

# Fourth Graders Historical Understanding

## of Diverse Civil War Narratives

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### Purpose

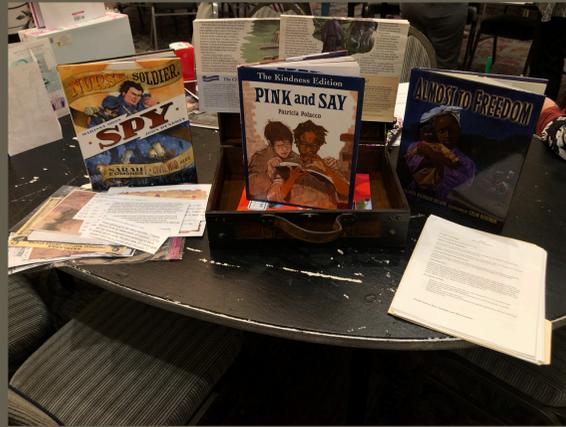
As Language Arts and Mathematics become the forefront of elementary curriculum, Social Studies is left on the backburner, ultimately being tied in with Language Arts (Boyle-Baise et. al, 2011). When both Social Studies and Language Arts are used in a healthy integration of cross-curriculum content, students become more in tune with the diverse perspectives throughout history (Barton & Levstik, 2011). Therefore, a Journey Box promotes healthy integration of Social Studies and Language Arts by containing primary and secondary sources that work to engage the inquiry minds of students (Labbo & Field, 1999). This project seeks to better understand how this method of teaching can promote young people's historical understanding through investigating primary and secondary sources (from a journey box) and a related high-quality children's book.

### Findings

Students were given a three-column paper that asked them to describe "What was life like during the Civil War." Students recorded their answers before any lesson/inquiry took place. Then students answered after reading "Pink and Say." Lastly, students answered after exploring primary and secondary sources during the Civil War. After students explored the primary and secondary sources, students...

- Provided more in-depth answers using information from the notable trade book and sources.
- Gathered information from diverse perspectives in order to synthesize what life was like during the Civil War.
- Used their knowledge from notable trade books as well as primary and secondary sources to form an educated journal entry on a rarely discussed perspective of the Civil War.

From the beginning answers of, "What was life like during the Civil War" to the end, 73% of students were able to build upon a more in-depth explanation based on their inquiry with the sources and the notable trade books. Based on the given rubric that assesses the students' historical understanding, 65% of students received a 3 or higher which ultimately means they have met the learning objective.



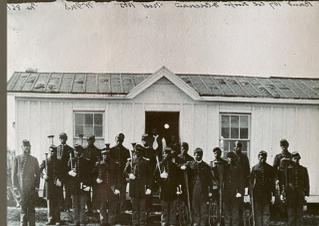
Notable Trade Books



Union Song



Family of Enslaved Peoples



United States Colored Troops



Union Nurse Workers

### Research Questions

**Research question.** To what extent can 4th grade students demonstrate historical understanding of perspectives in the Civil War?

**Sub-question.** I also seek to understand the pedagogy that supported their growth: How does the teaching strategy or pedagogy support historical understanding?

### Objectives

**Elementary Students' Historical Understanding.** As a result of this teaching, fourth grade students will be able to demonstrate historical understanding of the Civil War by interpreting primary and secondary sources to showcase life experiences in-depth from a particular perspective.

**Teaching Methods to Support Historical Understanding.** Simultaneously, I seek to understand the teaching methods that support such historical understanding.

What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge	What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge	What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge	What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge	What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge	What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge
I think life was like there were a bunch of fighting and hiding because it was the Civil War but not what I expect right? I would expect to see fighting and hiding cause people come to hide.	hard times no steady primary treated poorly and hated.	Actually joined the army to fight for freedom because helping people to get out of the war. I was a nurse and I was a soldier. I was a nurse and I was a soldier. I was a nurse and I was a soldier.	Life was hard. I was a nurse and I was a soldier. I was a nurse and I was a soldier. I was a nurse and I was a soldier.	I had a lot of fun. I was a nurse and I was a soldier. I was a nurse and I was a soldier. I was a nurse and I was a soldier.	They had a lot of fun.

