

Unit: The Civil War: Up Close and Personal
Lesson Title: A Picture: Worth One Thousand Words?

Grade level: Upper elementary

Estimated time: Two class periods

Specific topics: Photo analysis and Civil War prison camps

Subtopic: Camp Douglas

Teacher background information:

The following Civil War unit is based on a diary written by Private William D. Huff. The diary begins after Huff was captured at the Battle of Chickamauga, fought September 18–19, 1863. In it Huff narrates his harrowing experiences at Camp Douglas, Chicago’s Confederate prison camp. The diary contains over thirty detailed drawings and descriptions of life in this prison camp. Topics include escape attempts, harsh punishments, and disease. The diary ends with Huff’s parole and return to his hometown of St. Mary’s Parish, Louisiana.

Camp Douglas was the largest Civil War training camp in Illinois. It was located on Chicago’s South Side, on land provided by the estate of Stephen A. Douglas in 1861, between Cottage Grove Avenue and South Parkway on Thirty-first through Thirty-sixth Streets. Thirty-two units trained at Camp Douglas and the first prisoners arrived in 1862.

During the Civil War, Camp Douglas held more than eighteen thousand prisoners; one-third died there. The prison was notorious for extreme acts of cruelty and high mortality rates among prisoners, caused by overcrowding, unhealthy living conditions, poor medical treatment, inadequate food supply, and brutality. The camp maintained incomplete records and poor documentation of their procedures.

Prior to teaching this lesson, students should have a general understanding of both sides of the Civil War, including their reasons for dividing and fighting, as well as their strategies, relative strengths, and major victories.

Key concepts:

Injustice, loneliness, communication, division, and loyalty

Key questions:

Who were the prisoners at Camp Douglas? What stories did they have to tell? What were their beliefs? What were they fighting for? What consequences did their decisions have on their country, their fellow soldiers, and their family? How were these people similar to you? How were they different?

Goals of this lesson:

To learn that people in history—in this case the soldiers of the Civil War—were real people, not just two-dimensional names in a textbook. To understand that people in history are not very different from us.

Objectives:

1. Students will work cooperatively to derive factual information about a place and time period through observations, critical thinking, analytical skills, and deductive reasoning while evaluating primary sources (photographs of prison camps).

2. Students will identify one of Chicago's roles in the Civil War through the study of Camp Douglas.
3. Students will learn to sympathize with both sides of the war and to understand that there were losses on both sides.

Materials:

This lesson plan is based on cooperative group learning. The teacher should divide the class into groups of three to five students. Master copies of the photographs, Photo Analysis worksheet, and "Clues" are provided.

1. Two photographs of Camp Douglas (one photograph per group—half of the groups should receive one photograph and half should receive the other)
2. Photo Analysis worksheet (one per group)
3. "Clues" divided into envelopes numbered 1 to 5 (one set of five envelopes per group). The "clues" are questions designed to guide the students through their investigation of Camp Douglas. Clue #1 is the most general, #5 the most specific.
4. Paper and pens

Procedures:

1. Distribute a photograph and the Photo Analysis worksheet to each group. Students should have no prior information about the photograph.
2. Instruct groups to closely examine and discuss their photograph, using the Photo Analysis worksheet as a guide.
3. After the groups have completed the Photo Analysis worksheet, distribute the envelopes. Explain that each envelope contains a clue and a set of questions to help them figure out the subject of their photograph.
4. Instruct students to open Clue #1. Give the groups time to discuss the questions. Next ask them to make a hypothesis of the content of their picture and to write their guess on the back of each clue. Repeat for Clues 2, 3, 4, and 5. Groups should progress from Clue #1 to Clue #5 in order, until they correctly identify the subject of their photograph. Not all groups will require all five clues. This part of the activity should take approximately thirty minutes.

Optional:

Turn the activity into a game or contest. The winner is the first group to correctly guess the subject of their photograph with the help of least amount of clues.

