# All Aboard! Escaping Slavery on the Underground Railroad

## Lesson Overview

**Overview:** Students will use critical thinking skills and applications to understand the strains of slavery and the risks associated with escape to freedom via the underground railroad through an in depth primary source analysis. The students will use two primary sources to analyze the escape of a fugitive slave. Students will then apply their knowledge gained to complete related extension activities.

**Grade Range:** 3-5

**Objective:**
After completing the activity, students will be able to:
1. Perform a basic primary source analysis of a historic photograph.
2. Interpret informational text using grade level reading strategies.
3. List some of the risks associated with the Underground Railroad.
4. Apply reading and writing skills within the content area.

**Time Required:** Three class periods of 45 minutes.

**Discipline/Subject:** Social Studies

**Topic/Subject:** African American History, Maps

**Era:** National Expansion and Reform, 1815-1860, Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877

## Standards

**Illinois Learning Standards:**

**Fine Arts:**
27.A-Analyze how the arts function in history, society and everyday life.

**Language Arts:**
1.A-Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
1.C-Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.
3.C-Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.
4.A-Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
5.A-Locate, organize and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
5.B-Students who meet the standard can analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
5.C-Students who meet the standard can apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

**Social Studies:**
16.A-Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation.
16.D-Understand Illinois, United States and world social history.
17.D-Understand the historical significance of geography.
18.B-Understand the roles and interactions of individuals and groups in society.

**Mathematics:**
7.B-Estimate measurements and determine acceptable levels of accuracy.
Materials

Handouts: Extension Activities Packet

Analysis Tools: Put Yourself in the Picture

Books: Barefoot Escape on the Underground Railroad by P.D. Edwards

Library of Congress Items:
Title of Source: Tom-Runaway Slave
URL of Source: http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaeo:@field(DOCID+@lit(o4419))

Title of Source: Reynolds's political map of the United States, designed to exhibit the comparative area of the free and slave states and the territory open to slavery or freedom by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.
Creator of Source: Reynolds, William C.
Date of Creation: 1856
URL of Source: http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/gmd:@field(NUMBER+@band(g3701e+ct000604))

Title of Source: In the Swamp
Creator of Source: Stephens, H.L.
Date of Creation: 1863
URL of Source: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/93505069/

Procedures

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure Step #</th>
<th>Resource or Material Used</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>2. Begin lesson by listing some keywords: Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman, Fredrick Douglass, slavery, Abraham Lincoln, and abolition. Have students discuss what they have already learned.</td>
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<td>4. Display the LOC Reynolds map</td>
<td>LOC items</td>
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Evaluation

Teacher will evaluate students’ understanding through their participation in the oral discussion. The completed analysis form will be assessed for completeness and amount of insight.

Extension

1. Have students pretend they are a runaway slave. They will pick a slave state location from which they have escaped; they will plan their route by sketching a map showing travel from the start to where they will end in a free state. Students will answer these questions:
   - Most slaves ran from 10 to 30 miles a day, if they were healthy and strong. How fast can you walk? Figure out the average miles that you’re going to be able to cover each day.
   - Decide when to travel, day or night.
   - What time of the year will you journey?
   - Will you use a disguise?
   - Where will you stop to rest?
   - What if you can’t swim?
   - What will happen if you get sick?
   - What if you were a child, a pregnant woman, alone, an injured man or an older person? Do these factors make a difference?

2. Create a set of secret codes that could help other slaves on their journey to freedom. Draw and explain the codes. How will they help others?

3. Use the Safe Place worksheet to decide if a house is safe for runaway slaves to stop at.

4. Design a reward poster that could have been made to help find and return slaves to their owners.

5. Think of three to five things you would bring with you as an escaped slave.

6. Pretend you are a runaway slave who has made it to freedom. Write a letter home to family members describing what happened along the way and any troubles you had. Will you try to convince them to escape on the Underground Railroad? Why or why not? Put your letter in an envelope and write your family’s address.

7. Everything about the Underground Railroad had to be a secret so that those escaping and those helping would not be caught. They used code words to help keep everything secretive. Use the Internet to find out information about some of the passengers, conductors, stations and station masters. Use the information you find to fill in the train cars. Cut out the cars and glue them to the tracks.

Author Credits:
M.Will
Carolyn Wenz Elementary
Imagine yourself in the image provided and list three to five phrases describing what you see, hear, taste, touch, and smell.

**Sight**
What do you see? People? Words? Buildings? Animals? Interesting Items? Do these things give you clues about this time and place?
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

**Sound**
Sounds can indicate something good, bad, or sad.
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

**Taste**
What do you taste? Are things edible or is there “something in the air”?
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

**Touch**
How and what do you feel? What is the environment like? Hot? Cold? Wet? Are there “things” that you can touch? What do they feel like?
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

**Smell**
What smells are around you? City or rural scents? People? Animals? Businesses? Do they make you think of something good or bad?
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
$150 REWARD.

RANAWAY from the subscriber, on the night of Monday the 11th July, a negro man named TOM,

about 30 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high; of dark color; heavy in the chest; several of his jaw teeth out; and upon his body are several old marks of the whip, one of them straight down the back. He took with him a quantity of clothing, and several hats.

A reward of $150 will be paid for his apprehension and security, if taken out of the State of Kentucky; $100 if taken in any county bordering on the Ohio river; $50 if taken in any of the interior counties except Fayette; or $20 if taken in the latter county.

july 12-84-tf

B. L. BOSTON.
## Secret Slave Codes

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Drawings</th>
<th>Explanations</th>
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"A friend with friends."
Is this a safe place?
How will you test the safety of the house?

What happened?
How did you feel?
Timeline of Escape

Starting location: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Ending location: __________________________ Date: ________________
All Aboard!
Escape on the
Underground Railroad

Stations
All Aboard! Escaping Slavery on the Underground Railroad
All Aboard! Escaping Slavery on the Underground Railroad
**Use the information you find to fill in each box. Cut it out and glue to the back of the matching train car.**

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<th>What it means:</th>
<th>People or places famous for this role:</th>
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The United States in 1850

[Map of the United States in 1850, highlighting the Unorganized Territory in the Midwest]
## Slave Escape Plan

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<th>When will you travel?</th>
<th>What season will be best to begin the trip?</th>
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<th>How will you travel?</th>
<th>Where will you sleep or rest?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>How fast can you walk or run?</th>
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<td>How far can you make it in one day? _____ miles</td>
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<th>Will you use a disguise?</th>
<th>What will you eat?</th>
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<tr>
<th>If so what will it be?</th>
<th>Where will you find food?</th>
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