

***“HOW HAVE PEOPLE OF CONVICTION
CHANGED SOCIETY?”***

**DISCOVERING
THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
*AN INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIT***

SHARON FITZGERALD

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**CTGE 5548-002: LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
CTGE 5226: TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES TO CHILDREN
CTGE 5215-002: THE ARTS IN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

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**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
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INTRODUCTION

Although the history of slavery in the United States is referred to frequently, the details of this tragic period often are not explored in great depth. This unit will attempt to shed light on the heroic efforts of those men and women who participated in the Underground Railroad—the clandestine passageway to freedom that was traveled by runaway slaves prior to the Civil War. “Discovering the Underground Railroad” would encourage students to consider the risks taken by people of conscience, the hazards enslaved men and women dared to overcome, and how these commitments helped to end slavery within this nation.

Approaching the Underground Railroad as an interdisciplinary instructional unit would allow students and instructors to examine the complex relationships between human experience and inspiration, political influences and decisions, as well as the methods of documentation that are the foundations of culture and history. The mythology that surrounds such leaders as Harriet Tubman is deserved—who can imagine leading 300 fugitives for hundreds of miles through dark nights guided by a single star—but the resounding achievement of the Underground Railroad is the triumph of a network of strangers over inhumanity and greed. How did its participants attain their goal?

As a metaphor, the Underground Railroad is a profound example of kindred spirits ignited and in motion. Its anti-slavery activism influenced writing, legislation, and even the blankets with which some supporters covered their beds. By articulating the Underground Railroad’s response to the call of the anti-slavery movement—and its celebration in literature, history, and the arts—this unit will acknowledge the men and women who forged secret and illegal battles for liberty. To prepare students to understand the personal sacrifices that can be required in a democracy, there are no footsteps worthier of examination.

BACKGROUND

While I believe that any group of students could find this unit rewarding, I have decided to construct an instructional plan that would explain the UGRR to the students that I presently teach: twelve seventh grade, Special Education students in Harlem. Many of these youngsters are repeating the grade for the third time and a sense of resignation threatens to distort their visions of the future. Attending a supposedly tough, urban middle school makes some of them appear jaded, but the fact is that these teenagers have the same needs, desires, goals, and uncertainties that plague other students their age.

What my students lack in economic stability is complicated further by the way that instructional texts typically treat the history of African Americans. Most textbooks offer only fleeting descriptions of key events and leaders that advanced the cause of racial equality; the voices and activism of the masses remain muted. For young students of

history, the idea that ordinary people can influence a society is overshadowed by the wonders of celebrity, and by the monumental forces of governments, armies, and wealth. To realize that people of conviction—black and white—banned together to help others escape injustice is the essence of this unit’s defining question. Although as an ELA and Social Studies teacher I would be prepared to teach most of this unit, the project could also be approached as a collaboration between teachers in all three disciplines.

NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS

Because of the comprehensive nature of the unit, many of New York State’s Learning Standards will be addressed. Several of the standards will be emphasized more than others and an overlap in learning expectations will introduce standards from other academic areas into activities designed for a particular discipline.

English Language Arts. All four of the New York State Learning Standards will be addressed in this area of the unit:

- Standard 1—Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.
- Standard 2—Students will read, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.
- Standard 3—Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.
- Standard 4—Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

Social Studies. Four of the five New York State Learning Standards will be addressed in this area of the unit:

- Standard 1—Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.
- Standard 3—Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.
- Standard 4—Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and non-market mechanisms.
- Standard 5—Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the United States and other nations; the United States Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

The Arts. All four New York State Learning Standards will be addressed in this area of the unit:

- Standard 1—Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts and participate in various roles in the arts.
- Standard 2—Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.
- Standard 3—Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.
- Standard 4—Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

NAVIGATING THE UNIT

Throughout this instructional unit students will be asked to read a variety of materials to increase their knowledge of the people, circumstances, and events that comprised the Underground Railroad. They will be asked to analyze what they read to gain knowledge of the motivations of the UGRR's participants and to better understand the political forces that were at play during the years that preceded the Civil War.

