Civil War Soldiers often used letters to communicate with family, friends and other loved ones' back home. They recorded experiences on the battlefield, talked about camp, asked for money amongst many other things. They would often receive letters back from family members which helped to keep moral high amongst soldiers. Union Soldier, Peleg Bradford wrote a series of letters back to friends and family members. He often asked for letters back, money and the opinions of those he wrote most often.

Peleg Bradford’s letters show that the English language has evolved. We no longer use the same words and phrases to describe the environments that we are in. The way that we spell things are not the same as they did in the Civil War. For example, we have combined the word “anytime,” Bradford wrote it as two words. It should also be noted that literacy rates and education standards are not the same as they were then. Not every soldier had received a formal education or could read and write.

This activity is designed to allow students to compare and contrast Bradford’s letters with the language and spelling that we use today. Students should be able to pick out specific words and phrases that we no longer use and have changed.

**OVERVIEW**

**PHASES**

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<tr>
<th>CURRICULAR STANDARDS</th>
<th>4TH GRADE</th>
<th>8TH GRADE</th>
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<tr>
<td>SS.400.50 Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland and the United States.</td>
<td>SS.AS1.80.05 Explain how the Civil War caused technological change and medical advancements in America.</td>
<td>SS.DL.10.01 Evaluate a variety of sources by identifying and defining the type, origin and authority</td>
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<td>PHASES</td>
<td>4TH GRADE</td>
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<td>SS.400.50.01 Individuals and Societies Change Over Time</td>
<td>of a source, examining the historical context and assessing the corroborative value of a source. SS.DL.20.01 Communicate and critique conclusions by constructing well organized arguments containing multipart theses supported by a variety of sources, utilizing historical reasoning skills and addressing opposing points of view/counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.</td>
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| OBJECTIVE(S) | Students will be able to examine changes in the English language through the letters of Civil War Soldier, Peleg Bradford. | Students will be able to examine the changes in the English language through the letters of Civil War soldier, Peleg Bradford. |

| INFORMATION REQUIRED | 1. Peleg Bradford  
2. Changes in the English language  
3. Editing letters and phrases | 1. Peleg Bradford  
2. Changes in the English language over time  
3. Editing letters and phrases |

| ACTIVITY | **Engagement:** Letter writing was a common form of communication during the 1800s, much like sending texts and emails today. How much do you think the English language has changed since the Civil War?  
**Exploration:** Read through both letters written by Peleg Bradford, a Civil War soldier. See Appendix C.  
**Explanation:** After reading through both letters, highlight all misspelled words and phrases that are misspelled. Use a carrot (^) to edit word and phrases and change them to | **Engagement:** Letter writing was a common form of communication during the 1800s, much like sending texts and emails today. How much do you think the English language has changed since the Civil War?  
**Exploration:** Read through the letters written by Peleg Bradford, a Civil War soldier. See Appendix B.  
**Explanation:** Go through the letters and highlight words and phrases that are misspelled. Use a carrot (^) to edit word and phrases and change them to |
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<td>not like the ones that we use today. Use appendix A as a reference. <strong>Elaboration:</strong> Use letter one in appendix C to edit. Have students re-write this letter with corrected spelling (Language that we use today) Have students address the letter back to Peleg.</td>
<td>words and phrases that we use today. Use Appendix A as a reference. <strong>Elaboration:</strong> Answer the following question: What do these letters tell you about the English language at the time of the war?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| EVALUATION/CLOSING | How has language changed since the Civil War? Did Peleg Bradford spell words the same way that you do today? | Give 4 examples (two spelling and two phrases) of how language has changed over time using Bradford’s letters. How do you think language will change 100 years from now? |

**REQUIREMENTS**
This can be adapted to student needs as necessary.

**MATERIALS**
- Appendix A, B, and C
- Highlighter/two different writing materials.

**NOTES**
This lesson can be done using google docs and/or Microsoft word. Adjustments can be made for students as necessary.
Appendix A:

