**The Battle of Antietam**

**Writing a Letter “Home”**

**Background Information:**

Approximately 200 billion e-mails are sent per day (2010) which means more than 2 million e-mails are sent every second.  In America alone, more than 3 billion text messages are sent every day.   All of these are received in mere seconds.  “Snail mail” or mail sent through the United States Postal Service reaches its recipient within three days.

During the Civil War, soldiers did not just sit back and wait for their loved ones to write to them. They very actively solicited their friends and family by writing letters voraciously.  Even after the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the postal service continued to serve those states declaring themselves out of the Union.  Southerners continued to use U.S. postage.  On June 1, 1861, the postal services separated themselves from one another, the date chosen by the Confederate Post Office Department.  Even with the use of railroads, it may have taken two weeks or longer for a letter to reach its recipient.

Consider leaving home to fight in the Civil War or being left at home by a loved one.  Imagine not knowing when you would return home from war or where you will be week to week.  Picture yourself sitting at home waiting day after day waiting to hear from a loved one and not knowing whether that person is still alive and well or where he is, and waiting weeks to hear any news.

**Goals:**

Students will learn about the various effects that the Civil War had on people.  They will explore how it did not only effect people fighting in the war, but the families left at home and the general atmosphere of life during the time.  How did the Civil War impact the lives of people during this time period?

**Assignment:**

You will write ***one descriptive letter home*** from a surviving Antietam soldier, from either the North or the South (Union or Confederacy); consider the following questions:

* Who are you and where are you from?
* Do you believe in the cause you are fighting for?
* Which side are you fighting for? Why?
* What are the conditions in which you live?
* What is your clothing like?
* Who is your commander?
* What happened at the battle of Antietam?
* What do you think the outcome of the war will be?
* Do you think you will make it home alive?
* What will you do if you are able to return home and the war ends?

**Requirements:**

* Written in first person
* Follow standard letter writing conventions
* Include information relevant to the Battle of Antietam and the Civil War

**Examples of real letters written during the Civil War and other resources:**

* http://www.war-letters.com/
* Women’s Activities During the Civil War: A Select List of Photographs, Library of Congress

(http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/107\_civw.html)