5. Create a chart on the board to analyze class results. The chart should include each group's guess for each clue. By using the cart, the class will be able to review and learn from each group's approach to discovering the photograph's contents.
6. Use the completed Photo Analysis worksheets (and game results, if applicable) to facilitate a class discussion about life as a prisoner of war during the Civil War. Compare and contrast the two photographs. What different kinds of information do each of them provide about life at Camp Douglas?

Suggestions for student assessment:

1. Assign grades based on the number of clues students used to identify the photograph. The fewer clues a group uses, the higher their score.
2. Evaluate students based on their work on the Photo Analysis worksheet.
3. Assign each student in each group a specific role or responsibility. Grade the group on their success at working cooperatively.

Additional resources:

Levy, George. *To Die in Chicago: Confederate Prisoners at Camp Douglas, 1862-1865*. Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Co., 1999.

Websites:

U.S. National Archives & Records Administration, www.archives.gov
Illinois in the Civil War, www.illinoiscivilwar.org/campdouglas.html
Home page of the 19th Alabama Infantry Regiment, www.19thAlabama.org

Extension Activities:

1. Compare and contrast the photographs of Camp Douglas with images from other prison camps.
2. Compare and contrast past prison camps with prison camps today.
3. Research Stephen A. Douglas.
4. Assign students to write a brief essay or journal entry from the point of view of a Union or Confederate prisoner.

This lesson fulfills the following Illinois Learning Standards:**English Language Arts:**

State Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.

State Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information.

Social Science:

State Goal 14: Understand political systems, with an emphasis on the United States.

State Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations.

State Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the United States.

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“Clues” for Investigating Camp Douglas

Clue #1: CIVIL WAR

What role do these men have in the war?
What are the dangers in that job?
Are they performing this job in the picture?

Clue #2: CONFEDERACY

What side of the war was the Confederacy?
What side do you think these men were on?
How did they treat men from the other side and vice versa?

Clue #3: CHICAGO’S SOUTH SIDE

Was Chicago part of the Union or the Confederacy?
What was Chicago’s primary role in the Civil War?
Did people in Chicago support the Confederate men?

Clue #4: STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS

Who was Stephen A. Douglas? Why was he famous?
What was his relation to Abraham Lincoln?
Where was he from?

Clue #5: PRISON

What happened to the men captured during the war?
What was Andersonville to people in the South?
Why were prisons sometimes called “camps”?

PHOTO ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

STEP 1: OBSERVATION

Study the photograph closely. What is your overall impression of this photograph?

Next divide the photograph into four sections. Examine the individual items in each section. What new details can you identify?

People	Objects	Activities
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____

STEP 2: INFERENCE

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

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP 3: QUESTIONS

1. What questions does this photograph raise?

2. Where could you find answers to your questions?





*Confederate prisoners at camp Douglas,
Chicago.*

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A Picture Worth a 1,000 Words?



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Please take a few minutes to give us your *History Lab* feedback!

After reviewing and using this *History Lab* lesson, please send us your feedback. Your ideas and honest assessment will ensure that these lessons keep growing and provide us useful insight for future teacher fellows.

First name:

Last name:

School:

Grade you teach:

E-mail:

Are you a CHS member (circle one): yes no

Name of unit you are evaluating (check one):

America's Documents of Freedom

Chicago's World's Fairs

African American Life in the Nineteenth Century

Face to Face with the Great Depression

The Civil War: Up Close and Personal

America and Protest

Name of lesson you are evaluating:

Evaluation questions:

1. On a scale of one to five (with five being the highest) rate this lesson in terms of the quality of the student learning experience it provides (circle one):

5

4

3

2

1

2. What were the strengths of this lesson?

3. What aspects of this lesson needed additional fine-tuning?

4. Would you use this lesson, or some variation of it, again? Why or why not?

5. What advice, tips, or suggestions would you give to future users of this lesson?

6. Where does this lesson fit in your course of study (scope, sequence, unit)?

7. If applicable, how did the use of primary sources impact student learning?

8. Additional comments? (Use other side if necessary.)

Thank you for your time. Please send completed form via mail or fax to:

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