All Aboard! Escaping Slavery on the Underground Railroad
by Monica Will

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.

Overview

Objectives: After completing the activity, students will be able to:
- Perform a basic primary source analysis of a historic photograph
- Interpret informational text using grade level reading strategies
- List some of the risks associated with the underground railroad
- Describe what slave owners did to aid in the return of their slaves
- Apply reading and writing skills within the content area

Understanding Goal: Slavery was something that once divided our country. All too often the slaves were treated in bad ways and dreamed of being free. Many of the people that lived as slaves would often risk their lives to gain freedom no matter what it took. The Underground Railroad helped many slaves escape to freedom.

Investigative Question: What challenges and risks did runaway slaves face as they traveled along the Underground Railroad? How did the Underground Railroad help these fugitives escape?

Time Required: Three class sessions

Grade Level: 3 - 5
**Topic:** African American History, Maps

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

**Illinois Learning Standards:**
- Fine Arts: 27A
- Language Arts: 1A, 1C, 3C, 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 5C
- Social Studies: 16A, 16D, 17D, 18B
- Math: 6C, 7B

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

---

### Preparation

**Background for Lesson:**

- **Title:** Pre Civil War African American Slavery
  - **URL:** [http://www.memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/expref/slavery/slavery.html](http://www.memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/expref/slavery/slavery.html)
  - **Description:** Overview of slavery from 1815-1880 including document links.

- **Title:** Teacher Resources-Collection-From Slavery to Freedom, 1822-1909
  - **URL:** [http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/collections/slavery/](http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/collections/slavery/)
  - **Description:** Background information for teachers including links for critical thinking activities and arts and humanities integration.

---

### Library of Congress Items:

**Title:** Tom-Runaway Slave
- **Collection or Exhibit:** The African-American Experience In Ohio 1850-1920
- **Media Type:** Image
- **URL:** [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaeo:@field(DOCID+@lit(o4419))](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaeo:@field(DOCID+@lit(o4419)))

**Title:** Reynolds's political map of the United States
- **Collection or Exhibit:** American Memory Maps Collection
- **Media Type:** Map
- **URL:** [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query)

**Title:** In the Swamp
- **Collection or Exhibit:** Prints and Photographs
- **Media Type:** Image
- **URL:** [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/ils@fileq(@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a29269))+@field(COLLID+cph))](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/ils@fileq(@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a29269))+@field(COLLID+cph)))
Additional Materials:


“In the Swamp” primary source. One copy for each student

Picture Reflection Form (Put Yourself in the Picture) One copy for each student

Poster board
Index cards
Handkerchiefs
Art supplies (markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.)
Projector and a computer with Microsoft Power Point

Description of Teacher Actions:

This lesson will follow a textbook lesson that introduces the concept of slavery and gives an introduction to the Underground Railroad including the importance of Harriet Tubman in helping the slaves from the south escape to freedom.

Activate Prior Knowledge

- Begin the lesson by listing some key words from the previous lesson on the board including: Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman, Fredrick Douglass, slavery, Abraham Lincoln, and abolition. Have the students discuss what they have already learned.
- Also display the map of the United States from 1856.
- Review and discuss the problems that were facing the country at the time.
As a means of providing more background information about the Underground Railroad read p. 7-11 from the book ...If you traveled on the Underground Railroad.
With the help of these pages, be sure that students clearly understand that the Underground Railroad was not underground and was not actually a railroad. Instead it was a secret method of traveling to freedom in the North.

Model Learning
1. Read aloud the story from the book Barefoot to the students.
2. After reading tell students that this is a fictional story about a fugitive slaves escape route, but what he experienced is true of what many slaves felt on their path to freedom.
3. Discuss the time of day when he traveled and how the animals in the woods “helped” him.
4. Discuss some of the things that this fugitive may be feeling, seeing, hearing, etc on the trip.
5. Also talk with the students about how the young man knew it was safe to approach the house.

Student Investigation
1. Discuss what a primary source is and how they help us understand history.
2. Show the students the primary source “In The Swamp” uncovering it little by little. Ask students to note the things that they see as each part is revealed.
3. Hand out a copy of the Picture Reflection Form (Put Yourself in the Picture) to each student.
4. Have students fill in the form using their sensory perceptions.
5. After all students have had a chance to finish, discuss their answers.
6. Then show the reward poster and read through it together.
7. Ask students some of the following questions:
   a. Describe this document.
   b. What message is being sent?
   c. How does this poster make you feel?
   d. Does anything surprise you?
   e. Who do you think made this and why?
   f. What does the creator of the poster hope that people who see the poster will do?
   g. What can you learn from this poster/advertisement?

Wrap up/application of ideas
1. Ask students to summarize what they learned today and why it is important. Review the lesson objectives with the students.
2. Reteach or clarify if needed.
3. Follow up the lesson by having students complete two of the extension activities and use their work to assess their understanding.
Effective Practices:

1. Differentiated instruction through the use of a variety of extension activities that the students have a chance to choose from.
2. Promoting critical thinking through the use of the primary sources photograph analysis form, class discussions, and extension activities.
3. Literacy integration in the reading of the book aloud to the students and their own reading with making connections to the reward poster.
4. Technology integration through the use of the internet and or word processing tools for completing the extension activities.

