Section 2: Living in a Material World: The Life of a Civil War Soldier through Artifacts

Overview:
Students are introduced to conducting research with artifacts as primary sources and then using their research to interpret what life was like for a Civil War soldier. This section is comprised of three lessons. In “Reading an Artifact” students will observe, research, and record information about an object to determine how and why it was important in the life of a Civil War soldier. “Sounds of the Past” has students engage with objects on an audible and emotional level. “Translations in Time” is designed to help students connect the past to the present. It reinforces the idea that the needs of soldiers (or human beings) haven’t changed as much as has the technology.

Compelling Question: What was daily life like for a Civil War soldier?

Objectives:
1. The student conducts primary source research about the Civil War using a variety of primary sources including objects.
2. The student records and organizes primary source research using graphic organizers.
3. The student interprets the life of a Civil War soldier using artifact analysis and other primary source research.
4. The student presents his/her primary source research.
Lesson 2a: Reading an Artifact

Items used from the trunk:
(Worksheets and photos are located on The Life of a Civil War Soldier CD.)

“Object Identification” activity
- Objects
  - Haversack
  - Housewife
  - Playing cards
  - Hardtack
  - Shaving brush
  - Plate
  - Cup
  - Fork
  - Flint and steel kit
  - Lice comb
  - Minie bullets
  - Gummed blanket
  - Betty lamp
  - Canteen
  - U.S. enlisted waist belt with buckle, bayonet scabbard, and cap pouch containing 10 percussion caps
  - Union enlisted man’s sack coat with sergeant chevrons
  - Federal forage cap, dark blue wool with infantry horn
- Object cards for the items listed above
- Worksheet #1: Artifact Analysis (Worksheet is based on one designed by the National Archives and Records Administration, NARA)

“What’s Missing” activity
- Select from photos #01 to #10 (one for each small group of students
- Worksheet #2: What’s Missing?
- Worksheet #3: Enlisted Men’s Clothing Allowance

“Brother Against Brother” activity
- Confederate forage cap
- Union forage cap

“Show Me the Money” activity
- Union bank notes
- Confederate bank notes
Materials Provided by the Teacher:
“Show Me the Money” activity
- Magnifying glasses would be helpful, but not necessary.
- Map showing locations of the cities shown the bank notes: New York; Maine; Montgomery, Co., Pennsylvania; Washington D.C.; Quincy, Illinois; DeSoto, Nebraska; Montgomery, Alabama; Richmond, Virginia

Advance Preparation:
If desired, review information about African American, American Indian, and Mexican and Latin American Civil War soldiers and photography during the Civil War in the Historical Background portion of this manual, and about Union currency in the glossary, which can be found in the CD in this trunk.

“Object Identification” activity
- Make copies of Worksheet #1: Artifact Analysis, one per student

“What’s Missing” activity
- Makes copies, one per student
  - Worksheet #2: What’s Missing?
  - Worksheet #3: Enlisted Men’s Clothing Allowance
- Choose the photos students will examine. Photos #01-10 are appropriate for use with this activity. Photos 01, 02, 04 and 05 are of soldiers with Kansas connections. The number of photos needed will depend upon the number of small groups the class will be divided into with one photo assigned to each group.

“Where Do I Fit In?” activity
- Make three signs “Camp Life,” “In Battle,” and “Both.”

Lesson:
1. “Object Identification” – Students identify a Civil War object.
   a. Provide students with one object from the trunk and a copy of Worksheet #1: Artifact Analysis. Students should complete as much of the worksheet as possible by looking closely, or “reading,” the artifact.
   b. Provide students with the object card associated with their assigned object. Students should read the text on the back of the card and, using a different color pen, add information to the worksheet gained from this research.
   c. Reinforce that historical research is the process of asking questions and looking for answers. No one artifact or reference source can provide all the answers.
   d. Students should review their research and write at least one question they have about the artifact. Depending on time, have students research their questions.
   e. Have each student present his/her artifact research to the class using Worksheet #1: Artifact Analysis as a guide.
2. “What’s Missing?” – Students conduct primary source research to identify additional items Civil War soldiers used.
   a. Explain to the students that the items they examined are only some of the things a Civil War soldier used. Have students brainstorm types of primary sources that could be used to conduct additional research on other items Civil War soldiers used. If needed, direct the discussion to include photographs.
   b. Provide historical context for Civil War photography.
   c. Students working in small groups should examine photographs #01-10 of Civil War soldiers to locate other objects used by soldiers. Assign a different photo to each group. Using the first column on Worksheet #2: What’s Missing? they should record the items they locate.
   d. Have each group present its list to the class. Compile a master list in a visible location. Students should copy the master list information onto Worksheet #2: What’s Missing?.
   e. Have students use observation and inference skills to determine how and why the objects listed were used and then record this information in the second column on Worksheet #2: What’s Missing? If there is time, have students conduct research on the objects they identified in the photos.
   f. Distribute another piece of primary source of information about Civil War soldiers to each student, Worksheet #3: Enlisted Men’s Clothing Allowance. Students should be able to cite the source this information was taken from, recognize it as a primary source, identify additional information about items a Civil War soldier might have carried, and record the information on Worksheet #1: Artifact Analysis and/or Worksheet #2: What’s Missing?.
   g. By now students should have gained an understanding of what type of equipment a Civil War soldier used through their primary source research.

