Topic: Technology Comes to the Wild West – The Telegraph (3 parts)
Interpreting & using primary and secondary sources to understand the history of Fort Davis

Objectives and Standards: Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/

Grade 6
Social Studies
113.22: 1,2, 7, 20, 21,22,23
Language Arts
110.22: 4, 10, 11, 13, 14 15
Tech. Apps
126.12: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10

Grade 7
Social Studies
111.23: 1,5,6,8,9,10,11,19,20, 21,22,23
Language Arts
110.23: 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15
Tech. Apps
126.12: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10

Grade 8
Social Studies
111.24: 1, 6,10,1330,31,32
Language Arts
110.24: 4, 10, 11, 13, 14 15
Tech. Apps
126.12: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10

Materials Needed:
3 Student Activity Handouts
Venn Diagram
PowerPoint (optional)

Lesson Activities:

Historic readings/background information: Have students read and discuss the historic reading about the coming of the telegraph to west Texas and the role of the U.S. Army in its construction. Discuss the use of primary and secondary sources. This can help students validate the information from various sources when researching and writing term papers. It is especially important to make the connection on the need for students to be aware of sources, authors, and other information that they use from the Internet (the 21st-century version of the telegraph).

Activities and Projects: Once the students have read, discussed, and completed the readings and questions, they can transform that information into your choice of several projects:
*Compare and contrast the primary and secondary sources in a paragraph.
*Construct a Venn Diagram to show the likenesses and differences between the 2 passages.
*Create a PowerPoint presentation to tell about the coming of the telegraph to west Texas.
Include pictures or the students' own drawings.
*Create a comic strip that details the story of the establishment of the telegraph on the frontier. The letter from Andrews would provide a sequence of events to make a good comic strip.

Worksheets: Student Activity Handouts—

1. Interpreting Primary Sources
2. Using Primary Sources
3. Comparing and Using Primary and Secondary Sources in "Wired Wild West"

Wrap-up and Assessment: The instructor can use any appropriate means to evaluate student learning. Student activity questions can be used as a grade. The rubric furnished with a previous lesson can be modified to assess this lesson as well.

Answers to Lesson Questions

Worksheet I—Interpreting Primary Sources:
1. Are these Post Returns primary or secondary sources? *primary sources*

2. Who is 2nd Lieutenant George Andrews and where had been? *He was commanding Company I of the 25th Infantry as they built a telegraph line from Fort Davis to El Paso. He was also the son of the fort's commander at the time.*

3. What was the name of his regiment and company? What were the soldiers working on? *His regiment was Company I of the 25th Infantry as they built a telegraph line from Fort Davis to El Paso.*

4. What was the new technology being installed called and what did it do? In what ways might it have changed life for army posts across Texas? *Telegraph lines conveyed messages over long distances.*

5. The telegraph line was being constructed from Fort Davis to_____? *El Paso*

6. Abbreviations in old records are often different from current ones. This makes interpreting the text difficult. What do you think these abbreviations stood for?
Comdg   *Commanding*
Hdqrs or HQ   *Headquarters*
Infy   *Infantry*
Lieut or LT   *Lieutenant*
Capt   *Captain*

7. What do you think "detached service" meant? *working away from the post; not on personal leave*

8. Who was the first officer in the post returns listed as commanding the construction of the Military Telegraph? *Captain John W. French*

9. Would you have liked to be commanding a company of soldiers installing telegraph lines and poles? *Accept appropriate answers*
10. How do you thing the army communicated before the telegraph line was installed? *The army used messengers on horseback to carry hand-written or spoken messages.*

11. What do you think the Fort Davis soldiers of 1878 would think about today's DSL and high speed Internet? Explain. *Accept appropriate answers*

Worksheet II—Using Primary Sources:

What are these Post Returns talking about? *The soldiers from Fort Davis were building the telegraph line between Fort Davis and El Paso.*

Worksheet III—Wired Wild West: Comparing and Using Primary & Secondary Sources
1. What two things indicate that some of this information was taken from primary sources?
quotations and superscript (footnotes)

2. You have read the Post Returns about this event in Fort Davis history. Did the secondary source help you understand the post returns? How? *Accept appropriate answers.*

3. The telegraph was the beginning of a technology that fostered communication throughout the nation. What other communication technology do you think has been developed because of the invention and use of the telegraph? Explain. *Accept appropriate answers (telephone, Internet, FAX, cell phones, satellite communications).*

4. Read the next three pages. They contain a report from Lieutenant Andrews on the details of constructing the telegraph line. Choose one of these as your final project:
    a. Compare and contrast the primary and secondary sources in a paragraph.
    b. Construct a Venn Diagram to show the likenesses and differences between the two passages.
    c. Create a PowerPoint presentation to tell about the coming of the telegraph to west Texas.
      Include pictures or your own drawings.
    d. Create a comic strip that details the story of the establishment of the telegraph on the frontier.
    e. Do a bit of research on the telegraph key pictured. Then write an essay on how the telegraph
      worked and how the messages were relayed. Be sure to list your sources.
Adapt a rubric or use teacher judgment for these projects.