Extension Ideas:

(choose 2 of the 6 to complete) Some extensions will be more challenging. The students will be able to choose their 2 extension activities but help them choose those that are at their level.

1. Escape route
   - Materials needed: timeline, slave escape plan, and United States in 1850 map
   - Pretend that you’re a runaway slave. Now pick a slave state location from which you have just escaped (slave states were the southern states). Plan your route; sketch a map showing your travel from the start to where you will end and be free. Make a timeline of your trip.
   - Things to remember:
     - 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 you will travel, day or night. How could you follow the route if you travel at night? Remember that if you’re going to have to walk at night, you will probably slow down a bit.
     - 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. Secret Codes
   - Materials needed: secret slave codes worksheet
   - 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? Use the book If you traveled on the Underground Railroad book to see examples of some codes they used.
3. Is This A Safe Place?
- Materials needed: Is this a safe place worksheet
- The past couple nights you have been traveling and it has not been easy. You've come to a house with a lantern hanging outside, but how do you know for sure that this house is safe? It might be a trap. Decide what you're going to do to test the safety of the house. Then write a journal entry about what happened and how you felt.

4. Reward poster
- Materials needed: reward poster planning sheet, poster board, art supplies
- Design a reward poster that could have been made to help find and return you to your owners after your escape. (Think of the poster for Tom that we looked at together if you need help or an example) Be sure to include a physical description and the amount of money to be paid to those who found you.

5. Packing only the necessities.
- Materials needed: handkerchief, dowel rod or stick, index cards
- When slaves escaped, they had a long and dangerous journey ahead of them. Often they did not know where their path would lead them. They had to carry everything with them. Think of 3-5 things you would bring with you. Pack your items (or drawings of them) in a handkerchief and include your reasons for bringing each on an index card.

6. Imagine you are a runaway.
- Materials Needed: loose leaf paper and an envelope
- You have reached your destination and freedom by using the Underground Railroad. 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. Passengers, Conductors, Stations, and Station Masters everyone is important
- Materials needed: information train pages, use of the computer
- 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.
Evaluation

Teacher will evaluate students’ understanding through their participation in the oral discussion. The completed picture reflection form will be assessed for completeness and amount of insight. Students will also be evaluated on their work done using two of the extension activities to apply the things they learned during the lesson and in the previous lesson from the book.
PowerPoint Slides

Slide 1:

ALL ABOARD!
ESCAPING SLAVERY ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Slide 2:

Slide 3:

What is a primary source?
• Primary sources are original records or items that have survived from the past.
• They were a part of an actual personal experience of a person or an event.
• Primary sources help us understand history by helping us see what it was like to live at that time.

Information taken from: http://memory.loc.gov/learn/start/prim_sources.html

Slide 4:

Some types of primary sources include:
• Diaries
• Speeches
• Letters
• Interviews
• News film footage
• Autobiographies
• Official records
• Photographs
• Poetry
• Novels
• Music
• Art
• Pottery
• Furniture
• Clothing
• Buildings

Slide 5:

What do you think this is a picture of?
What colors do you see?
Where might the things in this picture be found?

Slide 6:

What do you see?
Who do you think this is?
How do you think he feels?
Slide 7

What is he wearing?

What do you think he is looking at?

Why do you think he is scrunched down?

Slide 8

Now what do you see?

What do you think they are doing in this picture?

Slide 9

What is happening in the picture?

Does the title give you any more information?

When and why do you think this was made?

How does this picture make you feel?

Slide 10

Slide 11

$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 jaws toothed; 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 hays.

A reward of $150 will be paid for his apprehension and delivery, 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, 1844.

R. L. BOSTON.

Slide 12

What did you learn today?

How did the primary sources help us learn about the underground railroad?
IN THE SWAMP.
Imagine yourself in the image provided and list three to five phrases describing what you see, hear, taste, touch, and smell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sight</strong></th>
<th>What do you see? People? Words? Buildings? Animals? Interesting items? Do these things give you clues about this time and place?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sound</strong></th>
<th>What do you hear? People? Animals? Nature? Sounds from inside or outside of buildings? Sounds can indicate something good, bad, or sad.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Taste</strong></th>
<th>What do you taste? Are things edible or is there “something in the air”?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Touch</strong></th>
<th>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?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Smell</strong></th>
<th>What smells are around you? City or rural scents? People? Animals? Businesses? Do they make you think of something good or bad?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drawings</th>
<th>Explanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

"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
Use the information you find to fill in each box. Cut it out and glue to the back of the matching train car.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What it means:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People or places famous for this role:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What it means:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People or places famous for this role:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What it means:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People or places famous for this role:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Slave Escape Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When will you travel?</th>
<th>What season will be best to begin the trip?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Moon and Stars" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Four Seasons" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will you travel?</th>
<th>Where will you sleep or rest?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Bed" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How fast can you walk or run?</th>
<th>How far can you make it in one day? _____ miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Footprints" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Will you use a disguise?</th>
<th>What will you eat?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If so what will it be?</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Bowl" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where will you find food?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>