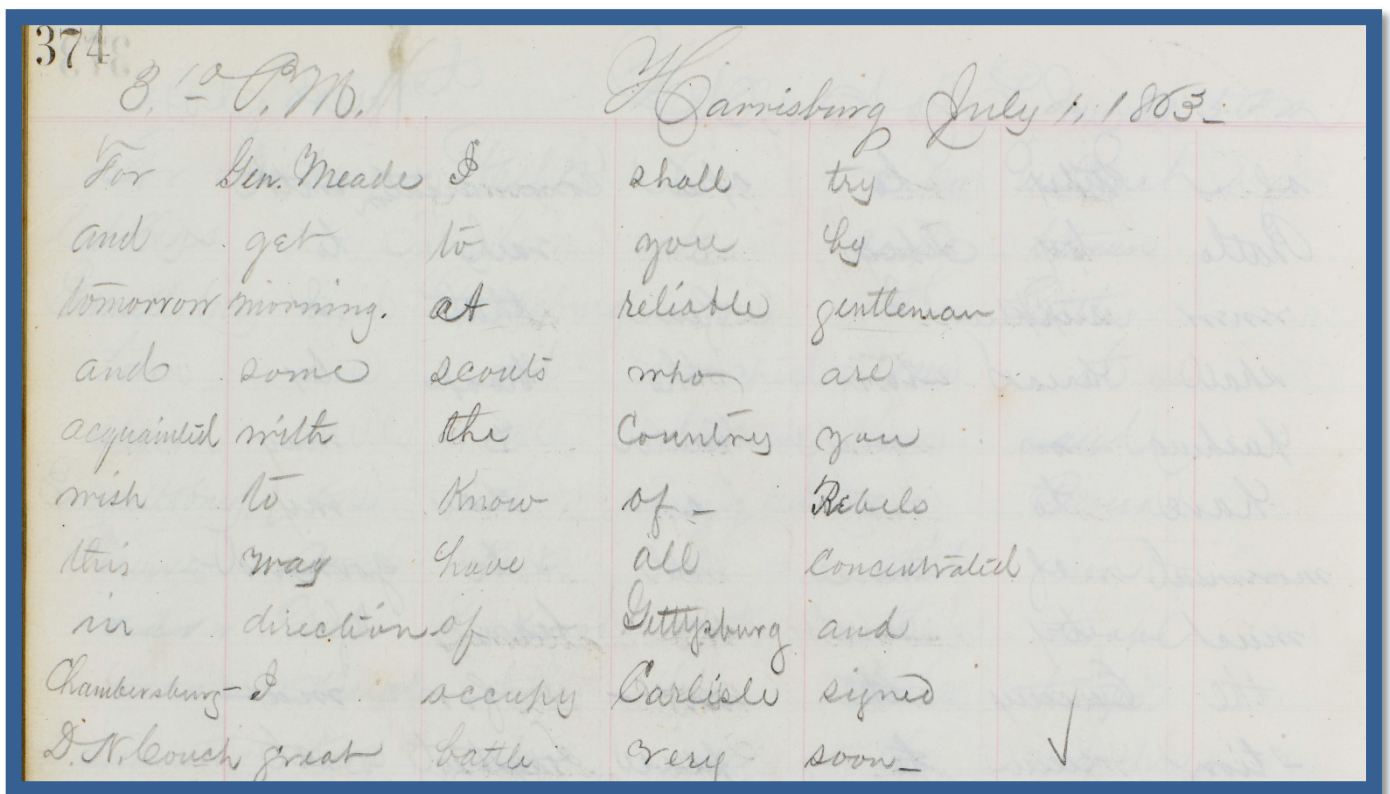


What do telegrams tell us about the Battle of Gettysburg?



Source: Image mssEC_06_399_p397_tel431, Ledger EC 06, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Questions

1. What was communicated about troop movements in telegrams sent during the Battle of Gettysburg?
2. How did telegrams announce battles, victories, and defeats during the Battle of Gettysburg?
3. Other than troop movements and military actions, what information was communicated in telegrams from the Battle of Gettysburg?

9-12 Grade Gettysburg and Civil War Telegrams

What do telegrams tell us about the Battle of Gettysburg?

