



Slavery: The Underground Railroad

A Lesson Plan for Middle & High School Students

Objectives

1. Students will research the resistance to and abolition of slavery in the United States.
2. Students will learn the Underground Railroad comprised of people in the United States and Canada who assisted slaves in escaping to freedom.
3. Students will read the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and learn how it affected the operation of the Underground Railroad.
4. Students will examine the tragic story of fugitive slave Margaret Garner and will draw critical conclusions about Margaret Garner's actions based on the host of information that they have gathered in this unit.

Social Studies Benchmarks

Middle School	SOC.I.1.MS.1	SOC.I.2.MS.4	SOC.V.3.MS.1
High School	SOC.I.1.HS.3	SOC.I.2.HS.2	SOC.V.3.HS.1

Vocabulary

Fugitive Slave Law of 1850	Rebellion	Abolition	Abolitionists
Freedmen	Routes	Michigan	Detroit
St. Clair River	Ohio River	Canada	Quakers
Laura Haviland	Levi Coffin	Harriet Tubman	John Mason
John Brown	Frederick Douglass	Secret Codes	entry ports
Josiah Henson	J. W. Lougen		
underground:	secret, hidden		
railroad:	powerful escape route transporting refugees and to freedom		
lines:	routes from safe-house to safe-house		
stations:	stopping places		
conductors:	people who aided fugitive enslaved Africans		
packages/freight:	fugitive slaves		

Day 1

Materials

- Vocabulary List
- Overhead Transparencies or Poster Boards

Procedures

1. Begin this lesson by stating the Michigan Opera Theatre is going to present an opera based on the life of Margaret Garner. It's scheduled to premiere at the Detroit Opera House in May, 2005 with mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves singing the title role. Margaret Garner's story is COMPLEX, COMPELLING, AND CONTROVERSIAL. Margaret Garner was born into slavery, suffered as a slave, escaped, and became a fugitive. This unit will focus on enslaved Africans who fled their masters through various means – mainly the Underground Railroad. This unit will give insight on Margaret Garner's view on slavery and her desperation to not want her family to experience it further.
<http://www.ecesc.k12.in.us/currweb/student5/KWL%20charts.html>
http://www.freep.com/entertainment/newsandreviews/mot20_20030220.htm
2. Divide students into groups and provide them a list of vocabulary terms to define, using web quest and other resources.
 Option: Print and place some articles on overhead transparencies for whole group activities.
3. Permit time for students to record their findings using overhead transparencies or poster boards while their classmates take notes.

Web Quest

Fugitive Slave Law

http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/blfugitive_slave_law.htm

“Famous Abolitionists Frequently Asked Questions”

http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212661/id27_m.htm

Underground Railroad Codes

<http://www.beavton.k12.or.us/greenway/leahy/ugrr/code.htm>

Underground Railroad Codes & Phrases

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/Units/lsDevon/DFormSS/UGRRcodes.htm>

Underground Railroad Codes

<http://www.njournalnews.com/blackhistory/codewords.html>

“Underground Railroad Words”

<http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212661/id39.htm>

Glossary of Underground Railroad Terms

<http://www.osblackhistory.com/glossary.php>

Day 2

Materials

- Map of the United States
- Web Quest

Procedures

1. Map and discuss the Underground Railroad routes.

Underground Railroad Routes

<http://education.ucdavis.edu/NEW/STC/lesson/socstud/railroad/Map.htm>

The Michigan Connection

<http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/museum/explore/museums/hismus/prehist/civilwar/undergro.html>

2. Discuss important roles Detroit and Canada played in the Underground Railroad.

The Detroit-Canada Connection

<http://www.living-library.com/FreedomTour/NABHistMus.html>

Entry Points to Canada

<http://www.osblackhistory.com/routes.php>

3. Discuss the Underground Railroad secret codes, paying close attention to Detroit's contribution.

“Courage, secret codes kept clandestine railroad on track”

http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/blfugitive_slave_law.htm

4. Using, vocabulary terms, explain in great detail the operation of the Underground Railroad, its conductors, the routes used, and secret codes.

Day 3

Materials

- Fugitive Slave Law of 1850
http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/blfugitive_slave_law.htm
- “Famous Abolitionists Frequently Asked Questions”
http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212661/id27_m.htm
- Core Democratic Values
- MEAP Rubric
<http://www.meritaward.state.mi.us/mma/socialstudies/SS-Model-8.pdf> (Refer to page 61.)

Procedures

1. Examine and analyze the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.
2. Identify famous abolitionists and their roles with the Underground Railroad.
3. Respond to the following prompt.

“People who offered their homes to escaping slaves broke the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Do you think that they were right to break this law? Why or why not? Use Core Democratic Values to support your position. Why would they risk their lives to help slaves?”

4. Why would slaves risk punishment to pursue freedom?
5. Research fugitive slave Margaret Garner. What led Margaret Garner to the desperate act of slaughtering her child?

“A Remnant of Slavery's Horror” (Margaret Garner)

http://www.enquirer.com/editions/1998/10/02/loc_slave02.html

“Excerpts from Slave Narratives – Chapter 37” (Margaret Garner)
<http://www.vgskole.net/prosjekt/slavrute/37.htm>

“Two Garner Stories: A Note on Margaret & Sethe in and out of History & Toni Morrison’s Beloved” (Margaret Garner)
<http://www.luminarium.org/contemporary/tonimorrison/muckley.htm>

Unit Evaluation

Students will write a detailed comprehensive 4 – 5 paragraph MEAP format essay with the following criteria: introduction, position statement, Core Democratic Values to support the position statement, supporting knowledge (from history, geography, civics, or economics), and a conclusion using a **WRITING PROMPT**.

Public Policy Issue Writing Prompt:
“Should tax dollars be used to construct a museum honoring Margaret? Garner in Cincinnati, Ohio? Use Core Democratic Values and data you have collected to support your position.”

Suggested Nonfiction

- ✓ The Underground Railroad by Raymond Bial
- ✓ Get on Board – The Story of the Underground Railroad by Jim Haskins
- ✓ Bound for the North Star: True Stories of Fugitive Slaves by Dennis B. Fradin
- ✓ Modern Medea: A Family Story of Slavery & Child Murder from the Old South by Steven Weisenburger

Suggested Historical Fiction

- ✓ Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stow
- ✓ Escape from Slavery by Doreen Rappaport
- ✓ North by Night by Katherine Ayrnes
- ✓ The Borning Room by Paul. Fleischman
- ✓ The House of Dies Drear by Virginia. Hamilton

Suggested Videos

- ✓ *Race to Freedom: The Story of the Underground Railroad* (Video)
- ✓ *Roots of Resistance – A Story of the Underground Railroad: The American Existence* (Video)

Extended Activities

1. Play old negro spirituals during each lesson to set the mood for this unit.
2. Become a slave in this interactive on-line activity.
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/99/railroad/>
3. Create literature circles to discuss and compare novels about the Underground Railroad.
4. Create a map, coloring book, comic strip, collage, painting, etc. on the Underground Railroad.
5. Write a song, poem, short story, book report, book report, research article, etc. on the Underground Railroad.

6. Do a characterization or dramatization about the Underground Railroad.

Web Quest

“Early Anti Slavery”

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/NR/travel/underground/antislav.htm>

“Famous Abolitionists Frequently Asked Questions”

http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212661/id27_m.htm

“Operating the Underground Railroad”

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/NR/travel/underground/opugrr.htm>

“Slave Rescue Quest - An Inquiry-based Project About the Institution of Slaves”

<http://www.myprojctpages.com/project.asp?id=437>