your thoughts on what you will do. Date the letter February 1, 1862.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.

The Outskirts of Washington, DC



Formatting your letter:

Date

Salutation (Dear...)

Introduction (why you are writing)

Body (descriptions of places, events, information about the topic, ideas)

Conclusion

Closing (Sincerely, Yours truly...)

Signature

It is the winter of 1862. You are an 11-year-old girl. Your father is a Pennsylvania soldier who is in permanent camp for the winter. He wrote your mother to bring the children and come to camp to stay for the winter months. You and your two younger sisters and baby brother now are living in the army camp. What is it like? What kinds of things do you see? How do you help your mother? Write a letter to your grandmother back in Harrisburg about living in the army camp. Date your letter January 31, 1862.

Discuss with your partner what you will put into your letter. Write ideas and notes in the space below to help you in composing your letter.



Letter Writing Rubric

Civil War Letter Scoring Rubric	Possible Points	Student Self-Assessment/Peer Score	Teacher Assessment/Score
Letter is written in a logical sequence and is well organized and formatted correctly.	10		
The letter captures the reader’s attention and events are easily understood by the reader	10		
Accurate and specific facts from the Civil War Home Front lesson, PowerPoint, group activities and class discussions are incorporated into the letter by the student.	10		
The letter addresses the topic assigned in the scenario and elaborates on and explains the scenario in detail.	10		
Student accurately incorporates relevant vocabulary and names of places, and people.	10		

<p>Letter as written demonstrates the student’s understanding of the learning objectives from the lesson plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the role women played on the home front • the impact the Civil War had on families • the challenges faced by those on the home front during the Civil War. • how current news during the Civil War era was received on the home front and the communication methods of the period. 	20		
<p>Letter is modeled on primary source information and documentation to inform a contemporary Civil War soldier or civilian about events from the view point of the person engaged in those events.</p>	10		
<p>The letter contains a strong conclusion.</p>	10		
<p>Letter was handed in on time</p>	10		
<p>OVERALL RATING TOTAL</p>	100		

Each category is rated according to the following scale:

9-10 = Excellent, 8-9 = Very Good, 7-8 =Satisfactory, 6-7 = Unsatisfactory, 6-0 = poor

Student Assessment Score: _____

Teacher Assessment Score: _____