

Theme: The Underground Railroad and the Fugitive Slave Act

Grade 5

Estimated Duration: 5 days

Objectives:

- Students will understand the hardships that slaves endured.
- Students will identify reasons slaves escaped as well as risks involved in escaping, including risks to the abolitionists who assisted slaves escape.
- Students will understand the Fugitive Slave Act and the significance of it, especially as it relates to the Underground Railroad.
- Students will understand that quilts, songs, and coded signals were used as a means of communication with each other.
- Students will investigate, through children’s literature, basic themes related to the Underground Railroad, such as desire, courage, cooperation, and perseverance.

Ohio Academic Standards:

Theme: Regions and People of the Western Hemisphere

Strand: Geography Strand

Topic: Human Systems

Content Statement:

8. Political. Environmental, social and economic factors cause people, products and ideas to move from place to place in the Western Hemisphere

Summary Overview: These lessons are designed to help students understand the social aspect of slavery, mainly how slavery affected the lives of slaves and the slave owners. Using information gained through the primary source and supplementary literature activities, students will better understand the main points of the Fugitive Slave Act and how slavery impacted the lives of those living in the North and the South.

Materials Needed: (3 activities)

1. Fugitive Slave Act

- Anthony Burns Pamphlet*
- KWL Chart*
- The Underground Railroad: A Ride to Freedommovie packet*
- Fugitive Slave Law document background information*
- Planning sheet for “If you were a slave would you escape?”*
- Planning sheet for “The Trial of Anthony Burns”*
- Fugitive Slave Law Essay rubric*

2. Henry’s Freedom Box, Ellen Levine, 2007

- Book*
- Vocabulary quilt cards (www.kidsdiscover.com)*
- Internet*
- Scrapbook paper*
- Glue sticks*
- Scissors*

3. *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*, Deborah Hopkinson, 1993

- n. *Book*
- o. *Scrapbook paper*
- p. *Glue sticks*
- q. *Information about quilt codes*
- r. *Scissors*
- s. *Sharpie markers*
- t. *Handout from Own Sound's Black History with sample quilt codes*

Modifications used in class for all IEP/Strategic Intervention students are the following:

- Differentiated for IEP students
- Cueing is used to stay on task
- Directions clarified through repetition and written format
- Oral responses
- Scribe for written responses
- Assistance with cutting/measuring of project materials

****Prior Knowledge:** Students should have basic prior knowledge from their classroom text of the use of forced slavery in the South on plantations. They should know what the living conditions were like and understand what a typical day in the life of a slave was like in order for them to understand why they wanted to risk their lives to escape from their master.

RESOURCES

The primary Source(s) used: documents and resources are taken from the following:

Quilt Codes:

http://www2.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/threads_of_freedom/threads2.html

<https://www.owensoundtourism.ca/en/arts-and-culture/quilt-codes.aspx>

<http://home2.fvcc.edu/~cgreig/final/story.html>

Henry's Freedom's Box: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eE5ukrt8eLU>

- *The Underground Rail Road*, Still, William, Published by Porter & Coates, Philadelphia, 1872.

Fugitive Slave Act:

<http://www.nationalcenter.org/FugitiveSlaveAct.html>

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/fugitive-slaves.html>

Guiding Questions:

- What would you be willing to do to get something you really wanted?
- What does the Fugitive Slave Act mean to you if you are a slave?
- What does it mean if you are an abolitionist?
- Why did slaves want to escape or did they not really want to escape?

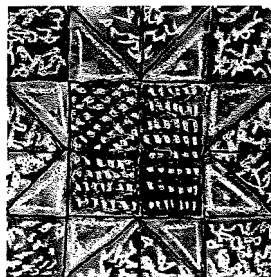
Instructional Procedures/Strategies:

Day 1: Pre-Assessment:

Students will complete a pre-test. Print off each pre-assessment in which each student will record their own responses. Collect to evaluate prior knowledge level.

**Fugitive Slave Act and the Underground Railroad
Pre-Assessment**

1. If you were living in the 1850's describe your journey on the Underground Railroad and use your five senses to journal your trip.
2. If you were a slave prior to the Civil War, list two ways to communicate with others?
3. What was the name of the law that gave the slave owners the right to get back their slaves?
4. Who helped the slaves on the Underground Railroad and list two ways they helped them.
5. Identify the quilt pattern below and its hidden message:



Day 1-2: Instruction Procedures for Primary Source Activity: (2-60 minute blocks)

- ✓ **Resource: Hamilton, Virginia. ANTHONY BURNS SLAVE. (A.A. Knoff, 1988)**

<https://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=386>

Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of the Fugitive Slave Law and its controversies by exploring the development of the Underground Railroad and the people involved.
- The students will be able to describe how the Underground Railroad was a constantly changing route that fugitive slaves used to escape slavery and identify at least two reasons why the Underground Railroad had to be “secret and changing.”
- Students will be able to describe at least three dangers that fugitive slaves may have encountered along the Underground Railroad and how the fugitives handled these challenges to reach freedom.

