

Civil War Slang

Grade Level: Grade 5

Topic: Language Arts / Social Studies

Resources Needed: Pre-selected letters from the Vermonters in the Civil War Collection where slang vocabulary is present.

Student Learning Objectives:

- Students will understand vocabulary used by soldiers in the Civil War.
- Students will gain a better understanding of how language changes over time.
- Students will be able to write a letter using Civil War era vocabulary.

Assessment of Stated Objectives: See attached rubric for assessing student letters.

Standards:

USA- Common Core State Standards (June 2010)

Subject: English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Grade: Grade 5 students:

Content Area: Informational Text K–5

Strand: Reading

Domain: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Standard: 9. Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Strand: Writing

Domain: Text Types and Purposes

Indicator: 3.a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

Indicator: 3.b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

Indicator: 3.d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

Procedures:

Orientation: Students will examine a number of Civil War letters. They will have both the original letter and the transcript. Students will serve as detectives looking for slang words. The teacher will lead a discussion defining what a slang word is and providing examples from a letter. Students will discuss different expectations of formality depending on the author (social class, military rank, education, etc.).

Teaching/Learning Process: Students will generate a list of the slang words they find. They should find at least 5 words, but the more they find, the better. Students will attempt to figure out the meaning of the word based on the context in which it is used. They may also use computers to find out meanings.

Once they have a complete list of words and meanings, they will write a letter to whomever they choose (a family member, a friend, a teacher, etc.) using their slang words relevantly and appropriately.

Closure: Encourage students to share a part of their letter.

Ask students:

- What they found out about the slang words
- If they think they could use these words in their discussions today (why/why not).
- If they saw differences in words (if soldiers used them differently or in different contexts).

Time allotment: 1 class period of 55 minutes per class

Lesson plan created by Kristen Couillard 3/8/2013 as part of the University of Vermont Education Class: *EDEL 157 – Social Education and Social Studies*.