3. “Where Do I Fit In?” – Students put Civil War objects into context.
   a. Post signs, or write these titles on the board, “Camp Life,” “In Battle” and “Both.”
   b. Tell students to join one of these three groups based on where the artifact they researched on Worksheet #1: Artifact Analysis was used most often or was of most importance. Have students explain the reason for their decisions. There are no absolute right answers. Students will learn that a Civil War infantry soldier carried everything with him at all times in addition to understanding what soldiers used in camp and in battle.
   c. Record the information on a Venn diagram if desired.

4. “Brother Against Brother” – Students compare two objects using observation and inference skills.
   a. Show the Confederate forage cap and Union forage cap to the class. Let students examine the caps.
   b. Have students compare the two and share what is similar and what is different. (They should observe that they are identical except for the color.)
c. Have students brainstorm reasons the forage caps are so similar. If needed have students define what secede and Civil War mean and what the military leaders of the south might have been doing before the start of the civil war.

d. Have students determine what the caps symbolize about the war. How might the uniforms of an invading army differ from the uniforms of soldiers taking part in a civil war?

5. “Show Me the Money” – Students use primary sources to explore political and economic issues related to the Civil War.

a. Provide every student, or small group of students, with one Union or Confederate bank note.

b. Have students record everything they see on their bank note including when, where, and by whom the bank note was issued. Use a map to identify the locations of those banks on the United States currency. Magnifying glasses are helpful but not essential for this.

c. Let students share what they discovered in their examinations of the currency. How is the United States currency today similar to, or different from, that available during the Civil War? Have the class brainstorm ideas about why United States currency had no standard design and was issued by numerous private banks.

d. Lead a discussion on what can be learned about political and economic issues in the Union and Confederacy by examining the bank notes such as: Who were the countries’ leaders? Where were the hubs of business?

6. Interpretation

a. Quickly review the primary sources students have examined: artifacts, photographs, Worksheet #3: Enlisted Men’s Clothing Allowance, and bank notes. Each provides some clues about the lives of those who owned and/or used them.

b. Lead a class discussion about what the class knows about the life of a Civil War soldier from the research they did. Students should be able to support their interpretations using examples from the primary source research they conducted.

c. Assign students a project that allows them to further develop their interpretation about the life of a Civil War soldier. Ideas for projects can be found at the end of Section 2 on page 14.
Lesson 2b: Sounds of the Past

Items used from the trunk:

- Objects
  - Haversack
  - Housewife
  - Playing cards
  - Hardtack
  - Shaving brush
  - Plate
  - Cup
  - Fork
  - Flint and steel kit
  - Lice comb
  - Minie bullets
  - Gummed blanket
  - Betty lamp
  - Canteen
  - Union enlisted man’s waist belt with buckle, bayonet scabbard, and cap pouch containing 10 percussion caps
  - Union enlisted man’s sack coat with sergeant chevrons
  - Federal forage cap, dark blue wool with infantry horn
- Object cards for the items listed above (optional)

Lesson:
1. Provide the student(s) with an object from the trunk researched previously in Lesson 2a or distribute the objects with their associated object cards.
2. Explain that students will give their assigned artifact a ‘voice.’ If the object could speak what would it say about how it was used, by whom, why it was used, etc.? Have students study their object and write a list of things it would say.
3. Have students share the “voice” of their object with the class.
4. Objects also make sounds. For example, leather saddles creak and metal plates and cups clink when bumped against each other. Ask the class to consider all the sounds associated with the Civil War. Using their objects, have students recreate some of those sounds. What does it sound like if all students are making their sounds at the same time? What would a Civil War soldier have heard? What new understanding do these sounds provide about the daily life of a Civil War soldier? What twenty-first century sounds would the Civil War soldier not hear? What new understandings does the lack of these sounds tell students about the life of a Civil War soldier?
5. Assign students a project that allows them to further develop their interpretation about the life of a Civil War soldier. Ideas for projects can be found at the end of Section 2 on page 14.
Lesson 2c: Translations in Time

Items used from the trunk:

- Objects
  - Haversack
  - Housewife
  - Playing cards
  - Hardtack
  - Shaving brush
  - Plate
  - Cup
  - Fork
  - Flint and steel kit
  - Lice comb
  - Minie bullets
  - Gummed blanket
  - Betty lamp
  - Canteen
  - Union enlisted man’s waist belt with buckle, bayonet scabbard, and cap
    pouch containing 10 percussion caps
  - Union enlisted man’s sack coat with sergeant chevrons
  - Federal forage cap, dark blue wool with infantry horn

- Object cards for the items listed above (optional)
- Worksheet #4: Then and Now

Lesson:

1. Provide the student(s) with an artifact that was researched previously in class or distribute objects from the trunk with their associated object cards.

