

## Unit 12 - Behind Enemy Lines

### 12A Introduction

The Civil War was full of spies. After all, most people in the Confederacy had friends or family in the North, and most people in the Union had friends in the South. If a spy could get information about the other side's troop movements, it could mean the difference between victory and defeat. These spies risked their lives just like the soldiers. Some of them were women.

One of the most important spies was a woman named Elizabeth Van Lew. She lived in Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy, and she ran a spy ring of twelve people. One of these people was Mary Bowser, an ex-slave who Van Lew had freed. Van Lew was able to get Bowser a job in the house of Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy. In his house, he and his generals discussed strategies, and Bowser would listen. She'd pass the information to Van Lew who passed it on to General Ulysses S. Grant. Without a doubt, Mary Bowser and Elizabeth Van Lew helped the Union win the war.

### 12B Song Lyrics

This is the story of two ladies, one black, the other white,  
Who set up the largest spy ring of the Civil War. Mary and Elizabeth...

Mary Bowser was born a slave,  
Forced to obey her owner every day.  
The slave-owner's daughter didn't share his views,  
Ahead of the times, Elizabeth Van Lew.  
She had a **disposition**, a tendency,  
To be **eccentric**, people called her crazy.  
And when her father lay in his grave,  
She freed Mary from being a slave.  
To improve and **enhance** Mary's life,  
Liz sent her to school where she learned to write.  
After a **stint** at the school, a little bit of time,  
She learned to read and write, line by line.  
To make a comparison or **analogy**,  
She was bright like the stars in the galaxy.  
Then came the **epoch**, or period of time,  
When the Civil War started claiming lives.

*Uh-huh, behind enemy lines,  
Going undercover like you're in disguise.  
Sometimes it feels right when you're telling 'em lies,  
Working as a spy behind enemy lines.*

When Mary got a job in the Confederate White House,  
She and Liz wanted to knock slavery's lights out.  
They were the most important, **principal** spies,  
For the Union behind enemy lines.  
Mary was **articulate** and good with her words,  
But she played dumb, and so she overheard



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The **crucial** and necessary info,  
About what Southern armies would get into.  
The Southern leaders didn't pay no mind,  
Maybe 'cause they figured that she had no mind.  
But she'd discover and **ferret** out facts,  
She **endeavored** and tried to memorize maps.  
She heard about a **cache** or the hiding spot  
Of weapons, that's where they had a lot.  
Then she used her clothesline like a phone line,  
The way she her hung clothes was the code, no lie.  
It **conveyed**, communicated information,  
She must have felt fear and **trepidation**.  
Liz would walk by, see two socks and a vest  
That let her know armies would march to the west.  
Liz **deciphered**, figured out the codes,  
She had a spy who could get in that close.  
These two ladies changed the tide  
Of the war, making moves behind enemy lines.

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## 12C Words Defined

analogy / articulate / cache / convey / crucial / decipher / disposition / eccentric / endeavor / enhance / epoch / ferret / trepidation / stint / principal

Below you'll find each vocabulary word that was used in the song. Each word is followed by the part of speech, a simple definition and a meaningful sentence. Some words will also have synonyms, antonyms and other forms of the word listed.

1. **analogy** (noun) a similarity or comparison between two things

My biology teacher made an *analogy* between the human heart and a pump.  
Other forms: When two things are *analogous* (adj.), they are related in some way.

2. **articulate** (adj) said or expressed clearly, or someone who is capable of clear expression

The principal was looking for *articulate* students to make daily announcements over the school intercom.  
Other forms: *Articulate* can also be a verb meaning "to pronounce clearly," as in: The doctor tried to delicately *articulate* to the parents that their child was terminally ill.

3. **cache** (noun) a secret supply

The burglar never found our *cache* of rare coins hidden in the floor.  
Synonyms: hiding place, stash, stockpile

4. **convey** (verb) to transmit information or transport something

The teachers tried to *convey* to Tyler's parents that he was failing all six of his classes.

5. **crucial** (adj) extremely important or essential

Locating the plane crash site was a *crucial* step in the recovery of the dead passengers.

6. **decipher** (verb) to decode, figure out, or solve

Some investigators have to *decipher* secret codes in notes intentionally left behind by serial killers.  
Antonyms: to scramble, confuse, encode

7. **disposition** (noun) state of mind, mood or spirit

Natalie had not taken a nap and her *disposition* reflected that.

8. **eccentric** (adj) strange; not behaving normally

She was *eccentric* all right; she made her clothes out of grass and hay.  
Other forms: An *eccentric* (noun) is someone who is *eccentric*.

9. **endeavor** (verb) to attempt or try

The chefs constantly *endeavor* to keep the food from spoiling by keeping it in the refrigerator until needed.  
Other forms: *Endeavor* can also be a noun meaning "an attempt or effort," as in: The skydiver made an *endeavor* to land on both legs in the middle of the arena.

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**10. enhance** (verb) to intensify or magnify

The photographer tried to *enhance* the model's natural beauty by adding softer lights around her face and a fan to blow her hair back.

Synonyms: improve, upgrade

Other forms: Bert made an *enhancement* (noun) to his house by adding on a game room loft and another bathroom.

**11. epoch** (noun) a time period marked by distinctive events

The treaty ushered in an *epoch* of peace and goodwill.

Synonyms: time, period, era

**12. ferret** (verb) to discover or search out

Janet is going to try to *ferret* out a candy vending machine in the vegetable canning plant.

Synonyms: extract, unearth, uncover

Other forms: A *ferret* (noun) is "a small, domesticated animal," as in: It is illegal to have a *ferret* as a pet in some states.

**13. trepidation** (noun) fear or alarm

He approached the scene of the car accident with much *trepidation*.

**14. stint** (noun) a period of time spent doing something

Robin did a short *stint* as a lion trainer with the circus.

**15. principal** (adj) of first or highest importance

Vinny's *principal* reason for going back home was to get his baseball glove for practice.

Other forms: *Principal* is also a noun meaning "the head or leader of an organization," especially the leader of a school.

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**12D Fix the Mistake**

analogy / articulate / cache / convey / crucial / decipher / disposition / eccentric / endeavor / enhance / epoch / ferret / trepidation / stint / principal

*Each of the sentences below has a mistake. The wrong vocabulary words have been used, so the sentences don't make sense. Rewrite each sentence using the correct vocabulary word from this unit.*

1. Although she was shy, she was extremely **crucial** when she spoke in front of a group of people.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. I was happy to find my little brother's **epoch** of Halloween candy in the back of his closet.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Frank usually has a sunny **analogy**, but today he looked upset.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Egyptian hieroglyphics can only be **conveyed** by trained archaeologists.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Patti tried to **ferret** her report on bears by typing it and drawing a colorful picture on the cover.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Unbelievably, the opera singer had done a short **trepidation** as a pro boxer.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. The **eccentric** reason for canceling the field trip was a lack of funds, but it was also a hassle to organize.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. I **conveyed** to build a castle in the sand, but the waves soon washed it away.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. To help us understand the inner workings of a cell, our teacher made a clever **cache** between it and our classroom.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. The doctor tried to **enhance** the seriousness of my illness by giving me a book to read on the disease.  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Evil pirates **articulated** out buried treasure from several different places on the island.  
\_\_\_\_\_

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12. The movie marked a new **disposition** in filmmaking: the golden age.

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Dana thought it was **principal** that she tell her boyfriend that her parents were extremely religious and overprotective.

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Vicky approached the roller coaster for the first time with incredible stint.

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Whenever Gerald answered a question correctly in class, he did a(n) decipher dance, which consisted of him twirling rapidly.

\_\_\_\_\_

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**12E Pick the Winner**

analogy / articulate / cache / convey / crucial / decipher / disposition / eccentric / endeavor / enhance / epoch / ferret / trepidation / stint / principal

Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.

1. Diego had a **(disposition OR cache)** of sharpened pencils in his desk.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. I feel extreme **(analogy OR trepidation)** toward spiders because I was bit by a black widow as a child.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Before becoming an actor, Jake did a short **(stint OR endeavor)** as a waiter at a restaurant that was frequented by celebrities.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The student council is hoping to **(enhance OR articulate)** the cafeteria with vending machines, microwaves, and a soft serve ice cream machine.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. It was **(eccentric OR crucial)** that the air traffic controller got a certain number of hours of sleep before reporting to work.  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**12F Draw the Relationships**

analogy / articulate / cache / convey / crucial / decipher / disposition / eccentric / endeavor / enhance / epoch / ferret / trepidation / stint / principal

*In each grouping of eight words below, draw straight lines between the synonyms (words that mean similar things) and squiggly lines between any antonyms (words that mean nearly opposite things). Every word should have at least one line connected to it. Some may have more.*

**1**

analogy	articulate	pronounce clearly	stash
keep in place	cache	convey	comparison

.....

**2**

crucial	decipher	scramble	essential
disposition	normal	eccentric	mood

.....

**3**

attempt	time period	enhance	ferret
endeavor	search for	epoch	make worse

.....

**4**

principal	period of time	relate	convey
trepidation	stint	fright	most important



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## 12G Understanding What You Read

analogy / articulate / cache / convey / crucial / decipher / disposition / eccentric / endeavor / enhance / epoch / ferret / trepidation / stint / principal

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

Mary Bowser felt an overwhelming sense of trepidation as she crept into Jefferson Davis' office. Her breath quickly became heavy and shallow, all at the same time. As a servant in the house of the President of the Confederacy, she knew that if she was caught stealing crucial information, she would most certainly be put to death.

She endeavored to calm herself. After all, this wasn't her first time stealing secrets. She had been doing it for weeks. Already, during her stint at Davis' house, she had been able to convey all kinds of plans - troop movements, supply lists and strategies - to her friend and former owner Elizabeth Van Lew. It was Elizabeth who was taking the secrets and conveying the information to the Union army commanders. Mary thought about Elizabeth and how good she was at spying. The fact that everyone thought she was crazy and eccentric made Elizabeth a great spy. People assumed she was just weird, and left her alone. In fact, people also assumed things about Mary. They assumed she couldn't read and that she was too dumb to understand maps. That's why Jefferson Davis and his generals would leave out important maps and documents where Mary could see them.

Mary ferreted through the office and desk, looking for information that would be helpful to the Union. Searching through the papers in Davis' desk, she wondered if the war would be over soon. She picked up a piece of paper and held it to the light. This was it - the principal piece of strategy she was looking for!

She gasped, and then quickly quieted herself down. She knew she would have to maintain an even disposition if she was going to get out of the house without giving herself away. Mary took a deep breath, rolled the fragile document into her overcoat, and stepped out the door.

### 1. When Mary entered Jefferson Davis' office, she felt

- (A) great
- (B) excited
- (C) scared
- (D) like she was going to be sick

### 2. The Confederate leader would leave crucial documents around the house because

- (A) they were lazy
- (B) they wanted them cleaned up
- (C) they were useless anyway
- (D) they didn't think Mary could understand them

### 3. Mary tries to keep an "even disposition" in order to

- (A) trick Elizabeth
- (B) pretend she was a Confederate general
- (C) not call attention to herself
- (D) not drop the document

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**4. Mary's and Elizabeth's actions could be considered**

- (A) lucky
- (B) boring
- (C) risky
- (D) funny

**5. This passage is an example of**

- (A) mystery
- (B) fantasy
- (C) fiction
- (D) realistic fiction

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## 12H Thinking Creatively

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Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

1. How would you **convey** to a teacher that you disagree with a grade you received?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. If you could leave any message for citizens of the future to find and **decipher**, what would it be?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. If you could divide your life into **epochs**, how many would there be and what would you title them?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Describe a TV show called *Ferretting Out Criminals*.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your **principal** reason for getting an education?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Word Breakdown

As you might have guessed, *principal* comes from the same root as *prince*. A prince is either a non-ruling member of a royal family (who is in line to be king), or is another word for a royal ruler. The word *prince* comes from two interesting Latin roots: *primus* and *capere*. *Primus* means “first” (think of a nice *prime* rib steak or the word *primary*). *Capere* means “to take” (think *capture*). So someone in ancient Rome combined *primus* and *capere* to somehow make *prince*: the “first taker.” Apparently, a *prince* gets to take things first.

The word *principal* comes directly from this idea of “first,” and thus means first in importance. The *principal* at your school is first in importance there, and the *principal* reason you go to school is to learn. Don't confuse *principal* with *principle* “a basic truth,” though the roots are the same.