Inquiry Standard	<p>D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.</p> <p>D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.</p>
Staging the Compelling Question	Analyze the Civil War map from 1861. Discuss battles in various regions and how the communication of battles, victories, and defeats in 1861 compares to how communication regarding war occurs today.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What was communicated about troop movements in telegrams sent during the Battle of Gettysburg?	How did telegrams announce battles, victories, and defeats during the Battle of Gettysburg?	Other than troop movements and military actions, what information was communicated in telegrams from the Battle of Gettysburg?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Using selected telegrams and a map with locations mentioned in those telegrams, list examples of the movement of troops before, during, and after the Battle of Gettysburg.	Create a series of newspaper headlines announcing the military actions described in the telegrams.	Participate in a fishbowl discussion about topics mentioned in the telegrams.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
Source A: Halleck telegram to Meade June 29, 1863 Source B: Couch telegram to Meade, July 1, 1863 Source C: Kelley telegram to Townsend, July 2, 1863 Source D: Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863 Source E: Couch telegram to Meade, July 4, 1863 Source F: Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 4, 1863 Source G: Map of selected troop locations in Battle of Gettysburg	Source A: Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863 Source B: Couch telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863 Source C: Couch telegram to Meade, July 4, 1863 Source D: Kelley telegram to Townsend, July 4, 1863	Source A: Couch telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863 Source B: Couch telegram to Meade, July 3, 1863 Source C: Couch telegram to Ingalls, July 3, 1863 Source D: Meade telegram to Couch, July 3, 1863

Summative Performance Task	<p>ARGUMENT Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, or essay) that discusses how telegrams were used to communicate about activities in the battle using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources, while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p>EXTENSION Using a digital media tool, design an informational visual illustrating the messages communicated via telegram during the Battle of Gettysburg.</p>
Taking Informed Action	<p>UNDERSTAND Identify an ongoing military action or activity in the world. Determine how this action is being communicated to the public and what alternative forms of communication would make a difference in the action.</p> <p>ASSESS Examine the extent to which the military action is communicated and whether the public is getting enough information.</p> <p>ACTION Write an editorial to the local newspaper, on the selected military action, discussing communication tactics and personal beliefs on future communication with the American public.</p>

Inquiry Description

This inquiry provides students with the opportunity to explore the role of telegrams during the Civil War. Students will examine eighteen telegrams to learn more about troop movements, battles, victories, and defeats, as well as other information communicated in telegrams in order to respond to the compelling question, “What do telegrams tell us about the Battle of Gettysburg?” The range of telegrams in this inquiry allows students to examine different perspectives on events related to the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. The final summative assessment asks students to make an argument about how Union military leaders used telegram messages during the battle.

The sources in this inquiry represent the views of majors, generals, soldiers, and political officials. The content in this inquiry is focused on eighteen telegrams from late June to early July in 1863. While working with the selection of telegrams gathered for the inquiry, students will apply historical thinking skills to reconstruct the meanings of historic messages and make inferences about the progress of the Gettysburg battle. Through this process, students gain an understanding of the telegraph communication system and its impact on the historic battle at Gettysburg.

Structure

The initial formative task is centered on telegrams describing troop movement during the battle. To better understand troop movement, students read six telegrams and analyze a map showing the places mentioned in these telegrams. After studying the map, students will list examples of how troops moved before, during, and after the Battle of Gettysburg. The second task provides students with an opportunity to understand how telegrams announced news from battles, particularly military victories. Students examine four telegrams with news from Gettysburg and write newspaper headlines reflecting the tone of each telegram message. The third formative task shifts to an examination of six telegrams that pull in information other than troop movement and the progress of battles during the war. Students will analyze these telegrams and identify topics to participate in a fishbowl discussion about topics discussed in Civil War telegrams.

Staging the Compelling Question

Compelling
Question

What do telegrams tell us about the Battle of Gettysburg?

Staging the compelling question

This inquiry opens with the question, "What do telegrams tell us about the Battle of Gettysburg?" To help students make connections to the topic, teachers may begin by asking students about current events where communication is critical for the success of the activity. If possible, this staging discussion should focus on current military activities. Teachers may keep the following in mind when facilitating the discussion.

- Activities in times of war can be communicated today in many forms (e.g. media, email, telephone, etc.)
- Why is this the case?
- How has communication changed over time?
- Do any students have background knowledge about communication during the Civil War?