Reading, writing, and speaking—for information and to participate in critical analyses—are standards that will be addressed throughout the unit, even as students examine the history of slave quilts to prepare their project in the arts. Responding to literature (both verbally and in writing) will be another of the unit's day-to-day goals. Writing letters, editorials, and reviews for a contemporary version of the anti-slavery newspaper *The North Star* should help strengthen students' connections to the period and to the information they are absorbing while teaching them to express their viewpoints in open forums.

During one segment of the ELA unit, students will be asked to imagine a dialog between abolitionist William Still and a friend who is resisting Still's request to support the Underground Railroad's efforts. Students will synthesize their readings of the anti-slavery movement's debates, create a language-based response, and then perform the exchange in class (a dramatic skill that is included in the Arts standards). Reading the words of Negro spirituals will put the symbolic language of escape in perspective; works of fiction and fantasy written about the Underground Railroad will allow literature to illuminate the facts. In addition to its version of *The North Star*, the class will prepare a scrapbook that will contain each student's personal escape narrative. These accounts (the unit project of the literature segment) will model the narratives read during the unit while serving as a record of the imaginary escapes planned within the Social Studies section. An original dictionary of Underground Railroad terms will be constructed mainly during ELA instruction but will be used extensively during other class work.

Social Studies also will influence the work assigned in companion disciplines. To understand the readings and to write about the Underground Railroad students will need

to be aware of the political landscape upon which the movement was constructed; this background knowledge will be developed during Social Studies lessons. The complex issues of slavery, abolitionism, economics, and regionalism will be explored early on so that the unit can evolve coherently. Student responses to the ideas, issues, and tensions discovered while conducting research will be recorded in diaries (this unit's version of a learning log) and may be printed in *The North Star*. Also, since Upstate New York was an important setting of abolitionist activity, it will be important for students to pause and consider the dynamic history of this region before their imaginary escapes propel them across the border into Canada.

Geography and economics both will be part of the unit's connective tissue. Maps will be displayed throughout the unit; as students chart their own escape routes (in preparation for the section's unit project—plotting an escape from Maryland to Canada) they will be expected to pay special attention to the terrain being traveled. Maps also will be used to help understand landmark legal decisions like the Missouri Compromise and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Students will refer to maps as they design and position patterns for the quilt created in the Arts portion of the unit. The economics of escape—meaning the cost of losing productive members of a labor force—will be analyzed as one cause of the regional antagonisms that contributed to the War Between the States. (Students will be reminded that usually only the strongest men and women attempted the arduous journey, although Harriet Tubman is said to have acquired a horse and wagon to rescue her parents.)

A study of the images of blacks created during the 18th and 19th Centuries will begin the Arts unit; this investigation should go far in fulfilling the fourth standard mentioned by the state. Students' use of materials will be directed by their exploration of the art and artifacts created by and about enslaved Africans. During one lesson students will create public notices by juxtaposing the images of slaves with those of contemporary people. The concept of cultural retention will be introduced as students are shown examples of artwork created by slaves that display symbols and motifs derived from African culture. The final project—a quilt that is a coded roadmap to freedom—will be designed as students consider the symbols and metaphors discovered in their ELA reading as well as the geographical landmarks identified during Social Studies.

Fusing elements from different academic disciplines is as invaluable as it is inevitable. It would be difficult to explain the language and symbols of the Underground Railroad without an investigation of history and of material (artistic) manifestations. A study of the politics of slavery and the anti-slavery movement would be static without mention of narratives, correspondence and freedom songs. The achievements of the fugitive slaves and their supporters were not conceived in a vacuum, therefore the exploration of their motivations, efforts, and actions requires an instructional lens that both pans and zooms in on strategies and creativity.

The scaffold upon which the unit is constructed intends to help students navigate uncharted terrain. The initial lessons are devoted to defining the Underground Railroad and on identifying the reasons for its existence. Next, the unit identifies the people who ran the operations and the dangers they encountered in doing so. The work of abolitionist

William Still is given a great deal of attention because his extraordinary contributions—as activist and historian—secured the Underground Railroad’s most compelling documentation. (It was Still who was inspired to write down the stories of fugitive slaves as they appeared at the office of the Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia. Because of the dangers of discovery, he buried these notes in a local graveyard and published them after the Civil War ended the institution of slavery.)

