



Graphic Organizers



Mary Miller, Education Services Director
New York News Publishers Association
50 Colvin Avenue, Suite 102, Albany, NY 12206
518-449-1667, Email: mmiller@nynpa.com

Sponsored by:
New York State United Teachers and the New York Newspapers Foundation

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet

Student Name _____

The History in Historical Fiction

DIRECTIONS: Before reading the story, discuss what you know about life in America leading up to and during the Civil War with one or more students or your entire class and fill in the chart below with what you know. After each chapter, fill in information you learn about life during that era. After you read the story, complete the last frame, explaining what more you want to know.

Know	Learned	Want to Know

FOLLOW-UP: Where can you learn more about life in northern New York during the Civil War? Where can you verify the information the author provides about this time and place?

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter One: The Letter

Student Name _____

Vocabulary – define the following words:

clamber _____

cloak _____

lean-to _____

sexton _____

tart (adjective) _____

wick _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. Why is Betsy coming home late at night? _____

2. Who is the letter on the table from? _____

3. What chore does Betsy have to do? _____

4. What time of year is it? _____

5. What year is it? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. What are some ways the author lets you know when this story takes place? _____

2. Why is she unhappy that her mother was reading the letter? _____

3. Why does Betsy have to pitch hay before she goes to bed at night? _____

4. How do you know that Betsy's mother misses her son? _____

In your own words...

In his letter, Jim wrote several things to try to keep his family from worrying too much about him. Pretend you are Betsy and that Jim can get letters in prison. Write him a letter to try to cheer him up. (Will you call him "Jim" or "Jimmy"?)

In the News

Betsy has an afterschool job helping Mrs. Baxter with her housework and her baby. Look through the classified ads in today's paper for a job that a student could do after school and on weekends to make extra money. Can you find one that sounds like fun? Briefly describe the job and if you think you'll enjoy it or not and why.

Follow up: If you can't find any in today's paper, use your imagination and write a classified ad for a job you think you'd enjoying doing for extra money.

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter Two: The Widow Woman

Student Name _____

Vocabulary – define the following words or phrases:

chimney lamp _____

Edwin Stanton _____

licked _____

pension _____

rebel _____

truck patch _____

widow _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. Why had Betsy not been up on the tower to see into the prison camp? _____

2. How old is Mrs. Baxter? _____

3. Why is Betsy doing chores at Mrs. Baxter’s house? _____

4. What chores did she have to do on this day? _____

5. What can Mrs. Baxter see from her front porch? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. How can you tell that Betsy and Mrs. Baxter have known each other a long time? _____

2. Why did Pa think the South “didn’t know when it was licked”? _____

3. Who are Lincoln and Stanton? _____

4. Why does Betsy think Mrs. Baxter would hate living so close to the prison? _____

In your own words...

Everybody has an idea of what Mrs. Baxter should do, but Mrs. Baxter doesn't want to do any of those things. Imagine that you are in a group of people who start talking about Mrs. Baxter and what they think she should do. Write a brief essay explaining how you would feel or what you would do or say in that conversation?

In the News

Mrs. Baxter tries to make ends meet by growing vegetables and by using sticks as kindling. Look through today's paper for ideas of how a family could save money on things they really, truly need.

Need	Ideas for saving money

Follow up: Share what you've found with a classmate. Brainstorm other ways your family might save money on necessities.

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter Three: News from the South

Student Name _____

Vocabulary – define the following words or phrases:

brakeman _____

bushel _____

damper _____

figures _____

grammar school _____

ledger _____

Sabbath _____

wasted _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. What were Betsy and her mother doing in the kitchen? _____

2. What was Pa doing in the front room? _____

3. What did Mr. Jackson bring to the house? _____

4. What was the good news in the letter? _____

5. What was the bad news in the letter? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. Why did Mrs. Pierce give the Harringtons a bushel of cucumbers? _____

2. Why did Betsy’s father quit working for the railroad company? _____

3. Why did Jimmy have to trade his pocket watch to get the letter mailed? _____

4. Why did Betsy’s parents have to go visit the Stouts? _____

In your own words...

This chapter begins with neighbors helping neighbors: The Pierces and Harringtons give each other milk and vegetables. And it ends with neighbors helping neighbors, as Betsy and her parents let John and Charlie’s parents know the news they’ve had from Andersonville.

Write about a time when you’ve seen neighbors helping neighbors, for happy reasons or for sad ones.

In the News

Betsy is lucky: She gets to go give the Kelleys some very good news about their son. But her parents have a harder task. Reporters also face stories that are fun to write and stories that are very hard to work on. Go through today’s news and find three stories that you’d be happy to write about, and three that you would wish someone else was covering. Record the headline of the examples you find in the space below.

Stories you’d be happy to write about	Stories you’d prefer not to cover

Follow up: Pick your favorite and least favorite story above and briefly explain why you feel the way you do about each.