Supporting Question 1

Supporting Question	What was communicated about troop movements in telegrams sent during the Battle of Gettysburg?
Formative Performance Task	Using selected telegrams and a map with locations mentioned in those telegrams, list examples of the movement of troops before, during, and after the Battle of Gettysburg.
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source A: Halleck telegram to Meade June 29, 1863• Source B: Couch telegram to Meade, July 1, 1863• Source C: Kelley telegram to Townsend, July 2, 1863• Source D: Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863• Source E: Couch telegram to Meade, July 4, 1863• Source F: Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 4, 1863• Source G: Map of selected troop locations in Battle of Gettysburg
Additional Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telegram Information Graphic Organizer (follows Source G)

The telegraph was used to communicate a lot of information. Perhaps the most important information conveyed was about the movement of troops. President Lincoln and his generals used telegrams to confirm troop locations, both their own and enemy troops, and to order the movement of troops.

This supporting question asks about how troop movement was communicated in telegrams sent and received over a six day period from June 29 to July 4, 1863. Answering this supporting question is a starting place for addressing the larger compelling question, "What do telegrams tell us about the Battle of Gettysburg?"

Formative Performance Task

Completing this task involves making a list using six telegrams that describe specific troop movements connected to the Battle of Gettysburg. These telegrams and the troop movements described within represent just a fraction of the communications and troop movement that occurred in the battle. The telegrams provide a snapshot of the complicated maneuvering and urgency often associated with troop movements.

In order to make a list of these troop movements, a "Telegram Information Graphic Organizer" is provided in the additional materials. This graphic organizer will help students pull information from the telegrams about the subject of those telegrams and troop movements mentioned within. A map with the locations of places mentioned in the telegrams is also provided. Reading the telegram messages and examining the map with the places mentioned in those telegrams will provide students with information they will ultimately need to make their argument about the role of the telegrams in the Battle of Gettysburg.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source A

Halleck telegram to Meade June 29, 1863

Excerpt

* NOTE: The text below has been modified from original text for readability. The original text can be found below the modified text.

Modified text:

Found on dead body of a soldier 4 ½ miles from Glenn Rock. July 3rd. Army Potomac 9 A.M.

For Gen. Halleck

Genl.

Upon assuming command of the army and after carefully considering the position of affairs and the movements of the enemy I have concluded as follows to move today toward Westminster and Emmitsburg. The army is now in motion placing the 1st and 11th Corps at Emmitsburg; the 3rd and 12th Corps at Taneytown; 2nd Corps at Frizzleburg; the 5th Corps at Minor; the 6th Corps at new headquarters; and my Cavalry guarding my flanks and rear.

...

The new headquarters tonight are at Middleburg three miles from Uniontown and thirteen from Westminster there is rail Communication from Baltimore to Westminster

signed G.G. Meade

Original text:

Found on dead body of a soldier 4 ½ miles from Glenn Rock. July 3rd. Army Potomac 9 A.M.

For Gen. Halleck

Genl.

Upon assuming command of the army and after care fully considering the position of affairs and the movements of the enemy I have concluded as follows to move today toward West minster and Emmetsburg and the army is now in motion for that time placing the Corps first and 11th at Emmittsburg two corps 3rd and 12th at Taney town 1st corps 2nd at Frizzleburg 1 corps 5th at Minor 6th corps at New HeadQrs my Cavalry guarding my flanks and rear.

...

A detachment of not more than three thousand to proceed with the property by Canale to Washington and strengthen your forces there against any cavalry raid the remainder to move up and join me. The line to Fredericksburg from Baltimore by rail will necessarily be abandoned while I move for ward I shall include to the right towards the Baltimore and Harris burg road to cover that and draw supplies from there if circumstances permit it.

...

My main P. 383 objective point being of course Lee's army which I am satisfied has all passed on through Hagerstown towards Chambersburg

...

The sections (over) p. 384 Continued of artillery and small force of cavalry sent from here to Baltimore have been ordered to fall back from Poplar Springs and join Genl Pleasant ons force on my right their route having been intercepted by the Enemy's Cavalry I have hastily made up this dispatch to give you the information telegraph Communications having been cut off

...