Glossary of Words and Phrases for Peleg Bradford, Jr. Letters

Words
abst- able
advis- advise
afain- again
agoin- going
agos- ago
answer- answer
any time- anytime
batry- battery
battle field- battlefield
beaf- beef
bear- bear
bin, bea- been
blaim- blame
bory- borrow
bottom- bottom
boyes- boys
brake- break
by- buy (August 11th, 1864)
cabbage- cabbage
cant- can’t
climated- to get used to the climate (life), acclimated
cum- come
dam- damn
daves- days
didemt- didn’t
dievels- devils
drawes- drawets
eather- either
eny- any
every thing- everything
fell- fall
field- field
first rate- great
gon- gone
good by, good bye- goodbye
grate- great
harde- hard
hat- hot
heald- held, healed

heaths- healthy
he- hell
hiim- him
hol- whole
kild- killed
knits- rights
lain- lame
messel(s)- measles
meny- many
mines- Mine ball- commonly used bullet in the Civil War
minitute- miniature (a small photograph)
my self- myself
napsack- knapsack
now days- nowadays
offener- more often
opinity- opportunity
our selves- ourselves
out doars, out doors- outdoors
pardner- partner
peace- piece
plasses- places
richmon- Richmond
rifel- rifle
rite, riting- write, writing
roap- rope
rods- measurements of twenty feet
rote- wrote
saim- same
says- says
seen- seen
seige- siege
set- sit (October 6th, 1863)
shal- shall
shone- shined
sickley- sickly
sience- since
sixtee- sixty
solgers- soldiers
som- some

sory- sorry
spearit- spirit
Ston Wal, Stonwall, Stonwall Jackson- Stonewall Jackson
sumers day- summer’s day
theair- there
theas- these
to- too (October 1, 1862)
to day- today
treas- trees
tuff- tough
twords- towards
waid- wade
weak, weaks- week, weeks
wel- well
whare- where
worry- worry
wouldeent- wouldn’t
wright- write

Phrases
that went from Carmel- that came from Carmel
how I get along- how I am doing
paid off yet- paid yet
as black as ever- as indifferent as ever or as blind as ever
long heald* Republicans- *held, Republicans who had stayed with the policies of the Whig party
sack a napsack- carry a knapsack
set we,…on to fight- and leave us to fight
be the means of his life to be taken- I shall be the cause of his death
taken sick- fell ill
take richmon*- *Richmond, to capture the city of Richmond for the Union
to sell us out of the woods- to lure us out of the woods
bug us a peg- could not move us an inch
threw about three hundred shells- shot three hundred shells
I am in hopes- I hope
get along so fast- heal so quickly
hardly dare to be seen- I don’t want to be

seen to my back- to my name
leave it all to you- leave the decision to you
Appendix B:

Dear Mother

Fort De Russey
October 1, 1862

I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know how I get along. I hope theas few lines will find you all well. I have bin sick with the measels and have not got abel to do duty yet. I wrote helen some time ago and have not got any answear ir yet. I have not had but two letters from home since I have bin out here. You ought to wright two to my one.

I want you to send me some money. I have spent all of my money since I have bin sick, and I had to bory some of Van Smith. We have not bin paid off yet and don’t know when we will get any money.

I don’t know of any any thing more to write so good by. Kiss Tat and Cub for me and the little one too.

Write often

From your son,
P. Bradford, Jr.

Dear Father

I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that I am getting a long very well and hope that theas fe lines will find you all well. I have been sick about ten days with the measels, but I am getting very well now. Wen I found out that I was going to have them, I got a pint of whiskey and steaped a pot of pnerial tea and with that and the whiskey drove them out first rate. Gard Ruggles has had quite a hard time with the measels but is getting better. Peat Paterson has bin sick about a month but is getting better. Theair is a grate meny sick ones in the regiment. Ruggles got here last Wensday just as I got dun writing, but I thought I would send it along for I wanted some money, for when eny one is sick had bread and beef is hard stuff to eat. I spent the last money I had for a pint of whiskey when I was sick and got some Van Smith to buy something to eat. I shouldent sent for any money, but he is about out of money himself. John Blake had a letter the other day and he told me that you had bought a horse and waggon. He and I wish I was at home to drive your team this winter. Ruggles told me that you was going to hall bark and logs from him this winter. We expect to move tomorrow or next day but I don’t know whiar we are going to. I don’t know of any more to write now. You must write often. You must write two letters to my one. Write often so good by.