As students feel more familiar with the issues and terrain they will begin to consider their own responses and to plot an imaginary escape. The stories discovered in readings of narratives and correspondence will allow them to hear the humble and hopeful voices of the Underground Railroad’s participants and to envision their own escapes as step-by-step endeavors sans animation or special effects. As they blend the authentic with the imagined, students will take possession of the material and absorb more of what they learn. The final projects in each discipline will evolve in tandem, allowing escape routes to inform roadmaps that inspire personal narratives.

The unit’s multicultural focus extends beyond racial differences. Underground Railroad supporters included people of different religious and economic backgrounds; women were among its leaders, a fact that cannot be overemphasized. This truly was a battle waged by people of like consciences who transcended their social identities. While the Quakers shared their homes and the Native Americans their settlements, working class Catholics and Jews might hide fugitives in a barn or storeroom. Men and women of wealth contributed money. The importance of such alliances will be emphasized throughout the discussion of the Underground Railroad’s history, but special lessons devoted to the abolitionists and the places of settlement will ensure that the cooperative nature of the movement are recognized and celebrated. During the early stages of the unit it also will be important to introduce correspondence and diary entries from people who favored the practice of slavery.

Students will use familiar learning skills and strategies, and build new ones, as the unit unfolds:

- *Comprehension skills* will be enhanced by extensive reading, interpretation, and discussion of a variety of materials, including history, fiction, biographies, narratives, newspapers, poetry, correspondence, diaries, and maps. Several lessons will be devoted to the identification of genres through which the Underground Railroad’s story has been told. Students will be asked to model these genres in writing assignments.
- *Reference skills* will be employed using a variety of research mediums, including the Internet, encyclopedias, maps, historical documents and images. Students will be asked to answer specific questions that require information not available in history text.
- *Language skills* will be strengthened throughout the unit as students learn to interpret the language of the historic period effectively and to understand the coded words that were used by those involved in the Underground Railroad. They

will create a dictionary of terms to support their own writing and discussions. A Word Wall will keep the most important terms in view.

- *Study Skills* will be challenged throughout the unit's activities. Taking notes and preparing outlines will be expected in nearly all instances; creating charts, story maps, timelines, and biographical synopses will help students keep track of the information revealed.

Student performance will be assessed on an ongoing basis, mainly through teacher observation of their participation and contributions to class discussions and projects. Because the lessons are accompanied by so many hands-on responses, there will be several opportunities to note how much information is being absorbed. For example, how confident is the student when writing a letter to *The North Star* about the abolition of slavery? What type of diary entry will a student create about a night spent in the home of a Quaker family? Instead of requiring students to memorize the events, the details of the Underground Railroad story should be expected to find a place in their imaginations.

The rubric would explain the types of details that should be mentioned and described in student work: geographic regions, debates and issues, leaders and everyday people, stories of other escapes, editorials and newspaper articles, political developments, social encounters, the words to songs. By weaving such information into their own Underground Railroad fiction, students will best demonstrate their understanding of the facts. The medial assessments (including the conversation with the curators at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture) will provide a chance to gauge how comfortable the students have become with the subject matter while boosting them into the more creative aspects of the unit.

As the students plot and record their own escapes, and while quilting a roadmap that would direct others, the most critical opportunities for assessment will occur. Are they considering the geography and terrain? Have they identified the areas in which support might be found? Are they able to imagine the guidance of conductors, the threat posed by a barking dog? Do they understand that the Fugitive Slave Law allowed runaway slaves to be captured anywhere in the United States? A regular test will be given so that students can identify what they have learned, but the most important assessment of the unit's success will be the quality of the student projects. Did they plot each step carefully? Did they leave a roadmap that others could follow? Did they tell their stories of captivity and freedom in a way that would inspire others to risk the journey and change the world?

KEY THEMES

- The geography of the United States: how regional differences influenced the economy of the nation; how far one had to walk to become free.
- The "peculiar institution" of slavery: what were the experiences of men and women kidnapped from Africa and brought to North America.
- The development of the anti-slavery movement within the United States.
- The decision to escape: the stories of the successful fugitives and how their journeys were orchestrated.

- The power of documentation: what types of writing recorded the journey of runaways; how have the UGGR's stories influenced our view of history?

