



GOAL 3 | LESSON PLAN | MIDDLE SCHOOL

Life At War

GRADES: Middle School

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TIME: 50 Minutes

GOAL: Students will be able to discuss the average Civil War soldier and some of the hardships.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to describe the use of equipment, uniforms, weapons, and other items that soldiers carried.
2. Students will be able to identify three reasons why battles happened in certain locations.
3. After reading portions of soldiers' letters, students will be able to identify and discuss hardships soldiers faced.

COMMON CORE:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

NCSS STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES:

PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

- 1—Culture
- 2—Time, Continuity, and Change
- 3—People, Places, and Environment
- 5—Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- 6—Power, Authority, and Governance
- 8—Science, Technology, and Society
- 10—Civics, Ideals, and Practices

MATERIALS:

1. Life at War Worksheet
2. Life at War PowerPoint
3. Where Battles Happen
4. Samuel Cabbie Letter
5. George P. McClelland Letter
6. John Sweet Letter
7. Zachariah Benefield Letter

The Traditional Civil War Curriculum, Goal 3

8. William Norton Letter
9. Analyzing a Primary Source Letter
10. Exit Pass

ANTICIPATORY SET/HOOK:

1. Discuss with students what they think a soldier did on a day-to-day basis during the Civil War. Were they always fighting battles? What do students think soldiers did when they weren't fighting battles? Do they think life was hard or easy for a Civil War soldier?

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. Pass out the *Life at War Worksheet* to each student.
2. Read and discuss the *Life at War PowerPoint* with your class, discussing different aspects of soldiering.
3. Have students complete the *Life at War Worksheet* during the presentation.

Activity 2

1. Pass out *Where Battles Happen* and discuss as a class why battles happen in relation to railroads, waterways, and capitals, filling in the boxes.
2. Discuss the second question, "Where else might a battle occur?"

Activity 3

1. Read the following letters with your students as a group
 - a. *Samuel Cabble Letter*
 - b. *George McClelland Letter*
 - c. *John Sweet Letter*
 - d. *Zachariah Benefield Letter*
 - e. *William Norton Letter*
2. Have the students Analyze one of the letters using the *Analyzing a Primary Source Letter*.

CLOSURE:

1. Have students answer the last question of the *Analyzing a Primary Source Letter* utilizing all of the letters.

ASSESSMENT IN THIS LESSON:

1. Completed *Life at War Worksheet*
2. Informal assessment through responses to the anticipatory set questions
3. Informal assessment through responses to PowerPoint questions
4. Informal assessment through the *Where Battles Happen* page
5. Completed *Analyzing a Primary Source Letter*



Life at War Worksheet

Directions: While viewing the PowerPoint, use the words in the word bank to fill in the blanks.

Word Bank:		
drilling	620,000	food
adventure	16	23
letters	sickness	available
Women	memories	

The age of the average Civil War soldier was between _____ and _____ years of age.

One reason why someone might sign up to fight in the Civil War would be:

Hardtack and salt pork are examples of _____ eaten by Civil War soldiers.

Civil War soldiers kept in touch with family by writing _____.

The majority of a soldier's time was spent _____ in camp, not fighting on the battlefield.

_____ men died in the Civil War.

Most men died of _____, not war wounds.

Hospitals were set up in any _____ structure, including houses and barns.

_____ came to help nurse the men back to health.

Soldiers faced _____ of the war for the rest of their lives.

The Things They Carried



All of a soldier's personal possessions were carried by the soldier, often in his haversack. Identify and briefly write about five items in the table below:

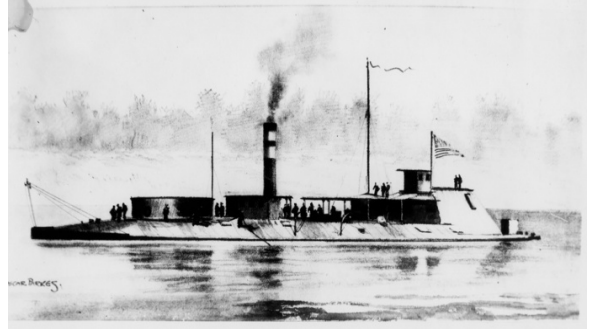
Number	Name	What it was used for



Where Battles Happen



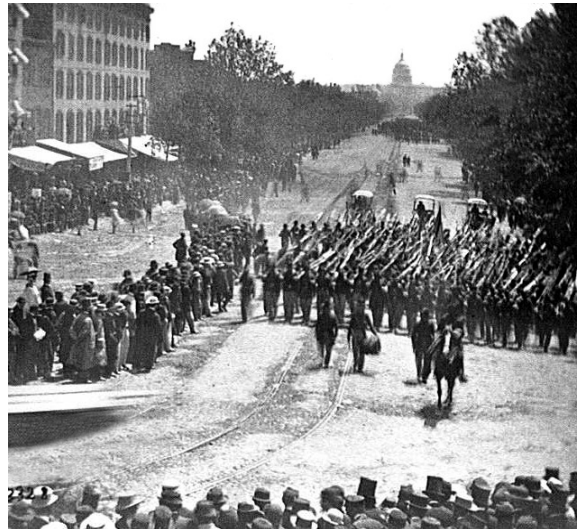
Near Railroads



Near Waterways



Richmond, VA



Washington, DC

Why did Civil War battles occur near or around these areas?

Railroads & Waterways	Capitals

Where else might a battle occur? Why?