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter Four: Kindness

Student Name _____

Vocabulary – define the following words or phrases:

amid _____

cambric tea _____

caterwauling _____

regiment _____

Underground Railroad _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. What are Betsy and Mrs. Baxter doing while they talk? _____

2. Why does Mrs. Baxter say Jimmy is “kind and thoughtful”? _____

3. Why did Sgt. Adams want two men to take Caleb back home instead of making him walk home alone? _____

4. What example does Mrs. Baxter give of a detail about her husband’s death that made her happy? _____

5. Who gives Betsy a ride home? _____

6. How does she know him? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. What does it mean to “shell peas”? _____

2. Why is Mrs. Baxter glad that John Kelley is a prisoner of war? _____

3. How does Betsy feel about saying she’ll never be glad until Jimmy comes home? _____

4. Why does the way Betsy feels about the rebels make it hard for her to talk to Mr. Jones? _____

In your own words...

Mrs. Baxter says that even bad news is news and that it's good to know the truth about things, even if they are painful. Do you agree with her? How can you tell when it would help to tell someone the truth and when it probably wouldn't?

In the News

"Even bad news is news," Mrs. Baxter says. Sometimes the news can be frightening or upsetting, but that doesn't mean it isn't helpful. Look through today's paper for a news item that is unpleasant but that might get somebody to help solve an important problem, or persuade someone to make positive changes in their personal life.

Bad news item	How might the story effect positive change?

Follow up: What would readers have to do in order to turn that piece of "bad news" into something helpful?

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter Five: Tunnelers

Student Name _____

Vocabulary – define the following words or phrases:

armory _____

buckboard _____

coffin _____

commotion _____

mounted _____

riddance _____

roll call _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. Why was Ma worried? _____

2. What was Betsy doing when she saw the soldiers? _____

3. How did the teacher say they could find out the facts about the escape? _____

4. How did Betsy find out the facts? _____

5. Why does Betsy hate the rebel soldiers? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. Why does Betsy think it’s best to not argue with Ma about going to Mrs. Baxters? _____

2. Why do Pa and Mr. Jones say it’s probably safe in Elmira now? _____

3. Why does Betsy think Mr. Jones should hate the rebels? _____

4. Why does Mr. Jones say the rebel prisoners aren’t fighting for slavery anymore? _____

5. What comparison makes Mr. Jones think Jimmy will get home? _____

In your own words...

The things we say and the words we use can tell a lot about how we feel. Look at what Ma, Pa, Betsy and John Jones say about the prisoners. Write a brief essay tell how you think each of them feels about the prisoners, using quotes from the story to explain your opinion.

In the News

Betsy's mother is much more worried by the news than Betsy's father. Look in today's paper for a news item that might frighten some people, but not others. Record what you find and your thoughts below.

News Story	
Who might be frightened and why?	Who is calm about this news item and why?

Follow up: Who do you think would be wiser? Why?

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter Six: Counting Eggs

Student Name _____

Vocabulary – define the following words or phrases:

butcher paper _____

cracked corn _____

fleece _____

satchel _____

skein _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. What did Mrs. Prestridge give Mrs. Baxter? _____

2. What does Tommy do while Betsy and Mrs. Baxter wind the yarn into balls? _____

3. What did Betsy have for lunch at school? _____

4. What did Betsy have for breakfast? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. In what order did these things actually happen: A. They roll yarn. B. They have tea with Mrs. Prestridge. C. Betsy gathers the eggs. _____

2. How can you tell that Mrs. Prestridge has known them both for a long time? _____

3. What does it mean when it says Betsy knew ‘that there was no such thing as “too much yarn,” but ... that there was such a thing as “too much charity”’? _____

4. Why does Betsy think that her eggs are not being stolen by a skunk or raccoon? _____

5. How does she know, at the end of the chapter, that the thief is not an animal? _____

In your own words...

There are several examples of good manners being shown here. Mrs. Pritchard says she has “too much wool” and Betsy and Mrs. Baxter pretend to believe her. Then Mrs. Pritchard pretends not to want to stay for tea until Mrs. Baxter asks her more than once. And Betsy thinks that you can’t choke on oatmeal, but she doesn’t say it out loud. Write a brief essay about good manners, using modern examples of how to be polite.

In the News

Mrs. Prestridge brings a generous gift of yarn to Mrs. Baxter, and Mrs. Baxter’s father gives her cracked corn from his farm to feed her chickens. We also know that the church took up a collection to pay Betsy to go help Mrs. Baxter every day after school.

Look in today’s newspaper for examples of how people in a community look out for each other and provide help for those who need it.

Record the issue or problem in the news story and what the community is doing to help.

What’s the Problem	How is Community Helping?	What Can You Do to Help?

Follow up: Now using the third column above, write down a couple of ways you could help either as an individual or a class.

