



Who Were Abolitionists?

History Theme Alignment: Values Beliefs, Ideas and Institutions

History Benchmark Alignment:

- Describe major factors that characterize Civil War and Reconstruction
- Identify and describe how individuals in history demonstrated good character and personal virtue.

Prior Knowledge: This lesson is appropriate after initial readings and preliminary discussion of slavery and abolitionism.

Purpose: To develop and elaborate the concept of Abolitionists by reasoning out the critical attributes of abolitionist behavior and beliefs.

Procedure to Develop Concept: Make a T chart on the board. Label one column "Yes Examples" and the other "No Examples". Do not put a title on the chart. The teacher will provide students with a list of behaviors and beliefs and explain that students are to categorize these. The students are to decide if the behavior is a yes example or a non-example. They should arrive at the title as they place behaviors in the columns. Place a few of the behaviors on each side to establish a pattern for students.

Implementation Choices:

Teacher Guided: Provide examples one by one and choose which column together as a class.

Pairs: combine and mix up the yes and no examples into a single list. Provide the list of examples to each team and have teams decide how to categorize each item.

Yes Examples

- Provide shelter for run away slaves
- Learn secret handshakes and signs
- Members of the religious society of friends
- Provide clothing and food
- Write articles about the wrongs of slavery
- Organize and meetings to protest slavery
- March in protest of slavery
- Sometimes went to jail for their anti-slavery beliefs
- May have been threatened or beaten because of their anti-slavery beliefs
- Believe humans have no right to own another human.

No Examples

- Mind own business and keep quiet.
- Think of slaves as property not people
- Believed in the plantation system as important cultural and economic system.
- Help neighbors round up slaves who try to escape.
- Punish slaves who do not obey masters.

- Write articles in defense of slavery.

Key Questions:

- What are the similarities in yes examples? These are probable or possible characteristics of people who were abolitionists.
- How do they differ from the no examples? They show actions that reflect belief that slavery is wrong. The “No” examples show actions that reflect a belief that slavery is not wrong.
- What should the title of this chart be? Who are Abolitionists? What Characterizes Abolitionists, etc.
- What critical attributes/What is the big idea of who abolitionists are? Abolitionists expressed their beliefs about the wrongs of slavery in very diverse ways yet they are all examples of the same belief in human freedom from slavery for African Americans.

Independent Activity Elaboration of Concept: Make a list of all the ways the abolition movement might be like a bakery. Then write or draw an extended metaphor to show how the two can be compared. Teacher Note: This is a transformation skill requiring creative and logical higher order thinking for learners.

Reflection: An appropriate closure could involve the teacher repeating some of the listed items. Students signal their understanding with their thumbs. Thumbs up to signify an example of an action or belief of an abolitionist, thumbs down to signify a non-example of an abolitionist, or thumbs sideways if the student is unsure. This will be a quick understanding check for the teacher to see if students really have mastered the concept of abolitionist.