KEY LESSONS

- The slave versus the free states—prepare a map that indicates which states permitted slavery and in which the practice was illegal.
- The importance of writing: diaries, narratives, newspapers, fiction, historical fiction will be discussed and explored. The evolution of oral histories into biographical narratives will be examined as well.
- Legal decisions that made a difference in the debate over slavery: The Missouri Compromise, The Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott Decision, and the Fugitive Slave laws will be examined.
- The leaders of the Underground Railroad—who were these men and women and how did they achieve their goal?
- Identifying the important terms that appeared during this historic period.
- The creation of metaphors, symbols, and secret codes.
- Mini-lessons will utilize graphic organizers to study the origins and meaning of words like abolition/abolitionist, emancipation, underground, and railroad. Unmarked maps of North America will be available throughout the unit as students plot an imaginary escape and analyze the terrain to be traveled
- The Underground Railroad's influence on the nation's literature and mythology. What is a myth? The fiction, poetry, and drama inspired by the UGRR activities will be positioned prominently throughout the classroom and will be read by students independently and within group sessions.
- The film version of Virginia Hamilton's novel *The House of Die Drears* will be shown to the class and used to introduce a discussion of how historic events can influence the lives of people a century later. An excerpt from the book will be used as one of the unit's group reading activities. Its symbolism—the house/UGRR station, the passengers/runaway slaves, the abolitionist/station master—will be explored as both historic roadmap and literary construction.
- Students will keep diaries throughout this unit. They will be asked to assume the roles of escaping slaves or abolitionists and to record their feelings and discoveries as the project unfolds. Student documentation also will be demonstrated in the creation of articles for a class version of the newspaper *The North Star*.

GROUP PROJECT

Students will draw a card from a hat to discover the role they will play on the Underground Railroad—passengers, conductors, stationmasters, or stockholders. They will be given a map that describes the topography of an area from which they will escape. Then they will be asked to describe the surroundings—the hills, forests, swamps, rivers or lakes standing between them and freedom. They will be asked to plot an escape that begins on the Eastern Shore of Maryland (the birthplace of both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass) and that ends in Canada. How many miles would they have to travel to reach freedom? What types of experiences might they have along the way?

