

Lesson 2: Letter to Abel Harwood

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings:

Why is examining primary sources important?

What was life like for everyday people like right around the time of the Civil War?

How are the happenings of everyday people important in local or national history?

List of Materials, Resources:

[Letter](#) to Abel Harwood and [Transcription](#) (document found at [Cattle Bank Museum](#), Champaign, Il.)

Setting the Purpose:

The students will read and examine the primary source document. Students will draw up questions they are left with after reading the letter.

Procedure:

1. Distribute letter packet (copy of original and transcription) to each student.
2. As a class, read the letter. Have students highlight any words or vocabulary that are new or confusing.
3. Students will then complete the [Written Documentation Analysis Worksheet](#).
4. Discuss the findings as a class.
5. Now have students fill in the KWL chart about this letter. Give examples of questions they could ask. These could be questions about vocabulary, the people in the letter, the ideas in the letter, where it was written, etc.
6. As a group, share your KWL questions. Put these on butcher paper as a class and keep them. Tell students to keep this in their research notebook. We may not follow up on every question, but will weed out our really good questions to follow up on later.
7. Ask the group: How do you think Abel responded to this letter? Have them write their answers in their notebook.

Time frame for lesson:

This lesson could take 1 to 2 class periods.

Analysis of Local Primary Sources:

[Letter to Abel Harwood](#), resident of Champaign County at time of death. Students will use the written analysis sheet to guide examination of the source.