HeadQrs to night are at Middleburg three miles from Uniontown and thirteen from Westminster there is rail Communication from Baltimore to Westminster

signed G.G. Meade

Source: Images mssEC_06_383_p381_tel416, mssEC_06_384_p382_tel416, mssEC_06_385_p383_tel416, mssEC_06_386_p384_tel416, and mssEC_06_387_p385_tel416; Ledger EC 06, pp. 381-385, telegram 416, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source B

Couch telegram to Meade, July 1, 1863

Excerpt

Harrisburg, PA., July 1, 1863.

General Meade:

I shall try to get to you by to-morrow morning a reliable gentleman and some scouts, who are acquainted with the country you wish to know of. Rebels this way have all concentrated in the direction of Gettysburg and Chambersburg. I occupy Carlisle.

D. N. Couch,

Major-General.

Source: Image mssEC_06_376_p374_tel414, Ledger EC 06, p. 374, telegram 414, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source C

Kelley telegram to Townsend, July 2, 1863

Excerpt

Clarksburg, W. VA.,
July 2, 1863
11 p. m.
(Received 3. 25 a. m. July 3.)

Colonel Townsend,

Assistant Adjutant-General:

Colonel Harris, Tenth [West] Virginia, at Beverly, reported to-day the approach of Colonel [W. L.] Jackson in considerable force. I ordered General Averell to advance from Grafton to his relief. Telegraph to Beverly ceased to work at noon to-day, since which time I am without news from there.

B. F. Kelley,

Brigadier-General.

Source: Image mssEC_06_387_p385_tel418, Ledger EC 06, p. 385, telegram 418, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source D

Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863

Excerpt

**NOTE: The text below has been modified from original text for readability.*

9. 20 A.M. Harrisburg. Pa.
July 3rd 1863
For Edwin M. Stanton

Everything quiet at the front. Captain Boyd supposed to be at Shippensburg... Some cavalry reports the rebels evacuated Chambersburg the night of July first at three o'clock going in the direction of Greenwood and Fayetteville. The rear guards of the rebels passed through Shippensburg rapidly not stopping Lee whose head quarters were near Chambersb'g yesterday. [Lee] is evidently massing his troops in that region to encounter Meade. Heavy firing heard all day at Carlisle from the direction of Gettysburg railroad. Communication opened from here to within one and half miles of Carlisle.
signed L Thomas

Source: Image mssEC_06_388_p386_tel419, Ledger EC 06, p. 386, telegram 419, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source E

Couch telegram to Meade, July 4, 1863

Excerpt

**NOTE: The text below has been modified from original text for readability.*

July 4, 1863. Headquarters Army of the Potomac:

Everything is sent forward, excepting guards to hold in check at [the river crossings]...A corps of 3,000 men can [move across] the Susquehanna at any moment in the present stage of water.

D. N. Couch,
Major-General.

Source: Image mssEC_06_396_p394_tel428, Ledger EC 06, p. 394, telegram 428, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source F

Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 4, 1863

**NOTE: The text below has been modified from original text for readability.*

1 PM Harrisburg

July 4, 1863

Hon. E. M. Stanton
Secretary of War

Judge Kimball who remained at Chambersburg came from there yesterday. He states that Lee has concentrated all his force amounting to not over [75,000], twelve thousand of which is Cavalry, two hundred, [and] pieces of artillery... [With a] depot of supplies at the base of the mountains in the Cumberland valley. There is a belief in the rebel army that Beauregard with forty thousand men is in the vicinity of Manassas. The available force here pushed forward to join Gen Smith on his march from Carlisle. Col Pierce from Bedford County is at Loudon. We are cheered to hear how splendidly Gen. Meade is doing.