Tasks:

- ❖ Students will be able to identify two conductors, or people involved in the Underground Railroad and write at least two facts about these individuals.
- ❖ The students will be able to retell in 3-5 sentences the myth of how the Underground Railroad acquired its name.
- ❖ The students will be able to discuss the Fugitive Slave Law by comparing and contrasting the law from the point-of-views of the fugitive slave, northern abolitionist and southern plantation owner.

Instructional Procedures:

1. Complete a KWL chart with prior knowledge about the Fugitive Slave Act
2. Introduce the Fugitive Slave Law
3. Engage students in an online activity: **“You Are a Maryland Slave”** where they decide if they are going to run away to freedom or stay a slave.
 - ✓ <http://pathways.thinkport.org/following/>
 - ✓ Students will share results with class in a whole group setting.
4. Watch the moviemaker: **“Underground Railroad: A Ride to Freedom”**
5. Go back to the KWL and discuss and complete additional information
 - Summarize main points as a Fugitive Slave Law, what it was and how it affected the North and the South
6. Have students complete, “If you were a slave would you escape?” activity and the planning sheet and then discuss in whole class setting.
7. Using primary source information (planning sheet) compiled in the pamphlet, **“Colonel Charles E. Shuttle vs. Anthony Burns”**, review the background of Anthony Burns presented in the movie and have students work in small groups to determine why he was released/and/or stayed as a slave from the court information presented in the pamphlet. Bring the whole class together to discuss.
8. Introduce ways slaves communicated using songs and quilts before leading into the literature activities.

Assessment: Students will complete a 3-5 paragraph essay discussing the Fugitive Slave Act and what they would have done if they were involved in a rescue from a northern abolitionist, southern planter, or fugitive slave point of view. (Fugitive Slave Law Essay rubric: Appendices)

Day 3: Instruction Procedures:

- ✓ **Resource: Henry's Freedom Box, Ellen Levine**
 - **Based on the story told by William Still in *The Underground Railroad***
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eE5ukrt8eLU>

- ✓ **Discussion: What kind of a life do you think slaves had? Do you think you would have tried to escape if you were a slave? Do you think you would have tried to help a slave escape? If you think you would have tried to escape, what would you have been willing to do for freedom?**

- ✓ **Introduction: One man had a great idea for how he would escape to freedom---his name was Henry "Box" Brown.**
 - Share the story, "Henry's Freedom Box" with students, which is a story about a man who mailed himself to freedom.
 - **Open-Ended Questions:**
 - Why do you think slaves were not allowed to know their birthdays?
 - Why does Henry feel like singing?
 - What do you think Henry will do now?
 - How else did slaves use the Underground Railroad to escape to freedom?
 - Is mailing yourself like this a good idea? What dangers are there?
 - What challenges do you think Henry will face now that he's free?
 - How would you feel if you were mailed in a box which would take you to freedom?
 - When the story is finished, read the back of the book, which gives further detail of the "trip" Mr. Brown took to freedom.
 - The students will then go to their desks and come up with three questions/thoughts they wish to discuss with another student pertaining to the reading.
 - Share these thoughts about slavery in a class discussion with the other students by doing pair/share activity.
 - The students will pair with one other student and discuss their questions/thoughts/ideas.

- ✓ **Activity: Vocabulary Quilt**
 - During the time of slavery, quilts were created to tell stories and depict historical events that happened in a slave's life. Students will create an Underground Railroad vocabulary word wall in the form of a quilt. On each patch of the quilt place an Underground Railroad term such as "conductor" or "safe house". Have each student go onto Internet and locate a photo/painting/artwork pertaining to slavery which represents the vocabulary word. They will each be responsible for several "squares" including the documentation on the backside. For example, "Safe house---a place slaves could go to find food and shelter", could be illustrated with a house where slaves were hidden.

Day 4: Underground Railroad Quilt Codes Procedures

Resources:

[http://www2.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/threads of freedom/threads2.html](http://www2.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/threads%20of%20freedom/threads2.html)

<https://www.owensoundtourism.ca/en/arts-and-culture/quilt-codes.aspx>

1. Establish prior knowledge from the classroom textbook establishing that secrets were used during this time frame.
2. Read aloud *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*
3. Discussion: How might a slave make a quilt of her own? How could a quilt communicate things?
Open Ended Questions:
 - How could an illiterate young slave girl accurately depict landmarks and cardinal directions?
 - What were the details of how Clara received directions or landmarks? How was she able to retain pieces of the master's cloth to make her own quilt?
 - Why didn't Clara take her quilt with her?
4. Owen Sound's Black History handout: students would each have a copy of this handout
 - Model one quilt code to class as students follow along on their handout
 - Pair students with limited time to read and discuss the remaining quilt codes.
 - Choose a pattern and create their own quilt square; copy and paste the explanation onto their pattern
 - Add stitch marks onto each quilt square.
 - Display as a unified classroom quilt

Enrichment opportunity: Create a rebus story.