

Letter to Abe

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- IL.1.A.3b > Analyze the meaning of words and phrases in their context.
- IL.1.B.3a > Preview reading materials, make predictions and relate reading to information from other sources.
- IL-PTS.1.C K: TCT understands how students' conceptual frameworks and their misconceptions for an area of knowledge can influence their learning.
- IL-PTS.1.I P: TCT designs learning experiences to promote student skills in the use of technologies appropriate to the discipline.
- IRA.1.3 ...demonstrate an understanding of the importance of literacy for personal and social growth
- IRA.1.5 ...demonstrate an understanding of reading as the process of constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation

Resources

[Library of Congress](#)

Letter from D.F. Hanks to Abe Lincoln

Overview and Rationale

Overview: Using the reading workshop method, this lesson will stress the importance of grammar and mechanics of writing to aid fluency and comprehension when reading.

Rationale: This lesson's purpose is to express the importance of reading as the main form of communication during the Civil War. This lesson ties into our social studies unit on the Civil War.

Objectives

The students will read and comprehend a letter from 1864.

TSW use prior knowledge and the knowledge attained from the letter to make predictions as to what was communicated in the letter Abe would have written before or after.

TSW engage in a whole class discussion about the letter.

Materials

- Library of Congress website www.loc.gov
- Handouts of handwritten and typed letter
- Newspaper articles from Civil War era newspapers
- Elmo/Overhead
- Dry erase markers/board
- Pencils
- Paper

Procedure

Teacher Sharing Time

- Introduce the letter as a part of the unit on the Civil War - say who it is from, who it is to, and their relationship.
- Explain that this activity will be about communication during the Civil War era.

Mini-lesson

- Share newspaper clips from the Civil War era with the class on the Elmo and look for differences in writing style – easy, medium, or hard to read?

Reading and Responding

- Pass out the worksheet with the handwritten letter.
- Spend 5 minutes silently reading the letter.
- Discuss with the class the whether they had difficulty reading the letter and why.
- Hand out the worksheet with the typed letter
- Spend 5 minutes silently reading the letter.
- Discuss with the class if the typed letter was easier to read or not
- Discuss the changes in technology and how that helped them read the letter.
- Compare communication in the Civil War era with how we communicate now.
- Prompt class to activate prior knowledge and prepare to ask questions as the letter is read as a class.

- Read the letter as a class
- Construct a KWL chart showing what content from the letter they know, what they want to know,
and what they learned.
- Explain the letter students will be writing. They choose to write the letter Abe wrote prior to
receiving this letter or his response to this letter.
- Allow students 15-20 minutes to write their letter using the knowledge they acquired.

Student Sharing Time

- Students share their letters with the class and the class may guess if Abe's letter was written before or after D.F. Hanks' letter.

Assessment

Checklist for whole class discussion

- Comprehension (1-5) _____
- Participation (Y/N) _____
- Student Share time - shared letter (Y/N) _____ Read with fluency (1-5) _____

* Letter Sharing: poor mechanics and grammar will be seen through the fluency of the reader and the comprehension of the audience.