From your son,
Peleg Bradford, Jr.
 Appendix B Continued:  

Fort Ripley, Md.  
May 14th, 1863  

Dear Friend  

It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to inform you that I am well and hope these few lines will find you the same. I had a letter from home and they told me that Hen was married, and I was surprised to hear of it...  

I have not had a letter from Smith for a long time, and I don’t know where he is, but the 2nd Maine will be discharged the first of June, and then he will be at home. I think that if Nancy Hurd has Hen Otis, she will sell herself pretty cheap. Don’t you? Where is Europe this summer, and how does Han get along?  

You tell your father that I like it our here first rate, and my weight is two hundred. We were turned out the other night and was draw into line of battle, and it turned out to be a false alarm, and so we did not have to fight. I think that we have been pretty lucky since we have been out here, for we have not been into a battle yet.  

I have just come in from real col, and it is getting to be about bed time, so I must draw my letter to a close, so good night. Write me as soon as you get this letter.  

Give my respects to your father and mother.  

Yours truly,  
Peleg Bradford, Jr.  

Columbian Hospital  
Washington D.C.  
Nov. 24, 1864  

Dear Friend  

I now take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well and hope these few lines will find you the same.  

I got here night before last. I had a first rate time on the road, and we have had a first rate time here today. We had a tip top dinner, and every thing went lovely. The doctor asked me to day if I wanted my discharge, and you can’t guess what I told him. I did not know what to tell him, but I guess it is all right. Any how I shall know in a few days what is to become of myself.  

I am going down to the City tomorrow, and I am going to have my miniature taken, and I will send it to you if you think enough of it to keep it, and if you don’t, you can send it back.
I should written to you before, but I was pretty well plaid out. I don't think that I shal have my picture taken standing. I don’t think it would look well, do you? Have you seen anything Mrs. David since I left home?

This is a short letter for I cant think of any thing to write. I will tell you more about things next time that I write to you. Did you ever see a horse walk on theair ears? Tell your folks that I am well. What do you think, had a better take my discharge or not? What do you say about it? Give my love to all inquiring friends, and keep a good part of it yourself. Write as often as you can. So good by for this time.

From your old friend,
Peleg Bradford, Jr.
Appendix C: For 4th Grade

Dear Mother

I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know how I get along. I hope these few lines will find you all well. I have been sick with the measles and have not yet been able to do duty yet. I wrote Helen some time ago and have not yet received any answer. I have not had but two letters from home since I have been out here. You ought to write two to my one.

I want you to send me some money. I have spent all of my money since I have been sick, and I had to borrow some from Van Smith. We have not been paid off yet and don't know when we will get any money.

I don't know of any other thing to write, so good by. Kiss Tat and Cub for me and the little one too.

Write often

From your son,

P. Bradford, Jr.

Dear Father

I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that I am getting along very well and hope that these few lines will find you all well. I have been sick about ten days with the measles, but I am getting very well now. When I found out that I was going to have them, I got a pint of whiskey and steeped a pot of pueraria tea and with that and the whiskey drove them out first rate. Gard Ruggles has had quite a hard time with the measles but is getting better. Peet Paterson has been sick about a month but is getting better. There is a great many sick ones in the regiment. Ruggles got here last Wednesday just as I got down writing, but I thought I would send it along for I want some money, for when any one is sick they get bread and beef is hard stuff to eat. I spent the last money I had for a pint of whiskey when I was sick and got some Van Smith to buy something to eat. I shouldn't send for any money, but he is about out of money himself.

John Blake had a letter the other day and he told me that you had bought a horse and wagon. He and I wish I was at home to drive your team this winter. Ruggles told me that you were going to haul bark and logs from him this winter. We expect to move tomorrow or next day but I don't know where we are going to. I don't know of any more to write now. You must write often. You must write two letters to my one. Write often so good by.

From your son,

Peleg Bradford, Jr.
Additional Resources from the National Museum of Civil War Medicine:

- **The Wounding of Peleg Bradford** – Read in detail about Peleg Bradford’s wounding in this blog post
- **List of Civil War Letter Collections** – Look through this list of Civil War letter collections to find other examples of different language