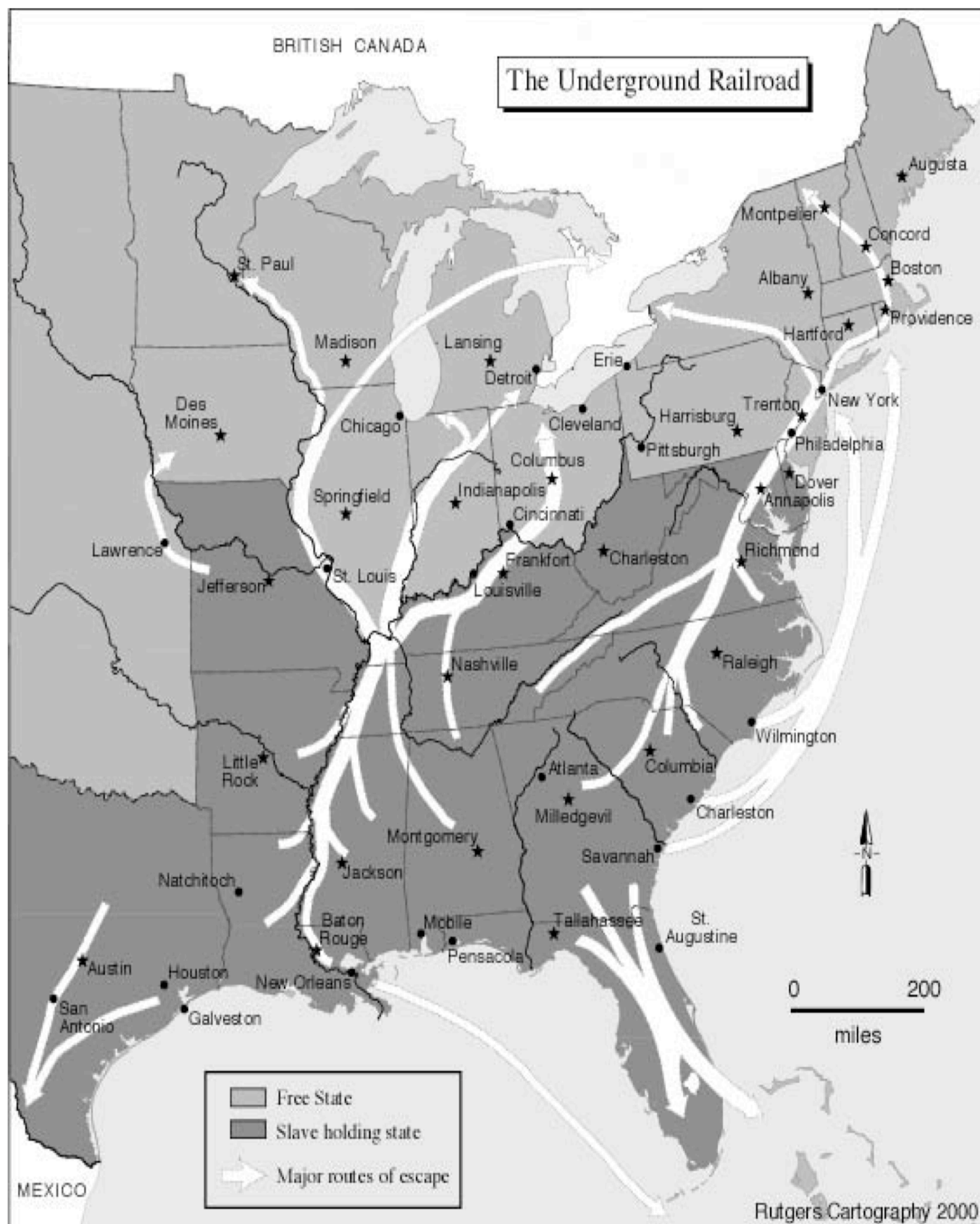
The student diaries will serve as a learning log and also as a record of their imaginary experiences. Were they assisted by a Quaker family in the Pennsylvania region, for example, or were they lucky enough to find a man with a boat to take them across a river? Their accounts will include the moods and fears of those in their party and descriptions of the dangers and assistance they encounter along the way. These diary accounts will be discussed, revised, and then published in a special class edition of *The North Star*. Correspondence—letters to friends, supporters, opponents, and newspapers—will be a recurring assignment.

The art education project—the creation of a quilt that contains directions for escape—will be preceded by a discussion of symbols translated from African culture. The images of enslaved people that were presented during slavery will be analyzed as a means of documentation and cultural influence.

DISCOVERY

This project will allow students to

- use their knowledge of geography and history;
- discover and model the literary genre known as slave narratives;
- draw maps and symbols to indicate their exodus and that warn others of possible danger;
- consider the songs used by fugitive slaves to convey their hopes;
- write correspondence that will record their responses and persuade others to help with Underground Railroad activities;
- add to the classroom's display of famous escapes as they research the different events;
- keep diaries that persuade them to imagine the thoughts of UGRR participants and to write creatively;
- explore the relationship between historic events and literary genres such as poetry, drama, biographies, and historical fiction;
- add to the classroom's Word Wall and to create an original glossary of Underground Railroad terms.



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**LITERACY LESSON PLAN:
“A JOURNEY TO REMEMBER”**

SHARON FITZGERALD

CTGE 5548-002: LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

**HELENE CRAWFORD
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**LITERACY LESSON PLAN:
“A JOURNEY TO REMEMBER”**

I. New York State Learning Standards

Standard #1: Students will read, write, listen and speak for information and understanding.

Standard #2: Students will read, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

Standard #3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Standard 4: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

II. Aim

“Who Dares to Tell the Tales?”

III. Materials

Diaries

Maps of Underground Railroad Routes

Unmarked maps of Eastern Seaboard

Computer; access to printer and the Internet

Tape recorder and blank tapes

IV. Readings

Harriet Tubman—The Moses of Her People by Sarah Bradford

Tales from the Underground Railroad by Kate Connell

Bound for the North Star by Dennis Brindell Fradin

The Underground Railroad by William Still

V. Motivation

While reading and preparing written responses to several well-known narratives, and discussing the characteristics of the narrative form, students will be asked to begin writing an account of their own imaginary escape. The journey described will be part of a group project developed in Social Studies, and so members of each group will share the events and directions. However at the beginning of the project students will adopt the role of a fugitive slave; their diaries and personal narrative will be written from this character’s perspective.

