



## **A Letter from 1863**

### **Lesson Overview**

Students will read a letter from a specific time in history and then write their own letter from 1863. *Recommended for grade 5.*

### **Standards**

***English Language Arts –***

***Grade 5 Writing Standards - Production and Distribution of Writing***

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

***Grade 5 Reading Standards for Literature – Literature – Key Ideas and Details***

1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

***Grade 5 Reading Standards for Informational Text***

2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
3. Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

### ***Social Studies***

**5.7** Determine the meaning of the terms of this period with a visual representation, including: (G, C) Union and Confederate States, Yankees and Rebels, Blue and Gray, and Johnny Reb and Billy Yank

**5.8** Analyze the geographic, social, political, and economic strengths and weakness of the North and South. (E, G, H, P)

**5.14** Use concrete words, phrases, and sensory details to describe the experience of the war on the battlefield and home front. (H, C)

### **Objectives**

Students will be able to interpret a primary source to reflect on a time in history.

Students will be able to use the proper techniques of letter writing to write a formal letter.

### **Time Required**

45-60 minutes

### **Materials & Resources**

- Copy of the letter from Joseph Acklen to Adelia, August 20, 1863 (images attached below)

### **Lesson Procedure**

1. Have the students brainstorm about what they know was happening in the United States in 1863. Ask them to think about what a person's life in Nashville would be like. Did

everyone live the same way? Was life easy or difficult? If it was difficult, what made it hard?

2. Share the letter from Joseph to Adelia. Ask students to pick out details from the letter that let readers know it was written in 1863.
3. Have the students write a letter to someone as if they are living in 1863. They can choose to be anyone: Yankee, Southerner, plantation owner, slave, etc. Encourage the students to use the proper techniques of letter writing, including writing the date, a salutation, the body of the letter, and a closing.

### **Extension**

- Have the students research any time period. Then have them write a letter from a person in that time to a person in the future.
- Have the students write a letter to their future self, including important elements of the current time period.

### **Evaluation**

This activity can be evaluated using a rubric based on students participation in class discussion, completion of their letter, and proper use of letter writing techniques and grammar.

Angela Hunt.

Aug<sup>st</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> /63

Dear Ade

I am in receipt of your letter of July the 26<sup>th</sup> In it you did not mention the receipt of any letters from me I have written you three very recently and sent them by the river, If Marshal has got home he will give you an account of the troubles and losses I we have sustained. To be separated from you and the children for so long a time is a very great hardship but as I could not avoid I have nothing left now but my Cotton and it is uncertain in if I shall be permitted to dispose of it I am in constant dread of its being burned my mules and horses have all been taken ~~by~~ and stole by the Confederates and my neighbours the places are all in ruins the crops are all wasted and wasting my only chance of support is to sell my Cotton and as soon as I can accomplish



that I shall start for Nashville, My  
general health is as good as usual but  
my infirmity has rather increased,  
I am done with niger labour I never had  
much fancy for it as you know but now  
I am fully satisfied I have suffered all  
kinds of deprivations and ~~then~~ subjected  
to all kinds of lies and slanders that  
malice could invent when you write  
again let me know something of home  
affairs how many servants you have and  
how you got along and if Sally is with  
you give my love to the children and  
tell little Pauline I will answer her  
letter affectionately your husband

Jos A. S. Acklen