Dear Journal,

Even though I feel terrified about what they might do to me if I try to escape and fight with the 28th regiment colored troop, I still think I deserve my justice and freedom. Once I went to the auction for me and after they bid for my old master, Garth Myer came up to me and said the new owner I have now was James McWier, so that meant I was now Carly McWier. Being a slave was hard work I had to clean, farm, sew, wear dirty clothes hand make things, and a lot more. I was lucky to eat a protein if I caught it. It wasn't fair that I had to do all this and I didn't get any holidays or Christmas just because the color of my skin. Later when I was about 18

Dear Journal, The Civil War is hard I see most people run and scared and try to hide. I'm scared sometimes too like other people I'm scared because I think that I might get caught because women aren't aloud to be in the war. They have to be a nurse and like I say I wanted to be both so one day I'm a nurse and one day I'm a soldier. Sometimes it can be tricky because my hair might fall down and see that I am wearing a wig and acceptly when I'm running to hide to get more ammo. So far as usual we are doing pretty good and I think we will win and there will be no slavery forever I hope. Only one of are soldiers get hit so far in the stomach well I must get a good nights of rest for tomorrow good night.

Dear diary,

I'm Suzy Bayl want you to be a soldier when I grow up. One day when I got home my mom told me that there were slaves and she told me I would be a slave. So one day I went up and I was sold for \$50. I was very hard for me when I had to do a bunch of things for my master and make me do the that and everything. One day the slaves swept the floor I even made her bed and I cook breakfast in the morning I wore dirty clothes I made a dress for myself and I was very hard for me to do it. But I didn't go to school so I didn't learn anything but I disguise myself one night when my master went to sleep I just up as a boy to be a soldier. I heard out that night and I started to fight for the Civil War even know I wasn't supposed to because I'm a girl but I still did it.

### Formative Assessment Answer Sheets

What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge	What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge	What was life like during the Civil War? (Pink and Say) Knowledge
I think life was like there were a bunch of fighting and hiding because it was the Civil War but not what I expect right? I would expect to see fighting and hiding cause people come to hide.	hard times no steady primary treated poorly and hated.	Actually joined the army to fight for freedom because helping people to get out of the war. I was a nurse and I was a soldier. I was a nurse and I was a soldier.

### Summative Assessment Journal Entries

Nancy Rogers Hixon

Sometimes I would try to get men, but always I got me a whipping for it. When I was a little girl, moving around from one family to another, I done housework, ironing, peeling potatoes and helping the ma's cook. I went barefoot most of my life, but the master would get his shoes from the Government at Fort Gibson.

I wore cotton dresses, and the Mistress wore long dresses, with different colors for Sunday clothes, but us slaves didn't know much about Sunday in a religious way.

Alice Alexander

Down there we lived in a one-room log hut, and slept on homemade rail bed stands with cotton, and sometimes straw, mostly straw runners and cotton winners. I worked round the house and looked after de smaller children -- I mean my mother's children. Mostly we ate yeller meal, corn bread and sorghum molasses. I ate possum when we could get 'em, but jest couldn't stand rabbit meat. Didn't know there was any Christmas or holidays in den days.

Prince Bee

I don't know how old I was when I found myself standing on the topen part of a high stump with a lot of white folks walking around looking at the little scared boy that was me. Pretty soon the old master, (that's my first master) Saul Buhrill, he say to me that I'm now belongin to Major Bee and for me to get down off the auction block.

Primary Accounts of Enslaved Peoples



Map of the Union and Confederate States

Score	Description	Number of Students who achieved:
4.0	Demonstrates rich historical understanding of life during the Civil War by interpreting (primary and/or secondary) sources to showcase an accurate, rich, and detailed perspective in an "inner-monologue" format of a particular perspective.	5 students
3.0	Demonstrates adequate historical understanding of life in the Civil War by using evidence to make an accurate and/or detailed perspective in an "inner-monologue" format.	12 students
2.0	Demonstrates initial historical understanding of life in the Civil War by seeking to connect evidence primary and secondary sources to a perspective at a surface-level.	6 students
1.0	Not yet able to independently use sources or imagine life in another time.	3 students

Summative Assessment Rubric

### Conclusion

Based on this final data, using primary and secondary sources encompassed in a Journey Box can promote student engagement and inquiry skills. When providing students with outside resources, such as a notable trade book and primary and secondary sources, students can analyze and understand a more adequate depiction of this time in history. Overall, utilizing notable trade books and primary and secondary sources can teach students a more in-depth analysis and bring awareness to the perspectives that are not always taught.

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 Linda D. Labbo & Sherry L. Field (1999) *Journey Boxes: Telling the Story of Place, Time, and Culture with Photographs, Literature, and Artifacts*, *The Social Studies*, 90:4, 177-182, DOI: 10.1080/00377999909602411