



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1981 Volume IV: Writing Across the Curriculum

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## Reading and Writing about the Civil War

Guide for Curriculum Unit 81.04.02  
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I have developed a unit to augment the U.S. History I program that deals with the Civil War. The unit is designed to encourage improvement in writing skills and consists of several lessons geared toward that aim. It is my firm belief that students' writing skills will improve if they are encouraged to do so through the use of challenging and stimulating assignments. This affirmation is the premise upon which the curriculum unit is based. I have tried to create interesting and varied lessons using a number of approaches. The unit presupposes that U.S. History students will be motivated to write well with appropriate stimulation. Some of the lessons included deal with biographies, interviewing, photographs, films, newspapers and mapwork. Some of the lessons require the use of audiovisual materials; some require sourcebooks, listed at the end of the unit, that are available at the New Haven Public Library. Through the use of various materials and media, the student, then, is encouraged in this unit to write a series of papers that will result in improvement in his/her writing ability.

As in any unit, a great deal of its success rests upon the shoulders of the teacher and his enthusiasm in presenting it. This unit will not help your students to write well if additional classroom instruction isn't supplemented along with it. Lessons in grammar, sentence structure, writing of paragraphs, proper usage of resource materials need to be given to the students if the lessons are to be of any value whatsoever. Reinforcement of such basic writing skills depending upon the needs of the group will enable students to develop their writing ability. Time must be taken to meet individual student needs if any growth is to take place. The lessons are arranged in a sequential manner so as to increase writing competence. That is, the beginning lessons are the easiest; the last lessons are the most challenging. I recommend that they be presented to student groups as they are listed.

(Recommended for 10th grade U.S. History I.)

### **Key Words**

*Civil War American History Basic Research Skills Wars General Writing Instruction*

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