Propelling students onto this terrain would begin with a BRAINSTORMING SESSION during which they will discuss several questions: What has impressed

you most about the narratives you have read? How is this form of storytelling different from other forms that you have encountered? What information do you think must be included for a narrative to have historic value? The students' responses will be written on chart paper and displayed on the classroom wall.

Next, students will be asked to prepare a QUICKWRITE response, also from the viewpoint of the character they have assumed. They will be provided with a list of prompts (topics to choose from) that should help them to enter the fantasy. The list should be expanded to include themes the students identify during their brainstorming session. The preliminary list would present the following ideas:

- Experiences in slavery
- The decision to escape
- Acquiring a ticket on the Underground Railroad
- Leaving behind family and friends
- Learning to trust the Underground Railroad conductor
- Disguises
- Unusual hiding places
- Hunger
- Encountering new people and cultures
- Coming close to being captured
- Rainy nights
- Feeling free
- Being reunited with a loved one
- A new home

After the Quickwrite is complete, students will be asked to place this response within their DIARIES. This activity will help them students to connect with the voice of their characters and to begin writing their narratives.

VI. Procedure

The OUTLINES and ITINERARIES of the imagined escape prepared in Social Studies will supply the impetus for this creative writing project; the unit's DIARIES will provide the skeleton upon which the narratives will be drafted.

While charting the day-to-day experiences of their flight, students will describe surroundings and events, and respond to the hopes and difficulties that characterize their journeys.

The materials read throughout the unit will provide new ideas and language. The Students will be encouraged to revise their diaries as these changes occur. They will be free to imagine unusual (but feasible) means of escape that they might use if faced with an unexpected circumstance. For instance, the Henry "Box" Brown story is acclaimed, but would this work if you were a mother carrying a baby? How long could a group of five spend riding at the bottom of a wagon? Should they pretend to be a group being led back from an auction if the stationmaster was willing to openly escort them for miles? The logistics of escape will be developed

in Social Studies, but the literature segment will allow students to explore the personal responses of the fugitive slaves.

By using the 5Ws that are a familiar tool of reading comprehension, students will HIGHLIGHT the narratives read independently, within groups, and with the instructor. They will be expected to identify and chart the information included; they also will respond to the tone of the writing. To place the different works in context, students will compare the accounts written in secret by William Still and the narratives written by emancipated men and women after the Civil War.

The list of themes presented in the Quickwrite will continue to inform the students' narratives. They will be asked to identify the ideas that they consider most important to share and position these responses on a timeline of their journeys. Although students will be allowed to select different themes for the body of the narrative, the introduction (Experiences in Slavery/The Decision to Escape) and the conclusion (Feeling Free) should be included in every essay. By approaching these ideas as distinct impressions (or diary entries), students will be able to construct narratives that incorporate more details and insight. WORKSHOP READINGS of their entries will give students a chance to respond to each other's ideas, ask questions, and approach their own revisions with renewed enthusiasm.

ORAL HISTORIES will be one of the unit's discoveries and this form of storytelling should not be overlooked during the writing project. [It is, in fact, the key MODIFICATION to be used to support students who have difficulties with written language.] Some of the workshop discussions will be RECORDED to enable students to *hear* the stories they are creating. Groups would be asked to discuss specific experiences such as the night they were almost captured or how hungry they were before reaching a particular station. Creating these scenarios will ignite their imaginations and enhance their individual stories. They can listen to the tapes during group sessions or during solo visits to the unit's LISTENING CENTER. Some sections will be transcribed and students can read these independently. Sections that resonate (like surviving nights of rain) can be published in the class version of *The North Star*.

Throughout the writing, discussions, and revisions students will be instructed to keep in mind what they are learning about the Underground Railroad in other lessons and subjects. Whenever possible, they will be asked to incorporate some of the people and events within their narratives. (Did their journeys take them through Philadelphia; did they meet William Still? Frederick Douglass? Lucretia Mott? What were their impressions of these encounters? Did they hear about an important escape or capture while on their own quest? Did such stories make them feel afraid to move on?) When the sections are positioned on the timelines of their journey students will begin to write the necessary transitions, revise, and edit.