Samuel Cabbie's Letter

**Samuel Cabbie, a private in the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Infantry (colored), was a slave before he joined the army. He was twenty-one years old.
Massachusetts
1863**

Dear Wife i have enlisted in the army i am now in the state of Massachusetts but before this letter reaches you i will be in North Carlinia and though great is the present national dificulties yet i look forward to a brighter day When i shall have the opertunity of seeing you in the full enjoyment of fredom i would like to no if you are still in slavery if you are it will not be long before we shall have crushed the system that now opreses you for in the course of three months you shall have your liberty. great is the outpouring of the colered peopl that is now rallying with the hearts of lions against that very curse that has seperated you an me yet we shall meet again and oh what a happy time that will be when this ungodly rebellion shall be put down and the curses of our land is trampled under our feet i am a soldier now and i shall use my utmost endeavor to strike at the rebellion and the heart of this system that so long has kept us in chains . . . remain your own afectionate husband until death—Samuel Cabbie*

Samuel Cabbie returned to Missouri for his wife, and together they moved to Denver, Colorado.

**Spelling and grammar are in the original.*



George P. McClelland Letter

**A Letter by George P. McClelland, Union Soldier
Virginia
December 19, 1863**

Dear Sister Lizzie,

The weather has been very cold and the duty of the men is severe. They hardly have time enough to obtain sufficient wood to keep themselves warm.

We have a very strong guard; one half of the Regiment on duty every day for the reason we have an important post to guard and guerillas are as plenty as blackberries in summer. No one durst stray half a mile from camp or he will be “gobbled” up. It is really dangerous as we are liable to be picked off by murderous assassins at any time. I would sooner be in “front” – that is, with the main Army.

Pardon this scribble. I never take time to punctuate. I require a lecture from you or somebody else, then I’ll be better.

Ever Your Brother,
George



John Sweet Letter

Letter from John Sweet, Confederate Soldier, to His Parents Tennessee November 1863

We have just returned from a trip into East Tenn where we got big amounts of everything to eat and everything we eat is so good to me as I had been starved out so long on some bread & beef, all that we got while we were here besieging Chattanooga. up there we got sweet and Irish potatoes, chickens, molassas, wheat bread and everything that was good for a poor soldier. Oh, how I do wish that I could be at home now, for it is getting late in the evening and I have had nothing to eat since breakfast and no telling when we will get rations for our rations are out, since we left our ration wagons behind in coming here to this place, for I know you have all had a good & plentiful dinner. I know you will say poor John, but this is only a chapter in military service which we often read, but I am content and will be more so when we get rations. The independence of the bounty is what I want and I am willing to suffer for something to eat many, many days if it will only send me to my dear parents, a full and independent boy.

John H. Sweet



Zachariah HJ Benefield Letter

Letter from Zachariah HJ Benefield, Confederate Soldier, to His Wife Tennessee April 1864

Mrs Sary Jane Benefield

Dear beloved wife I seat myself this morning to drop you A few lines to let you know that I am well at this time and hoping this few lines may --- ---- to hand and find you enjoying the best of health Jane I have no mise of intrust to write to you Only we have had A hard march we marched five days it snowed and rained every day we are camped a- Zolicofer Tennessee Eleven miles from the line of Virginia. When you hear from me again I will be in Virginia. I reckon We have stopped at Zolicofer to rest A few days on Tuesday the 22 of March the snow fell two feet deep hear & it has been snowing & raining every since We are on our rode to Virginia I think

Jane we are faring very bad for something to eat we get flour with the brand in it & it is half oats & man can't hardly eat it we don't get half enough if it We steal a little & parish a little. We can't buy nothing our money ant no count... Give my love and best respects to all friends I must close so no more at present Only remains your truly husband until death

Write soon Good Bye When this you See remember Me

Z H J Benefield



William Norton Letter

**A Letter from William Norton, Union Soldier, to His Mother
Hilton Head, South Carolina
Oct. 8th, 1862**

My Dear Mother,

Hearing that there is a mail going out this afternoon I thought I would improve the opportunity and write you a few lines.

I am sorry to tell you I am not very well at present. I was taken sick about three weeks ago with chronic diarrhea, and have been in the hospital about a fortnight. I have been pretty sick but I am getting better now and hope to be well in a few days.

I would like to have you send me some things which will come better in a barrel than in anything else. I should like some good fresh eggs, a bottle of preserves, some lemons if you can get some good ones, some ginger root. Some butter would be very nice, it will come better in a tin can than in anything else. I would like some sugar too. I wish you would send a bottle of good Cider Vinegar also-

I would like some pickled onions, and some dried apples. Some prepared chocolate would taste first rate, as we do not get good tea and coffee.

A towel and a couple of handkerchiefs will be very acceptable also. If there is any room for anything else I wish that you would fill it up with onions and good sound apples that are not quite ripe that they will keep better. Direct to the care of Capt. Sanford, Co C, 7th Regt. Conn Vols. _____ DD Tompkins Esq Asst. Q M General No 6 State St. N.Y. Please send it as soon as possible.

I have not heard from you since I have been here but should like to do so every mail. If convenient please send \$5.00 the next time you write.

Give love to all enquiring friends, and believe me -

Ever your aff son

William Norton



Analyzing a Primary Source Letter

1. What is the name of the person who wrote the letter?

2. If you are able to tell, when was the letter written?

3. Where was the author when he wrote the letter?

4. Was the author a Union soldier, Confederate soldier, or civilian?

5. Can you tell anything else about the author's background?

6. What relationship does the author have to the recipient of the letter?

7. Why do you think this letter was written?

8. What questions would you like to ask the author of this letter?

Describe one similarity you can find in both letters. What does this tell us about soldiers fighting the Civil War?

- Be sure to provide a quote from each letter that shows this similarity.
