

Life of a Soldier after the Civil War Lesson Plan

WHAT'S IN A NAME

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Grades: 7-12

Length of Time: Approximately 1-2 days

Goals:

1. Help students understand the diverse make-up of the soldiers in the Union Army.
2. Show students the struggles faced by Irish and African-American veterans as they sought their civil war pensions.
3. Illustrate to students the issues of race and social class in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Objectives:

1. Students will learn the barriers that prevented Irish and African-American veterans from receiving their pensions by completing the Student Reading.
2. Students will gain an understanding of institutional bias in the pension process from the Student Reading and Case Studies.
3. Students will identify issues facing veterans today (ex: homelessness, mental health concerns, and physical disabilities).

Materials Used:

- Student Reading- Pension Overview handout
- Case Studies #1-4
- Evaluation Reading Quizzes

Anticipatory Set/Hook:

What do you think a pension is? Do you think certain groups of people were discriminated against and how? What effect do you think the war has on soldiers, and how does it impact their post-war life?

Procedure:

1. Have students read the Student Reading in pairs, or individually. Then discuss the idea of a pension.
2. Break students up into small groups of 3-4. Have them read and analyze Case Study #1 and #2.
3. Have students complete Reading Quiz A on Case Study #1 and #2.
4. Students read and analyze Case Study #3 and #4.
5. Have students complete Reading Quiz B on Case Study #3 and #4.
6. Have students write a journal entry to identify the similarities and differences found in the four Case Studies. Hold a class discussion to compare their findings.

Extension: Issues Facing Today's Veterans

- a. Have students study issues such as effects of Agent Orange, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Gulf War Syndrome.
- b. How are the challenges today's veterans deal with, not unlike veteran's issues from the Civil War?
- c. Contact your local veteran's affairs office for additional information.

Extension: Battlefield Conditions and Preservation

1. Battle of Bull Pasture Mountain
 - a. May 8, 1862 near McDowell, Virginia
2. Battle of New Market Heights or Chapins Farm
 - a. September 29, 1864 in the vicinity of Petersburg, Virginia

Closure:

What struggles did Irish and African-American soldiers of the Civil War Face? What stopped soldiers from receiving their pensions? How do these post-war struggles compare to the struggles of today's soldiers?

Assessment:

Students will complete both Reading Quizzes based on the four Case Studies to show comprehension of discussions and readings.

Modification Ideas:

1. Discuss case studies as a whole class after small groups discuss and analyze.
2. Make each Case Study into a station, and have student groups rotate to each one.
3. Have students take quizzes in their groups.
4. Invite a local veteran into your class to discuss issues he or she has faced since returning from the military.