

Jeremiah Handley Lesson Plan

2ND PLACE, BEST LESSON PLAN CONTEST 2011-2012

BY TODD SEARING

Living a young man's life during the Civil War

Grade Level: Middle School

Approximate Length of Time: Four, 45-minute periods

Goal:

Students will understand choices someone close to their age in 1861 might have faced during the American Civil War.

Objectives:

1. Students will apply historical knowledge to the condition of a hypothetical individual, demonstrating understanding through creative writing.
2. Students will engage in goal-oriented primary source analysis to accomplish an individualized creative task.

Materials Used:

All materials used can be downloaded with the lesson plan on the right side of this page.

Primary Source materials (linked below)

Primary Source analysis sheets (linked below)

"Jeremiah Handley's Story" (included with lesson plan) for each student

"Interview with Jeremiah" response sheet for each student

Anticipatory Set:

Pages 1-3 of the original story of fictional character, Jeremiah Handley. Activate prior knowledge of events and issues of the early Civil War and build student ownership in leading up to the first choice to be made.

Procedure:

1. Have students read a selection of the primary source materials provided below and discuss as a class or in groups.

- [Accounts from the Battle of Shiloh](#)
- [Battlefield Tragedy](#)
- [Carnage at Antietam](#)
- [Sherman's March to the Sea](#)
- [Recollections of the Battle of Perryville](#)
- [The Humane Hero of Fredericksburg](#)
- [National Archives Civil War Photographs](#)
- [Images from the Library of Congress](#)

2. While reading selected documents and viewing images, students can fill out these analysis forms.

- [Written document analysis sheet](#)
- [Photo analysis sheet](#)

3. Have students read Jeremiah's story, making choices as to how his life will play out until reaching an "ending" on one of the last eight pages (11-18).

- Depending on where students are in terms of background knowledge, a read aloud and discussion of pages 1-3 can be a good beginning to the lesson.
- In making the choices, small groups can get together and make the initial decisions or each individual can take time to explore the story.
- If students read individually, they can then join a partner or a small group and come to a consensus on the "ending" the group will reach. Alternatively, groups can be assigned based on the choices individuals made.

4. At the end of the story (pages 11-18), students will answer the questions that are provided. They will use their knowledge from the primary sources and the events of their chosen path of Jeremiah to address these questions

5. Have students complete the "Interview with Jeremiah" response.

- Students should imagine themselves in the role of interviewer and interviewee, writing responses as Jeremiah.
- All four questions give opportunities to include learning from the primary source analysis in step two and question four is designed to specifically focus students' attention on the issues left open on the "ending" page they reached.

Closure:

Sharing responses among students can be confusing if everyone is not familiar with all of the possible endings. One remedy is to close with a survey of what choices were made and what endings were reached. With some explanation, students can then concentrate on sharing what was most informative to them when analyzing the primary sources. Some groups may decide to record the interview responses as a performance as well.

Assessment:

The two areas of assessment are participation as a group member according to expectations and evidence of primary source research included in the written interview responses.

Jeremiah Handley's Story

Page One

The boy's name was Jeremiah Handley. He was 13 years old, going on 14, in 1861.

Jeremiah lived in Kentucky with his 18-year-old brother James and his mother. Together, the three of them ran what was left of the family farm. When Jeremiah's father died five years ago they had given up their two slaves and half of their farm land.

Now, in 1861, word had reached nearby Louisville that real fighting had begun between the northern Union states and the southern states of the Confederacy. First, outspoken states like South Carolina had seceded, which means they left the Union (the United States), and formed their own Confederate States of America (CSA). Then shots were fired at Fort Sumter, off the coast of South Carolina, when President Lincoln refused to give it up to the South. But now the underdog "Rebels" claimed to have won a battle at Bull Run stream, near a small town in Virginia.

Continue on Page Two.

Page Two

Living in Kentucky, the Handleys understood why the South worried when Abraham Lincoln was elected. He was well-known for being against the spread of slavery despite being born not far from where the Handleys now lived. Many people in slave states thought the federal government gave too many advantages to the North already and now might further control the South's way of life.

James, Jeremiah's older brother, planned to answer the call for more Southern troops. He saw the "Runaway" notices for slaves who had probably escaped across the nearby Ohio River, and took the side of the slave owners. He remembered his father saying that blacks had just always been slaves, and that was the way things were. Jeremiah was not sure what he would do.

Kentucky was a "border" state. It continued to be a slave state, but also stayed in the Union and did not secede or join the Confederacy.

Continue on Page Three.

Page Three

As James prepared to set off for a Tennessee enlistment center to join the Southern troops, Mrs. Handley had come down with a serious illness. She told Jeremiah to go with James, that she'd be alright. She would rent out the land to neighboring farmers. Jeremiah felt he should stay to care for his mother, but knew he couldn't run the farm well.

If you think Jeremiah should...

go with his brother and try to enlist (join the Southern army), go to Page Four.