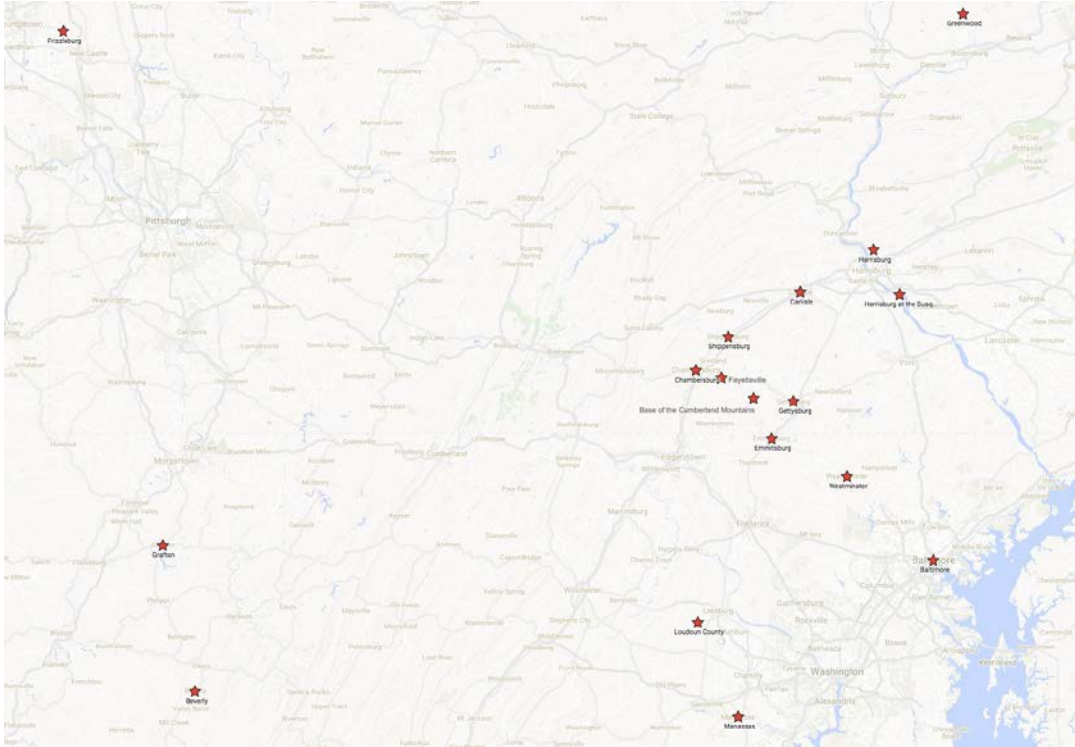
L Thomas
Adjunct-General

Source: Image mssEC_06_397_p395_tel429, Ledger EC 06, p. 395, telegram 429, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source G

Map of selected troop locations in Battle of Gettysburg



Map with the location of places mentioned in 6 telegrams sent and received during the Battle of Gettysburg

Supporting Question 1

Additional Materials	Telegram Information Graphic Organizer
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Performance Task Graphic Organizer

Directions: Fill in the graphic organizer using the telegrams provided (add more rows as needed). Be sure to include the following locations when examining the troop movements; Carlisle, Chambersburg, Gettysburg, Beverly, Grafton, Shippensburg, Greenwood, Fayetteville, Harrisburg, Emmitsburg, Westminster, Manassas, Loudon County, Baltimore, Harrisburg at the Susquehanna River, and Base of Cumberland Mountains. You may use some locations multiple times. Once the graphic organizer is completed answer the question that follows in paragraph form.

Telegram Date	Author and Recipient	Summary of Content	Troop movements described in location

What similarities do you see across the six telegrams?

Supporting Question 2

Supporting Question	How did telegrams announce battles, victories, and defeats during the Battle of Gettysburg?
Formative Performance Task	Create a series of newspaper headlines announcing the military actions described in the telegrams.
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Source A: Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863● Source B: Couch telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863● Source C: Couch telegram to Meade, July 4, 1863● Source D: Kelley telegram to Townsend, July 4, 1863

Descriptions of battles, victories, and defeats are common among this set of four telegrams. The successes and failures of the armies on both sides in the Battle of Gettysburg were, of course, the ultimate measuring stick. During the heat of the battle, military leaders had different approaches to sharing information about the battles. These different approaches are on display in the telegrams. This supporting question asks about the different approaches used to announce events during the Battle of Gettysburg.

Formative Performance Task

A close examination of the four telegrams provided for this formative task will offer a glimpse of how military actions and specifically military victories were communicated through telegrams. For this formative task, students list the military actions and victories described in the four telegrams. They may work with partners or in a group to describe the tone of each telegram and locate supporting details. Students may also work to identify patterns and common language across the set of four telegrams. A whole class discussion may supplement and extend students' thinking. Using all the information compiled, students write a series of newspaper headlines reflecting the information in the telegrams.

Supporting Question 2

Featured Source A

Thomas telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863

Excerpt

HARRISBURG,
July 3, 1863. (Received 3. 45 p. m.)

