

Transcription Procedure

1. Your teacher will give you and your partner copies of a Civil War-era primary source (a letter, a diary entry, etc.). Put your names on your copies.
2. Try to read the primary source aloud. Try to agree on what each word is and use red pen on the copies to record your transcriptions.

If you encounter a word that is unclear, try the following:

- Zoom in on the word with a magnifying glass (or the Adobe Reader program if your primary source is available online).
- Look back in the source for other letter combinations that look similar to the one that is unclear, especially if you are certain about the transcription of the other word.
- Ask your classmates for assistance. They may have encountered that word or phrase in their primary source and have a clearer copy.
- Do what historians do...use a question mark(?) or ellipse (...) for words or phrases you can't decipher or are unclear or missing due to torn paper, ink smudges, etc.

3. Write/type a verbatim transcription of the primary source.

Write/type the primary source word for word and line for line. Don't make any corrections to the primary source. DON'T CORRECT SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, CAPITALIZATION, OR OTHER GRAMMATCAL ERRORS. Instead, write/type exactly what was written in your primary source.

Save a copy of this verbatim transcription and your copies of the primary source for the next step. Your teacher will give you a folder for this purpose.

4. Write/type a modern transcription of your primary source.

Now you're going to edit the verbatim transcription of your primary source. This time CORRECT ALL THE SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, USAGE, AND GRAMMATICAL ERRORS YOU FIND.

As you write/type the modern transcription, use brackets [] around words that you spell correctly and around words or symbols that you change in the letter for syntax and grammatical purposes. This is what historians do.

Be sure to save a copy of this modern transcription, your verbatim transcription, and your primary source in your folder for the next step.

5. Prepare to present the modern transcription of your primary source.

Decide with your partner how you will share the reading of your modern transcription of your primary source. Both of you should contribute to the presentation.

Be prepared to read your modern transcription fluently and with expression to the others in your class.

Transcription Rubric

Name: _____

	4. Distinguished	3. Proficient	2. Apprentice	1. Novice
Verbatim Transcription: Wrote/typed the primary source word-for-word and line-for-line; no corrections.	Students completed a verbatim transcription of all or most of their primary source.	Students completed a verbatim transcription of about half of their primary source.	Students completed a verbatim transcription of about a fourth of their primary source.	Students had a great deal of difficulty completing a verbatim transcription of their primary source.
Modern Transcription: Corrected spelling. Punctuation, usage and grammar errors of the primary source.	Students completed a modern transcription of all or most of their primary source.	Students completed a modern transcription of about half of their primary source.	Students completed a modern transcription of about a fourth of their primary source.	Students had a great deal of difficulty completing a modern transcription of their primary source.
Transcription Presentation:	Students gave a fluent and expressive presentation of all or most of their modern transcription.	Students gave a fluent and expressive presentation of about half of their modern transcription.	Students gave a fluent and expressive presentation of about a fourth of their modern transcription.	Students struggled to give a fluent and expressive presentation of their modern transcription.
Teamwork-Cooperation:	Always listened to, shared ideas with, and supported partner. Worked consistently for the good of the team.	Listened to, shared ideas with, and supported the efforts of the partner. Did not disrupt the team's effort.	Did not consistently listen to, share ideas with, or support the efforts of the partner. Made some effort to be a team player.	Rarely listened to, shared ideas with, or helped the partner. Was not a team player.