

Name _____

Shared Struggles

Directions: Read the two historical excerpts carefully. Pay attention to the point of view, tone, and details in each person's account. Fill in the comparison chart to identify similarities and differences in their experiences. Answer the reflection questions to show how perspective shapes historical understanding.

Excerpt A: Letter from a Civil War Soldier (Union Army, 1863)

(adapted from period letters for clarity)

"We march endlessly through mud and rain, our boots worn thin and our rations barely enough to keep us strong. Last night, cannon fire shook the ground as if the earth itself were angry. I fight because I must, though my heart longs for home. Every day brings fear, but also pride, knowing we fight for the preservation of our nation. I dream of peace, yet I cannot see how it will come soon. The cost is high—friends fall beside me, and their absence weighs heavily on my soul."

Excerpt B: Diary of a Civilian Woman in Gettysburg (July 1863)

(adapted from historical diaries)

"The thunder of battle filled our town, and smoke darkened the skies above the fields. Families huddled in basements, praying the fighting would not reach their doorsteps. When the soldiers passed, they looked worn, hungry, and broken. I gave bread to one boy who could not be much older than my son. Our homes tremble with every blast, and I wonder if life will ever return to what it once was. War has made even the simplest days heavy with dread."

Reflection Questions

1. How does the soldier's description of war differ from the civilian woman's?
2. What experiences do they share despite their different roles?
3. Why is it important for historians to study both perspectives?
4. How might these two voices together give us a fuller picture of the Civil War?

