



1863 CIVIL WAR JOURNEY: RAID ON INDIANA STUDENT NEWSPAPER ACTIVITY RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 3-5

During the Civil War, children and teenagers contributed to national discussions about the war and other important issues like race, the experience on the home front, patriotism, and what it meant to grow up in the midst of a violent national conflict by creating their own newspapers. Neighborhood children and classmates modeled their newspapers on contemporary adult newspapers and periodicals aimed at children. Like most Civil War-era newspapers, they featured serious articles, editorials, human interest stories, humor, poetry, and cartoons, and virtually none of them practiced objective journalism. Rather, most newspapers took a strong political stance that was reflected in their content. Many of these amateur newspapers were written by hand, but some were printed. A few even attracted a relatively wide readership of more than 100 subscribers. (See *Children for the Union: The War Spirit on the Northern Home Front* by James Marten for more information.)

OBJECTIVES:

After doing this activity, students will be able to:

- Write an article describing their experience at Conner Prairie's 1863 Civil War Journey.
- Describe the participation of individuals in Indiana during Morgan's Raid and on the home front during the Civil War.
- Be familiar with primary documents and use them as examples for their own writing.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Examples of Civil War-era newspapers.
 - Harper's Weekly
 - Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper
 - Local Newspapers
 - **Note:** Digitized copies of Civil War-era newspapers are widely available online. See harpweek.com for examples.
- Large piece of paper to paste articles together
- You may also choose to have students type their newspaper articles and put them together using publishing software.

WHAT TO DO:

- As you prepare for your class's visit to Conner Prairie and 1863 Civil War Journey: Raid on Indiana, have your students look at examples of

newspapers from the Civil War to get a sense of the topics that were covered and the style of the articles and illustrations. Before your visit, have each student select a topic to cover for the class newspaper. Choose a name for your newspaper.

- During your visit, instruct your students to take notes on their experience. They may interview each other and/or draw pictures.
- After your visit, each student should write an article to contribute to the class newspaper. Paste these articles and any illustrations together on a large piece of paper to create the class newspaper.

TEACHING OPTIONS:

- Students could try to write in the style of Civil War-era newspapers. This means they may write in first or third person, use opinions in their articles, or even write poetry.
- Many newspapers from the Civil War featured first-person articles written by soldiers. Students may put themselves in the role of a soldier and write a first-person account of their experience.
- Students may take on the role of editor and critique one another's work before the completion of final drafts.
- Students may work together to brainstorm ideas for headlines.

IN ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Language Arts: 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

Social Studies: 3.1, 4.1

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