2. Have students identify the item, its function, and its modern equivalent. For example, Civil War soldiers wore forage caps and soldiers today wear steel helmets.

3. Students should find a photo of the modern equivalent on the Internet.

4. Using Worksheet #4: Then and Now as a guide, students should examine both items more closely. First observe what is different or has changed, and then infer why it has changed. What may have brought about this change? What has remained the same?

5. Drawing upon their knowledge of the daily life of a 21st century soldier how was the daily life of a Civil War soldier different? How was it the same?

6. Assign students a project that allows them to further develop their interpretation about the life of a Civil War soldier. Ideas for projects can be found at the end of Section 2 on page 14.
# Worksheet #4: Then and Now (Example)

Select an object from the trunk and write its name in the column titled “Then.” What is the modern equivalent of this object? Write its name under the column titled “Now.” Answer the questions for each object in the correct box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact: What is it?</th>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forage Cap</td>
<td>Wool cloth, cotton cloth, cotton string, leather, brass</td>
<td>Steel, nylon, paint, cloth, plastic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material: What is it made of?</th>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wool cloth, cotton cloth, cotton string, leather, brass</td>
<td>Steel, nylon, paint, cloth, plastic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction: How was it made? By hand? Machine? Does it have moving parts?</th>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It has machine stitching so it was probably made in a factory. The chin strip has a buckle so it can be adjusted to fit the soldier’s head.</td>
<td>It was made in a factory. It would take heavy machinery to mold steel into this shape. The nylon chin strap is adjustable to fit the soldier’s head. I looks like it has a light on the front and extra padding around the ears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design: What is the color, shape, texture, size, weight? Does it have figures or shapes on it as part of the design?</th>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is made of dark blue wool with a black leather bill and chin strap. The hat is tall and slants forward. The top of the hat is flat and has a brass horn secured to it. The brass buttons on each side of the strap have an eagle design.</td>
<td>It is dome shaped and painted in shades of tan and brown.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function: How was it used? Who used it? When and where was it used?</th>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was used to keep the soldier’s head warm and dry as well as shade it from the sun. Because of the brass horn and eagle buttons, this was worn by a Union infantry soldier. It was part of his uniform.</td>
<td>It is used to protect the soldier’s head from bullets and other weapons. It would shade the soldier’s head from the sun. It is part of the soldier’s uniform.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis: Name one thing that is the same and one thing that is different between these objects. What can you infer from these objects about how wars were fought in each conflict?</th>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same: Soldier’s uniforms included something to wear on their heads. Different: Civil War soldiers’ hats did not protect them from bullets. Inference: Weapons to fight wars have become much more advanced.</td>
<td>Same: The headgear matches the uniform Different: Soldiers today want to blend in as much as possible so their helmets are camouflaged. Inference: Battles were fought face to face so uniforms did not need to be camouflaged.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment Ideas

A variety of assessments exploring the daily life of a Civil War soldier may be used with the lessons in Section 2 of this manual. Ideas for possible assessments are listed below.

1. Using the objects in the trunk have students work together to create an exhibit. Each student should write a caption for an artifact relating it to the daily life of a Civil War soldier.
2. Write a three paragraph essay describing what life was like for a Civil War soldier.
3. Pick three artifacts and explain how they made a Civil War soldier’s life better, worse, easier, or harder.
4. Write a newspaper article from the perspective of a Civil War soldier.
5. Write a three paragraph essay explaining how a soldier wearing a Civil War uniform would feel if he was white? African American? A volunteer? A paid replacement? Drafted?
6. Conduct a research project on such topics as: Who made the soldiers’ uniforms and equipment? What was it like to make the uniforms and equipment? Who were these people? (Women? Children? Factories? Families?) Was it the same or different in the North and the South? How did this affect the Union’s ability to win the war? How did this affect the life of a Civil War soldier?
7. Conduct a research project centered on one or more objects in this trunk. For example, select the haversack, personal items, and the gummed blanket to help answer the question “Why did more men die from disease than from wounds in the Civil War?”
8. Write a narrative from the perspective of a Civil War soldier. Conduct additional research as necessary. Assume the role of a young man who enlisted in a Kansas army regiment at the start of the war. What effect would it have on your family? Your business? Your town? Explore the issue of choices having consequences.