OR

stay at home and care for his mother, go to Page Five.

Page Four

Jeremiah says a tearful goodbye to his mother. He and his brother have made sure long-time friends of the family will care for her.

Jeremiah and James complete the journey by hitching rides on wagons or horses or going by foot. They find the enlistment center. Recruiters are happy to see them, saying, "We'll take any able 16-year-old. Just make your marks here." Jeremiah and James look at each other. It seems Jeremiah can pass as old enough, but what might happen later?

If you want Jeremiah to...

lie about his age and enlist with his brother, turn to Page Seven.

OR

tell the truth about being only 13, turn to Page Eight.

Page Five

Jeremiah hates to watch his brother leave for such an exciting adventure. He doesn't think much about the danger. The war probably won't last long enough for him to get involved. That's what everyone seems to think.

However, your mother is ill. How could both of you leave her now? You have to stay.

Over two years pass and your mother does not recover. One morning the doctor is called, but can only shake his head. Your sorrow over your mother's death is consumed in many activities. You wrap things up by selling the family farm land to those who have been helping to work it since James left for the war. You entrust most of the cash to close friends.

Continue on to Page Six.

Page Six

Jeremiah now is determined to join the army. He has not heard from his brother in nearly a year, which is not surprising during the war, or even in peace time. He sends word of their mother's death, hoping it will reach James.

Jeremiah has known slavery all his life, but does he support it enough to fight for the Confederacy? He could make the short trip into Louisville, or over the Ohio River to enlist with the Union troops.

If you want Jeremiah to...

follow James to enlist for the Confederacy, turn to Page Nine.

OR

enlist close to home and fight for the Union, turn to Page Ten.

Page Seven

Jeremiah does not correct the recruiter. Later, he writes the number 15 on a scrap of paper and slips it in his shoe. When asked if he is over 15, he feels he can honestly answer yes, since he is standing on top of 15, and it is all for a good cause anyway.

The new Tennessee troops are to split and head in two different directions. A train will carry one group east toward those battlefields. The rest will march southwest in the direction of the Mississippi River. James Handley is to march and Jeremiah is to board the train. In the confusion, Jeremiah sees he can slip into the marching group rather than board the train.

If you want Jeremiah to...

board the train, turn to Page Eleven.

OR

avoid boarding the train, turn to Page Twelve.

Page Eight

Jeremiah takes a deep breath and tells the recruiter he will turn only 14 in a few weeks. He is told he can't join the army as a soldier. After telling of the brothers' journey, Jeremiah is told he can learn to be a drummer and pass commands on to the troops by his signals.

When James learns he will be leaving the Tennessee town marching southwest, people begin to move in every direction. As the troops form columns to march out, Jeremiah sees the chance to slip in with the marching troops.

If you want Jeremiah to...

stay and learn to be a drummer, turn to Page Thirteen.

OR

sneak off on the march with James, turn to Page Fourteen.

Page Nine

All the friends and neighbors Jeremiah has ever known have accepted slavery as a way of life. Jeremiah packs the necessary things and sets off south toward the nearest Confederate encampment.

A few months later, Jeremiah has been with a Confederate regiment for some time. It seems all that has happened is marching. For hours at a time the troops march. Some no longer have shoes. All carry whatever belongings they have with them. Even many officers are now on foot.

One day Jeremiah's group is forced to pick its way through a thick forested area. As they advance they begin to be fired upon by Union troops. Jeremiah must decide what to do.

If you want Jeremiah to...

advance quickly hoping to overrun the Union firing line, turn to Page Fifteen.

OR

take cover behind trees to set up a defensive line, turn to Page Sixteen.

Page Ten

In the time since James left, Jeremiah has grown up. He has had time to form stronger opinions on his own. While James had felt badly for the slave owners when he saw notices of runaway slaves, Jeremiah had come to understand the situation of the slaves. In the past year, Jeremiah had harbored a series of escaping slaves on his family's property. He had used his reputation as the son of a past slave owner to help fugitives across the Ohio River.

Now Jeremiah was following the same path. He enlisted with the Union in Cincinnati, Ohio. The train lines, which remained undamaged in the North, carried troops east to help advance against Robert E. Lee's Confederate troops. Routes also led west and down the Mississippi. The river was now controlled by the Union, splitting the Confederate states.

If you want Jeremiah to...

travel east to battle Lee's troops, turn to Page Seventeen.

OR

travel west and deeper into the South to help continue dividing the Confederacy, turn to Page Eighteen.

Page Eleven

Jeremiah decides not to push his luck and boards the train traveling east. He bids a hurried goodbye with a wave to his brother.

In the east Jeremiah will become part of the South's effort to take the war into the North. Nearly every battle in the war will be fought in the South, but one effort will end in a famous battle in Pennsylvania.

What will Jeremiah's part be? How will it affect the South to have nearly every battle in its territory? What will it be like to be in a battle involving tens of thousands of soldiers? Will everyday routine and small encounters be all some groups experience?

