

## Lesson Plan

**Teacher:** Joe Cotten

**Lesson Title:** J. W. Robison –Confederate Soldier

**Grade Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Lesson Time Length:** One class period

**Big Idea:** (What do you want students to understand at a deep level? An example might be “Students understand that the relationships between Native American groups, immigrants, and European Americans were very complex.”)

Students understand the issues, difficulties and pressures facing soldiers fighting in the Civil War.

**Lesson Abstract:** (Provide a short two or three sentence description highlighting what your lesson is about.)

J. W. Robison was a private in the Maury Light Artillery of Tennessee. His wife Josephine received and kept some 100 letters from him during the time of his service. These letters, primary sources, describe the issues facing those fighting in the Civil War.

**Lesson Background and Context:** (Provide a paragraph or two that provides users with a sense of time, events, and place in which your lesson fits.)

This lesson unfolds during the end of the second year of the Civil War. J.W. Robison and his 600 confederate mates are near Hopkinsville, Kentucky preparing to face 3000 union troops in the days/hours that lie ahead.

He relays to his wife the troubling facts that there is a fever ravaging their camp, he is losing weight but is still standing, they are out of Kerosene and it is “cold as Hell”. A deserter named Irwin was hanged in front of them for deserting. He is scared and had to shoot and kill a young Union soldier that was the age of his son. He misses and loves his family and wants them to know it.

**Standards Alignment:** (List the state standards and benchmarks that this lesson will target.)  
Taken from newly approved KS Standards.

Choices have consequences  
Individuals have rights and responsibilities  
Societies are shaped by beliefs, idea and diversity  
Relationships between people, place, and idea and environments are dynamic.

**Objectives** (Describe what students will know and be able to do after their learning. This should be a simple list of specific content knowledge and historical / literacy skills.)

Students will identify and list as many of the issues Robison writes about as they can while watching the music video “Josephine.”

Students will choose the issue they find most troubling to them or to Robison and explain why they chose it in a 50-100 essay.

**Teaching Materials:** (List the resources you use to deliver the lesson. This might include textbooks, trade books, fiction, videos, artifacts, and primary sources.)

Textbook –The American journey for back ground information. Chap 16 Sec 3, Life during the War.

The story behind J.W. Robison’s Civil War love letters to his wife Josephine.

The music video “Josephine” by Joey and Rory.

**Vocabulary:** (List the terms and concepts will students learn.)

primary source

kerosene

deserter

pressures of being away from family

being asked to kill someone you don’t even know (sometimes children)

**Lesson Implementation and Procedures:** (List and describe the steps necessary to deliver this lesson.)

Have students read background information.

Lecture over background information and history of the letters and the making of the music video.

Share information on the writer of the song and producers of the video.

Discuss which venue is the primary source. Letters, song or video.

**Technology Integration:** (What technology will you and your students use to complete this lesson? This may include web sites, software, simulations, Web 2.0 tools, social media, and devices such as iPads.)

The American Journey Powerpoint for lecture support.

Website: [www.milkhousemedia.com/reel/Josephine.html](http://www.milkhousemedia.com/reel/Josephine.html)

Copy of letter

Music video

Background on J.W. Robison.

**Evaluation and Assessment:** (What evidence will students provide to prove they have learned what you want them to learn? List any formative and summative tools that the teacher uses as part of this lesson.)

Students will identify which of the following is the primary source- the letter, song or video. Students will list issues, difficulties and/or pressures identified in the music video "Josephine." Students will write a 50-100 word describing which issue is the most troubling to them and why.

**Extension and Enrichment:** (Describe how you will extend the learning for gifted students as well as what you might do for remediation and re-teaching.)

Students can search web for more information on J.W. Robison and his wife, Josephine. He survived the war although he spent time in two union prisons. His gravesite and tombstone can be viewed online as well as Josephines. She lived to be 92 and actually applied for a soldier's pension after his death.

**Resources:** (Be sure to attach student handouts, lecture notes, presentations and other documents associated with the lesson.)

Assignment Assessment

Student Samples

This assignment was extremely successful! The students told me they definitely made an emotional connection with J.W. Robison, and appreciated the difficulty of the situation he was in and the decisions he was confronted with.

Assignment  
Assessment

Name  
Hour

Josephine

(1pt) ① Which of these is a Primary Source

A. Song      B. Video      C. Letter

(1pt each) 2. List as many issues as you can, faced by John W. Robison, in the video "Josephine". The video represents the letter written to his wife Josephine as he served in the Confederate Army.

5pts 3. Identify the issue you find the most troubling and explain why. (50 words minimum).

Josephine

20  
20

Student  
Sample

1. C: Letter

2. Running out of things

the weather/cold

Fever/Sickness

Making it through

Hunger

Missing children/family and friends

Saying goodbye

losing people

People trying to get away

Killing

dying

being afraid

3. The fear probably is the worst. Not only the fear of dying but losing everything else too. You live in constant fear of how your family is doing, the people dying, not getting through, and also hunger and sickness. You never know how things are going to turn out, and although you stay strong things get really hard and sad.

# Josephine

① C. Letter

20  
20

- ②
- \* It's cold outside and then out of carcass
  - \* Away from his children and wife
  - \* Had to watch a man get hung
  - \* Had to kill men, including one that looked like his son
  - \* He's probably gonna die
  - \* Not much food
  - \* Had to tell his wife that if he died to marry another man

③ The issue that I thought was most troubling was having to watch someone get hung. I couldn't even imagine having to watch someone suffer and die. I'm sure J.W. Robison had a really hard time watching it. I also think being away from his wife children was a very troubling. Nobody wants to be away from their family and knowing he was probably never going to be able to say goodbye to them probably made it even worse.

Josephine

20  
20

1. letter
2. 1. cold
2. they've been marching for 2 days
3. soldiers are too sick to fight
4. soldiers are dying
5. they don't have any more kerosene
6. fever in camp
7. misses his children
8. had to shoot a kid that looked like his son
9. leaving his family, and might not get to see them again
10. deserter man got hung
11. snowing
12. he's losing weight

3. The thing I think would be the hardest is leaving his family, because he could die and not ever see them again. His wife has to take care of all of the kids, and if he dies she will be alone until she finds another. It'd be hard to go awhile without seeing your wife or kids.

9  
19  
30  
42  
51  
57

Josephine

40  
20

① Letter

② Snowing no where to go

- Fever everyone is getting sick
- Losing people
- Missed loved ones
- Killed young person
- Could die
- Walking a lot but not getting very far
- Captain never seen this ...
- Losing weight
- odds are against them
- people getting hung

③ I found killing a young person the most troubling.  
Killing a person in general would be hard but, killing someone that reminded you of your son would be terrifying! Both times we watched this video this part was the part "I choked up on". I think this would be the hardest part in war.

(54)