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter Seven: The Egg Thief

Student Name _____

Vocabulary – define the following words or phrases:

corn shocks _____

self-reliance _____

sickly _____

tines _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. Why does Mr. Vanderleese start talking to Betsy about chickens? _____

2. What does he warn Betsy about? _____

3. Where does the conversation between Betsy and Mr. Vanderleese take place? _____

4. What did Betsy find that let her know someone might be in the hay loft? _____

5. What did she pick up as a weapon to defend herself? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. Again in this chapter, we don’t hear about things in the order they happened. Write down the two main actions of this chapter in the order they happened. _____

2. Why does Betsy hope her parents don’t join the conversation at the church? _____

3. Why doesn’t Betsy bring the lantern into the hayloft with her? _____

4. How does Betsy act so that the reb won’t realize she knows he’s there until it’s too late for him to escape or to harm her? _____

In your own words...

Mr. Vanderleese says “Self-reliance is good, but being stubborn, well, now, that’s a fault.” Write a brief essay explaining what he means and giving examples of times when you might have tried to be too self-reliant, and of other times when you asked for help with something you could have done by yourself.

In the News

Betsy acts bravely in confronting the escaped prisoner, but she could have put herself in danger. It might have been wiser to pretend she didn’t notice, then go back to the house and tell her parents.

Look in today’s newspaper for examples of people trying to help in a dangerous situation. Were they acting wisely or not?

Use the chart below to organize what you find in the news.

News Headline	Wise	Unwise	Why did you decide what you did about this action?

Follow up: Select one of the stories above and explain what made the difference between this being a wise decision to respond to a dangerous situation or a foolish one.

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter Eight: A Louisiana Tiger

Student Name _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. Why does the rebel not want to stand up? _____

2. What does Betsy tell him to do? _____

3. How did he hurt his ankle? _____

4. Where is he from? _____

5. What does Betsy do with her dinner? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. Why does Betsy want to see the reb’s ankle? _____

2. What does Betsy think she ought to do? _____

3. What does Seth tell Betsy he’s afraid will happen if he goes back to the prison? _____

4. Why doesn’t Betsy finish her dinner? _____

In your own words...

Imagine that you are Seth and write Betsy a letter asking her to help you escape. What will you tell her to get her to not turn you in to the army or sheriff? Use the things you know about Seth and the things that Betsy has told him about herself.

In the News

Seth talks about his family, telling Betsy that he has a brother near her age, which is another way, besides being a prisoner of war, that he is like Jimmy.

Obituaries tell the story of a person’s life. Find an obituary in today’s paper and look in it for ways that the person was like you, or a member of your family, and ways in which they were different.

Use the chart below to organize the details from the obituary and your own life.

Obituary	Same	Me or Someone in my Family

Follow up: Does seeing the ways that you are alike make you think that, if you had been neighbors, you would have been friendly towards each other? Why or why not?

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet - Chapter Nine: A Decision

Student Name _____

Vocabulary – define the following words or phrases:

breeches _____

endure _____

extended _____

proper _____

wince _____

Facts and Details: Literal Meaning

1. Why does Betsy walk slowly towards Mrs. Baxter’s house? _____

2. What does she ask Mr. Jones about? _____

3. When Seth says he can’t walk, what choice does she give him? _____

4. What does she give him? _____

5. How does she advise him to find his way back to the South? _____

What’s Going On? Reading Comprehension

1. Why does Betsy have to get up her nerve to ask Mr. Jones those questions? _____

2. When Betsy says “Thank you!” what is she thanking Mr. Jones for? _____

3. What does Mrs. Baxter probably think she is thanking him for? _____

4. How does Betsy know how to wrap Seth’s ankle? _____

5. Why did Betsy help Seth escape? _____

In your own words...

What does the last line of the story tell you about how Betsy feels about her decision? Pretend you are Betsy and write a journal entry about it, as if it were that night after Seth has gone.

In the News

Betsy puts things in the sack for Seth that will help him but won't weigh him down: The cup and matches are light, oatmeal is dry, sardines are full of protein and potatoes are filling and nutritious.

Look through the ads in today's paper for five useful things you could carry easily. Record the items you find and the section name and page number where you found it below.

Item	Section/Page #	How is it useful?

Follow up: Now write down how each item is useful in the third column above.

“I Will Come Home” Student Worksheet – Making Connections

Student Name _____

Text to Self, Text and World

DIRECTIONS: What connections can you make to Becky and his story? Use the questions below to guide but not limit your thinking.

TEXT to SELF

Do you know anyone who is like Becky in some way? Have you lived in or visited a place similar to Elmira?

TEXT to TEXT

Have you read about anyone who reminded you of Becky or any of the other characters? Have you read newspapers, books or viewed TV programs or movies about American during the Civil War?

TEXT to WORLD

Does Elmira remind you of your home town? Do events told in the story remind you of current events in your community, state, nation or world?

FOLLOW-UP: Make connections between *I Will Come Home* and your newspaper and between Becky and current events that affect your community, state, nation and world.