Page Twelve

Jeremiah has come this far with his brother and does not want to leave him now. In the mass of people he disappears into the line of marching troops with his brother. Records of enlistment are kept, but individual troops in the field might only be identified with difficulty, so Jeremiah may avoid punishment.

After many long days of marching, Jeremiah and James face enemy fire around a Confederate fort along the Mississippi. Fighting outside the fort to help hold the important river, the battlefield was left strewn with bodies. As Jeremiah retreated into the fort, he did not see his brother.

Was James one of the dead? What will Jeremiah's reaction be if he is? What if he isn't? Does seeing men die in battle change Jeremiah?

Page Thirteen

Jeremiah decides he can play an important role and be a part of the army without having to hide or sneak around. He works hard to learn the complicated drum signals used to communicate orders to the troops.

The drummer is given special consideration in battle. They are not supposed to be shot at as they are unarmed and often young boys. However, in the chaos of actual fighting this doesn't always mean safety.

Will Jeremiah survive? Will he end up carrying a weapon as the South runs into greater need for troops? Will the war still drag on once Jeremiah is 16? Does Jeremiah see his brother again? Does he stay healthy?

Page Fourteen

In all the activity, Jeremiah moves out of sight of the officers and joins James among the troops. He is sure he can handle the life of a soldier. After all, he is physically strong and knows how to handle a gun.

Will the brothers be able to stay together? Will there be punishment if he is discovered? Will being a soldier hold any surprises for Jeremiah? What will the experience of battle be like?

Page Fifteen

Jeremiah takes the lead, yelling fiercely and motioning for others to follow. As he advances all he can see is smoke and trees. Suddenly a bullet wounds him in the leg and he falls to the ground.

When Jeremiah come to, he sees many Confederate and Union troops lying dead. He has lost his canteen, but is able to scrounge water from the canteens of some of the dead. He realizes he is fortunate to have not been taken prisoner or shot where he lay if Union men had seen he was not dead.

Now Jeremiah must move on his own. Is he captured by the Union? Will he rejoin Southern troops? Will he find his way home? Is his leg too badly injured for him to make it on his own? What will happen to him?

Page Sixteen

Amid the smoke and confusion, Jeremiah motions to those around him to take cover behind trees and return fire.

By his actions, the Confederate troops drive the Union soldiers back, finally chasing them from the area with a wild "Rebel Yell."

Even at such a young age, Jeremiah becomes an officer shortly after this success. Both the North and South are suffering many thousands of deaths and injuries, but the South has a smaller population and is in desperate need of officers and soldiers.

Will Jeremiah survive long? Will he continue to rise through the ranks? How will battle be different as an officer? Will he ever learn what has become of his brother?

Page Seventeen

Jeremiah travels east. He is part of a Union regiment that is advancing south through Confederate territory toward Georgia. Although they are better off for food and supplies than the Southern troops, it's been a long war and things are far from perfect.

How do Jeremiah and the Union troops, some of whom are African-American, react to slaves they meet? How do the hungry troops treat Southern farms? Will Jeremiah ever know what happened to his brother?

Page Eighteen

Jeremiah heads south and west with the Union army. After surviving several skirmishes, or smaller fights, he is injured and taken captive by Confederate troops.

What will a Confederate prison camp be like? Andersonville is a famous Civil War camp in Georgia. How serious is Jeremiah's injury? Will he survive? What has become of his brother?

Interview with Jeremiah

Names:

When creating our story we read pages 1, 2, 3, _____ and _____.

Your job is to interview the fictional character of Jeremiah Handley and write out the answers as you believe he would have given them.

Make sure to include information or ideas drawn from your analysis of primary sources. Cite the source material as your teacher directs.

Interview question 1

Jeremiah, when you chose to _____,
what caused you to make that choice?

Interview question 2

Jeremiah, looking back what is something in your life that you are proud or happy about?

Interview question 3

Jeremiah, what is one thing about your life you wish had been different?

Interview question 4 (Look back at the italicized section at your "ending")

Jeremiah, _____?

Ask a question that makes Jeremiah talk about one of the issues brought up at the end of the story you chose to create.

Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 1. Observation

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities

Step 2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

Step 3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

B. Where could you find answers to them?

Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1.	TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one): <input type="radio"/> Newspaper <input type="radio"/> Map <input type="radio"/> Advertisement <input type="radio"/> Letter <input type="radio"/> Telegram <input type="radio"/> Congressional Record <input type="radio"/> Patent <input type="radio"/> Press Release <input type="radio"/> Census Report <input type="radio"/> Memorandum <input type="radio"/> Report <input type="radio"/> Other
2.	UNIQUE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more): <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting Letterhead <input type="checkbox"/> Notations <input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten <input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp <input type="checkbox"/> Typed <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Seals
3.	DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT:
4.	AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT: POSITION (TITLE):
5.	FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN?
6.	DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.) A. List three things the author said that you think are important: B. Why do you think this document was written? C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document. D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written. E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document: