



Learning with Lincoln Institute

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Going, Going, Gone: Emotions of Slavery

by Karen Murphy



On March 2 and 3, 1859, the largest slave auction in American history was held in Savannah, Georgia. Over 400 slaves were sold from the plantation of Pierce Butler in order to pay his gambling debts. During the sale, torrential rains poured down. When the auction ended, the sun appeared in the sky. The sale became known as “The Weeping Time”. Different viewpoints were held about slavery in the United States. During an interdisciplinary study of the Civil War in social studies class, students will read a book that was written based on a newspaper article available from the Library of Congress. After reading the novel and the primary source, students will illustrate a scene from the book and provide captions for the thoughts of each person at a slave auction.

Overview

- Subject:** Social Studies/U.S. History/ Reading
- Time Required:** One week to read the book plus three 45 minute class sessions
- Grade Range:** 6-8
- Understanding Goal:** Students will understand what the author means when he says “History is not only an accounting of what happened when and where. It includes also the emotional biographies of those on whom history imposed itself...” and multiple perspectives of slavery through the use of historical fiction - make inferences on how various people thought about slavery -visualize what is read and transfer those visions to paper through drawing
- Investigative or Essential Question:** How can students understand the diverse emotions of slavery from reading literature and primary sources?



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Materials

Purpose of Library of Congress Items: The primary source helps students see the historical facts from which the author based his story. The Library of Congress photos illustrate slave auctions to aid students in visualizing an event for historical accuracy

Library of Congress Items: Bibliographical Information attached.



Additional Materials:



Lester, J. (2005). Day of Tears: A Novel in Dialogue. New York: Hyperion



Lester's acceptance speech for Coretta Scott King award <http://www.ala.org/ala/emiert/corettascottkingbookaward/speechesa/cskauthorspeech.htm>



Background information for The Weeping Time www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2918.html



Slave auction with captions <http://school.discovery.com/schooladventures/slavery/witness1b.html>



<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h1562.html>



Illustration Assignment Rubric (attached)



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Required Vocabulary: Abolitionist, auction, master, plantation, overseer, slave quarters

Prior Content Knowledge: In social studies class, students will be learning about slavery and the Civil War. They need to know the beliefs between the North and the South

Technology Skills: Students must be able to insert pictures into Microsoft Word. Using the drawing tool, callouts can be added to the picture and words can be typed inside the callouts. Or The illustrations that the students draw can be scanned, placed on the computer, and callouts can be added to the picture with captions written inside

Standards

Illinois Learning Standards: 1, 1.B, 1.B.3a
2, 2.B, 2.B.3a
16, 16.A, 16.A.3b

For information on specific Illinois Learning Standards go to www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/

Actions

Description of Teacher Actions:

Activating Prior Knowledge or Anticipatory Set

Introduce "The Weeping Time" .

Student Investigative Activities

Students have one week of class time to read the novel. Any reading not completed during class will be done at home.

1. Read aloud the author's acceptance speech to the American Library Association for winning the Coretta Scott King award in 2006. In the speech, Lester recognizes the three historical sources for his book, one of which is available through the Library of Congress website.
2. Discuss differing opinions learned in social studies concerning the institution of slavery: abolitionists, slave owners, slaves, south vs. north.



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3. What viewpoint does the author portray? Lester says that he tried to present all points of view, no matter how despicable their actions were. What does Lester mean when he says "History is not only an accounting of what happened when and where. It includes also the emotional biographies of those on whom history imposed itself"?
1. Divide students into groups that will read two sections of the article "What became of the slaves on Georgia plantations? Great auction sale of slaves, at Savannah, Georgia, March 2d & 3d, 1859. A sequel to Mrs. Kemble's Journal. "
2. Assign students portions of the primary source document written by the newspaper reporter used as the basis for the facts by the author.
3. Distribute copies of the article divided in these sections:
 - Sale Of Slaves.
 - Where The Negroes Came From.
 - How They Were Treated In Savannah.
 - The Sale.
 - Daphney's Baby.
 - Bob And Mary.
 - The Love Story Of Jeffrey And Dorcas.
 - The Market Value Of An Eye.
 - An Unexpected Marriage.
 - The Case Of Joshua's Molly.

Model Learning

1. View dinner illustration and discuss what each person is thinking or saying something with regard to the auction. Explain that they are going to create a similar drawing along with captions based on the book they just read.
2. Act out the chapter titled *The Dining Room* (p18-29) Select five students to be the characters: Master, Mattie (slave cook and housekeeper), slave-seller, Sarah (Master's daughter who deplors slavery), Frances (Master's daughter who supports her father's belief in slavery) think about how each person feels about slavery as characters read the parts.
3. If possible, play sounds of rain falling or storms If you have access to sound effects.
4. Show the class the photo of slaves serving a family in their dining room
5. Create a document with blank callouts or thought bubbles. The Master is sitting at the head of the table just like in the book. What did the Master thinking about slavery? Mattie?



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Sarah? Frances? The slave-seller? Write thoughts into the callouts and share with the class.

1. Have students choose a scene from the book to illustrate.
2. From the reading, students should have an understanding of the emotions involved with slavery from different perspectives.
3. Captions should be added for each person in the image. Share photos that can be shown to help in understanding and visualizing a slave auction when creating their own illustrations.

Best Instructional Practices:

Teaching for Understanding

By creating captions for a diverse group of participants at a slave auction after reading both a novel and the primary source, students show an understanding of the emotional perspectives of slavery from different perspectives.

Differentiated Instruction

Select chapters from the novel that express varying opinions about slavery can be assigned to struggling readers.

Technology Integration

Students use the computer to work with images and word processing.







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Attachments

Library of Congress Resources

Title:			A slave auction at the south
	Collection or Exhibit	Prints and Photographs	
	Media Type:	Sketch	
	URL:	http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/ils:@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a06254)):displayType=1:m856sd=cph:m856sf=3a06254	
Title:			What became of the slaves on a Georgia plantation? Great auction sale of slaves at Savannah, Georgia, March 2d & 3d, 1859. A sequel to Mts. Kemble's Journal
	Collection or Exhibit	Pamphlets from Daniel A.P. Murray Collection, 1818-1907	
	Media Type:	Published Text	
	URL	http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/murray:@field(DOCID+@lit(lcbrmpt2305div1))	
Title:			Slave Auction at Richmond Virginia
	Collection or Exhibit	Prints and Photographs	
	Media Type:	Sketch	
	URL	http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?pp/ils:@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a17645)):displayType=1:m856sd=cph:m856sf=3a17645	
Title:			Family amalgamation among the men-stealers.
	Collection or Exhibit	Prints and Photographs	
	Media Type:	Sketch	
	URL	http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/ils:@fillreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a52182))+@field(COLLID+cph))	



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Rubric for Slave Auction Illustration

Categories	4	3	2	1
The drawing accurately portrays a scene from the book	Illustration is directly related to a scene from the book and enhances understanding of the text	Illustration is directly related to a scene from the book	Illustration is generally related to the scene from the book	Illustration does not clearly represent a scene from the book
Multiple perspectives about slavery are expressed	Three or more different perspectives are included from at least three different characters	Two different perspectives are included from at least two different characters	Only one perspective is included from only one character	Captions have no perspective based on the viewpoints of slavery
Each caption is accurately portrayed for the person making the statement about the slave auction	At least three captions have historically accurate statements	Two captions have historically accurate statements	One caption has a historically accurate statement	None of the captions have historically accurate statements
Appearance and clarity of cartoon	The project reflects a great deal of effort and is visually appealing.	The project reflects effort and is visually appealing.	The project reflects some effort and is somewhat visually appealing.	The project does not reflect much effort or is not visually appealing.



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2006 Coretta Scott King Author Award Speech by Julius Lester

Day of Tears: A Novel in Dialogue

<http://www.ala.org/ala/emiert/corettascottkingbookaward/speechesa/cskauthorspeech.htm>

One question writers are always asked is, "From where do you get your ideas?" The book that would become *Day of Tears* began with a phone call from Garin Thomas, my editor at the time at Jump at the Sun.

She told me about the "weeping time," the name given to the largest slave auction in American history. Over a period of two days more than 400 slaves were sold in Macon, Georgia. It rained torrentially from the moment the auction began and eerily, the rain stopped abruptly the moment the auction ended.

What interested me initially was not writing about the largest slave auction in American history. What spoke to my imagination was the rain and especially what the rain must have sounded like over the course of the two days. The novel began then, not as an idea, but in the incessant, unrelenting sound of rain.

How did I get from a sound to a novel? Well, there were a combination of elements. I am also a photographer, and in a photography magazine I saw a daguerreotype of a slave girl of about 8 or 9 years old holding a white baby of 3 or so years on her lap. When I saw the photograph, I knew I had my main character. I kept the photograph on my desk throughout the writing.

The second element was inherent in the story. The man behind the auction was Pierce Butler. He had been married to Fannie Kemble, the famous English actress. She had published her journal of the brief time she lived on the Butler plantation. Her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* graphically described the horrors of slavery and had an enormous impact on anti-slavery sentiment in England in the mid-19th century.

Research into Kemble's life, Butler's and their children gave me the characters of Butler and especially the two daughters. My research also uncovered a book by one of the daughters, Frances, which was an apologia for slavery.

The third element was a remarkable contemporaneous document I stumbled across somewhere in the nether regions of the Library of Congress website. I don't think I could find my way there again if my life depended on it, but I don't need to. What I found was a reporter's description of the auction with the names of slaves, what they did, their family relations, and many of the tiny details that make an event come alive when one is trying to recreate history on the page.

In writing fiction the central question is always how to tell the story, what is referred to as point of view. Is it best to tell the story in the first person, third person, author omniscient? Having written so much about slavery, I wanted this story to have as much immediacy as possible. If I described how characters looked, what they were wearing, and what the house looked like, etc., etc., I felt that the immediacy would be lost.



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I came back to the way the story was born inside me—sound. I began to wonder if I could tell the story almost entirely through voices.

Henry James described a writer as someone on whom nothing is lost. As I thought about telling the story through voices, I went all the way back to when I was in 7th and 8th grade at Northeast Junior High School in Kansas City, Kansas. I was a member of a voice choir. We did not sing; we recited poetry, but as a chorus broken up into soprano, alto, tenor, and bass speaking voices. The timbres and pitches of our adolescent voices had remained with me.

In addition I drew on the seven years I was a radio personality in New York from 1968–1975. I loved being on the radio because with my voice alone I created images and feelings in listeners. I trusted that even as mere words on the page, readers would hear both the melodious and harsh music of the various voices.

Now, I know many of you think that *Day of Tears* is really a play. Even my editor tried to convince me that it is a play. I am here to tell you that it is not a play. The reason it is not a play is because I do not like plays; I do not go to the theater; and I do not read plays. Therefore, I could not, would not, and cannot write a play. I understand if teachers want students to act it out in the classroom as if it were a play. Well, even though it's not a play, if you want to treat it like one, that's fine, but don't invite me to the performance because I don't like plays.

The other unusual element in the novel is that all of the characters' stories are projected into the future. As I write I try to anticipate every question a child might conceivably ask and answer that question in the story. In writing *Day of Tears* that voice wanted to know what happened to Pierce Butler, the slave auctioneer, and the other characters. And so did I. I risked breaking the narrative flow of the main story by interspersing the stories of what happened to everyone.

I want to thank the members of the Coretta Scott King Award Committee for choosing *Day of Tears* for this award. The Coretta Scott King Award is special because it does not only honor books for their literary merits. Of equal importance are the moral dimensions of a work. I learned what it is to be a moral writer from the work of Edward Lewis Wallant, a young Jewish writer who died much too early. He is best remembered for his novel *The Pawnbroker*. I read all of his novels while I was still a struggling, unpublished writer, and what amazed me about his work was that he never took sides against his characters, even ones whose actions were despicable. The other quality I took from his work was that, more often than people are given credit for, humans triumph over adversity, be it crushing poverty, illnesses teetering over the abyss of death, physical or psychological limitations.

There is a transcendent dimension to the human experience, and it was this belief in a transcendent humanity that characterized the lives and works of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King. It is this belief in a transcendent humanity which the Coretta Scott King awards seek to draw attention in the books these awards honor.

I accept this award on behalf of those whose condition may have been slavery but whose lives, more often than not, transcended their condition. Many of them entrusted their spirits and their stories to me to bring to you.

We thank you.



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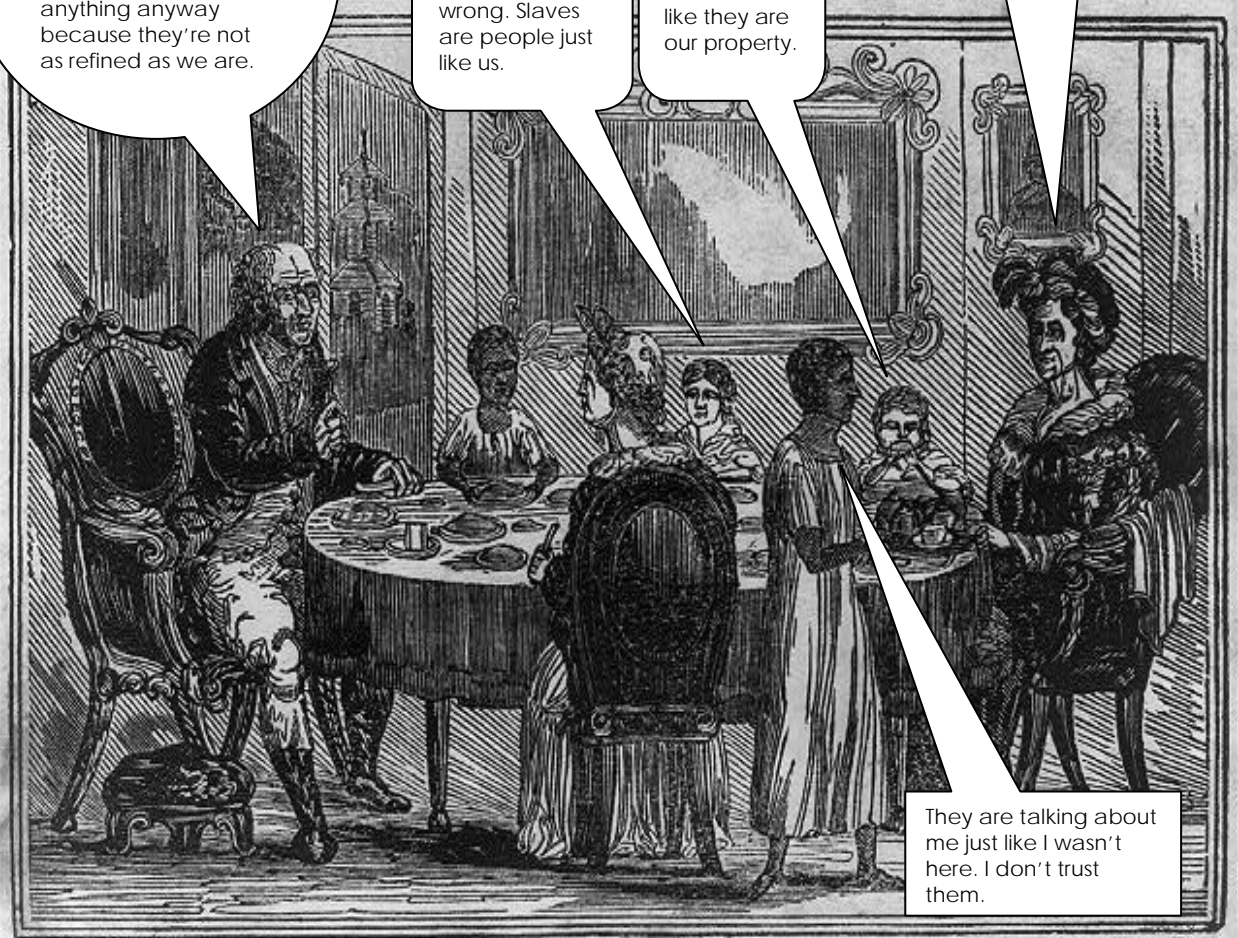
Model Assignment

Selling my slaves is hard to do but I don't want to go to prison to pay my debts. Slaves don't feel anything anyway because they're not as refined as we are.

I think what my father is doing is wrong. Slaves are people just like us.

I want to be just like my father and treat slaves like they are our property.

Slaves are as dumb as mules. Neither one can think. As the slave-seller, I'm going to make lots of money just like when I sell bales of hay and cotton for the farmers.



They are talking about me just like I wasn't here. I don't trust them.

Family Amalgamation among the Men-stealers.

Page 91.