Honorable E. M. Stanton,
Secretary of War:

General Smith telegraphs from Carlisle that Lee engaged Meade on the 1st at 11 a. m. Lee driven back 2 miles. Action continued on the 2nd until 9 a. m., when Lee, by flag of truce, asked to bury his dead. Firing ceased at that time.

The entire rebel baggage train, with stolen horses, at Cashtown; all the escort of it, even Daniel's brigade of raw troops, sent to the front.

This information from a contraband, recently belonging to General Olds, brought to Carlisle by a scout.

Dispatches from Captain Boyd, who is following the train the General Smith, corroborate what is said about the train. General Couch has ordered an advance up the Valley. Everything going on well here.

L. Thomas,

Adjutant-General.

Source: Image mssEC_06_394_p392_tel424, Ledger EC 06, p. 392, telegram 424, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 2

Featured Source B

Couch telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863

Excerpt

Harrisburg
July 3d 1863
10:00 AM

Edwin M. Stanton

I only know by scouts that at nine A. M. July second Lee sent in flag of truce to bury his dead having been driven by Meade two miles Lee putting forward even his raw troops signed

D.N. Couch

Source: Image mssEC_06_389_p387_tel422, Ledger EC 06, p. 387, telegram 422, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 2

Featured Source C

Couch telegram to Meade, July 4, 1863

Excerpt

Harrisburg
July 4, 1863
12:40 PM

G. G. Meade

The glorious success of the army of the Potomac has electrified all I did not believe the army of the Potomac could be whipped when fought in a body Unquestionably the rebels have fortified the passes in south mountains such information was given me a week ago from Gettysburg signed

D.N. Couch

Source: Image mssEC_06_396_p394_tel427, Ledger EC 06, p. 394, telegram 427, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 2

Featured Source D

Kelley telegram to Townsend, July 4, 1863

Excerpt

CLARKSBURG, W. VA.,
July 4, 1863-9 a.m.
(Received 2. 40 p.m.)

Colonel E. D. Townsend,

Assistant Adjutant-General:

Rumors from Beverly this morning indicated that the enemy was repulsed in his attack of yesterday. A portion of my re-enforcements reached Beverly last evening; balance of the way. Will report so soon as I receive particulars.

B. F. Kelley,

Brigadier-General, Commanding.

Source: Image mssEC_06_398_p396_tel430, Ledger EC 06, p. 396, telegram 430, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 3

Supporting Question	Other than troop movements and military actions, what information was communicated in telegrams from the Battle of Gettysburg?
Formative Performance Task	Participate in a fishbowl discussion about topics mentioned in the telegrams.
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Source A: Couch telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863○ Source B: Couch telegram to Meade, July 3, 1863○ Source C: Couch telegram to Ingalls, July 3, 1863○ Source D: Meade telegram to Couch, July 3, 1863

This supporting question shifts the focus to a more general consideration of topics addressed in telegrams from the Battle of Gettysburg. Building on the analysis conducted in the first two formative tasks, the question asks students to consider topics other than troop movements and announcements about military actions.

Formative Performance Task

Working collaboratively, with a partner or in small groups, students identify and analyze four additional telegrams looking for topics or themes other than troop movements and announcements of military actions. Once these topics mentioned in the telegrams have been identified and analyzed, students participate in a fishbowl discussion or some other form of class discourse.

The discussion should focus carefully on topics and details that will support students as the work toward developing their argument. Questions may include the following.

- 1 - Who and what is discussed in these telegrams?
- 2- What do these telegrams tell us about the details of the Battle of Gettysburg?

Supporting Question 3

Featured Source A

Couch telegram to Stanton, July 3, 1863

Excerpt

Harrisburg, PA.,
July 3, 1863
9. 30 a. m.
(Received 10. 20 a. m.)

Honorable E. M. Stanton:

Jefferson Davis was undoubtedly at Greencastle yesterday.

