



NEW MEXICO HISTORIC SITES

Writing Assignment: A Soldier's Life Editorial (9-12)

Writing Prompt

Imagine that you are a journalist for a large East Coast Newspaper in 1858. You have been assigned to travel to the Western Frontier and report back on what life is like. You find yourself at Fort Stanton and are able to interview some of the soldiers and civilians stationed at the post.

People back on the East Coast are eager to learn more about life on the frontier. Your editorial article should be structured as a five-paragraph essay. The essay must have an introduction paragraph that includes a thesis statement that reflects the role of the U.S. Army in Southern New Mexico and the daily life of those living and serving at Fort Stanton. The main body, three middle paragraphs, of the essay should describe the following topics: pertinent and accurate facts about what you witnessed (See Resources Below), aspects of the army's mission in the 1850's, daily life of a Ft. Stanton soldier, and whether the life of a soldier is a good one. Students shall utilize the following resources to complete the main body of the essay:

- Ft. Stanton's Ranger John Shultz (Video)
- Background Information Provided with this Virtual Lesson Plan
- Lydia Spencer Lane's primary source description of life at Fort Stanton in 1858
- The National Cowboy Museum: *Those Who Served: The US Army on the Frontier*
<https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/explore/served-u-s-army-frontier/>

Finally, a conclusion paragraph should include your opinion about life as a Ft. Stanton soldier in 1858 and what prospective civilians should expect if they are considering joining the U.S. Army at Ft. Stanton in the New Mexico Territory.

Once the assignment is complete, upload your article in the comments section of the Facebook lesson video. Happy writing!