D. N. Couch, Major-General.

Source: Image mssEC_06_388_p386_tel420, Ledger EC 06, p. 386, telegram 420, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 3

Featured Source B

Couch telegram to Meade, July 3, 1863

Excerpt

Harrisburg,
July 3, 1863
9:45 AM

Genl. Meade Army of Potomac

My scouts inform me that Lee is hurrying everything forward. Troops passed through Green Castle yesterday on the way to Chambersburg. Even his raw troops were pushed forward. Lee has a depot of stolen horses and baggage at Casstown. General Smith is hoping to look after it period is moving this morning.

signed

D.N. Couch

Source: Image mssEC_06_389_p387_tel421, Ledger EC 06, p. 387, telegram 421, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 3

Featured Source C

Couch telegram to Ingalls, July 3, 1863

Excerpt

Harrisburg
July 3 1863
12:00 PM

For Gen R. Ingalls care Genl. Meigs

I hope to have the Cumberland valley railroad in working order to Shippensburg in 3 days. We can also put the Northern Central railroad in order in three days from the time rebels are cleared out north of Gettysburg

signed

D.N. Couch

Source: Image mssEC_06_395_p393_tel425, Ledger EC 06, p. 393, telegram 425, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Supporting Question 3

Featured Source D

Meade telegram to Couch, July 3, 1863

Excerpt

Headquarters Army of the Potomac,
July 3, 1863
8. 30 a. m.

General Couch,
Harrisburg, Pa.:

I presume you are advised of the condition of affairs here by copies of my dispatches to the General-in-Chief. The result of my operations may be the withdrawal of the rebel army. The sound of my guns for these three days, it is taken for granted, is all the additional notice you need to come on. Should the enemy withdraw, by prompt co-operation we might destroy him. Should he overpower me, your return and defense of Harrisburg and the Susquehanna is not at all endangered.

Geo. G. Meade,
Major-General.

Source: Image mssEC_06_395_396_pp393_394_tel426, Ledger 06, p. 393-394, telegram 426, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Summative Performance Task

Compelling Question	What do telegrams tell us about the Battle of Gettysburg?
Argument	Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, or essay) that discusses how telegrams were used to communicate about activities in the battle using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources, while acknowledging competing views.
Extension	Using a digital media tool, design an informational visual illustrating the messages communicated via telegram during the Battle of Gettysburg.

Argument

In this summative performance task, students build an argument to answer the compelling question, “What do telegrams tell us about the Battle of Gettysburg?” Students construct their arguments by discussing the details described in the telegrams and by making inferences about the purposes and impact of telegrams. When creating their arguments, students use specific claims and relevant evidence from the sources, while acknowledging competing views. Students incorporate information from their work on the formative performance tasks. The arguments should include information about troop movement, military actions, and other topics included in telegrams.

Students may begin their argument by focusing on troop movements and referencing the map depicting those troop movements. Then students may describe how military activities, particularly military victories, were communicated through telegrams. Students use details from the telegrams to support their position on how telegrams were used in the battle.

Students may take varying stances in their argument and may emphasize different detail as evidence. Some possible arguments include the following;

- Details about troop movement in telegrams helped the Union stay organized.
- The role of telegrams in detailing military activities was wide-ranging and usually very timely.
- Sometimes the telegrams made a difference in informing victories and defeats, whereas other times it was too little too late.
- Telegrams provided information on a variety of topics (e.g. troop movement, battle details, etc.) during the Civil War.

Students’ claims should include evidence from the three supporting tasks to answer the compelling question. The primary focus of evaluation should be students’ abilities to make claims based on sources supporting their claims.

Extension

In this extension task, students use a digital media tool to create a visual representation of the telegrams featured in this inquiry. The goal is to communicate the main ideas from the argument in new and creative ways. The extension offers students an opportunity to communicate what they learned in this inquiry in other ways and to other people.

Taking Informed Action

Understand	Identify an ongoing military action or activity in the world. Determine how this action is being communicated to the public and what alternative forms of communication would make a difference in the action.
Assess	Examine the extent to which the military action is communicated and whether the public is getting enough information.
Action	Write an editorial to the local newspaper, on the selected military action, discussing communication tactics and personal beliefs on future communication with the American public.

For this inquiry, students work with fifteen telegrams focused on troop movements, military victories, and other topics. Union military leaders relied on the telegraph to gain an advantage over the southern armies. Over time, communication technologies have advanced and changed. Today, communication in times of war might take the form of emails, phone conversations, media broadcasts, etc. This task asks students to dig deeper into the past, present, and future of military communication and propose an appropriate policy for using communication technologies in times of war.