The completed narratives will be shared during the QUILTING PARTY at the end of the unit and then placed within a class SCRAPBOOK.

VII. Medial Summary

The midway assessment for this portion of the unit will take place before this writing project begins. Its approach is simple but comprehensive: students will be asked to write a letter to the authorities in the voice of someone who opposes the end of slavery and the activities of the Underground Railroad. They will be asked to describe what they have learned about the secret activities, how they learned these things, and what they think should be done to curtail Underground Railroad activities. They should mention leaders and places to be watched.

This approach has been selected because it will reveal how comfortable students are with the dynamics and information so far. Are they able to take an idea that they probably support (a flight to freedom) and analyze it from another point of view? Reconsidering the facts and feelings about slavery also is excellent preparation for analyzing the subject in greater depth.

VIII. Application

The narrative accounts of former slaves have become a respected source of historic material. While studying different stories and approaches, students will experience an important genre and also consider how different voices can be used to describe similar events. The approach described in the Procedures section above was constructed to help students create a work of fiction based on their exploration of history. By recording their impressions and responses in diaries, and writing these entries in segments, students should feel more comfortable tackling the unique elements of the narrative form—a combination of personal response and observation expressed in an almost conversational tone. Ongoing discussions with their fellow travelers (including those that are recorded on tape) should support the literary endeavor and help students to create their narratives independently.

IX. Content & Standards

The New York State Learning Standards will be addressed in different ways throughout this unit. Students certainly will approach written materials to gain information and understanding; they will respond to and model literary works and styles. They will read critically, to analyze and evaluate the impact of the Underground Railroad and the anti-slavery movement; and they will share their ideas and opinions with others during discussions and in editorial forums like the class version of *The North Star*.

X. Evaluation/Assessment

Student performance will be assessed using some standard and some unique criteria. Clarity, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, grammar and spelling will be carefully considered. The true success of the unit, however, will be demonstrated as students take on the issues of the era and personalize their responses to particular events. Are they cognizant of the challenges presented by a

river or a mountain range? Do they use the coded language that was part of the Underground Railroad? Do they research and navigate through areas where supportive groups like the Quakers and Native Americans might be found? Did they mention the freedom songs? Were they committed to telling the story of their exodus in a way that would stir and inform people—does their writing reflect an awareness and appreciation for personal histories? Did they dare to tell truths that could lead others to freedom?

XI. Summary

The importance of documentation is at the heart of this project. It was nearly a century until the stories of enslaved people reached beyond the academies and the hands of everyday people. Collections produced in recent years by the Schomburg Center, the Smithsonian Institute, and Harvard's DuBois Institute have helped greatly, but there are still enormous lessons to be learned. If people who had been denied the right to literacy had not told their stories, what we would understand today about their achievements? If people with letters had not been there to listen, record, and teach, how much more would we have been left to speculate? (If we even knew there was something to remember.)

By encouraging students to use their imaginations to record events as they experience them, this lesson will extend beyond the sessions designated by this unit—it is in the end an instruction about testimonies, and the responsibility of each individual to bear witness bravely and honestly.

MODIFICATIONS

Because this lesson was developed to meet the needs of Special Education students, some modifications already have been introduced. In a general education setting the shared reading sessions would be replaced with independent reading and the materials read would be approached at a faster pace. Fortuitously, the story of the Underground Railroad and the achievement of those who left behind its narratives are meant to inspire literacy. This project will provide an instructor with the extraordinary opportunity teach students about a period of history that was characterized by fortitude and learning.

Two Special Education students come to mind for whom more adjustments are necessary. They are repeating seventh grade for the second time and read at about a second grade level. They will not be able to manage the research materials with confidence, although they understand what is read to them. Their curiosity and insight are terrific and consistent, but there is a great resistance to written words. At the same time, they are imaginative and very likely to create scenarios that would enhance the projects of their groups.

Oral histories will therefore be at the heart of this unit's modifications. Students will be asked to speak their ideas into a tape recorder. They will be expected to consider and analyze the same questions as their classmates, but their responses will be returned (and read to them) in transcribed form. It may be possible to have a classmate work on this transcript (if so, this should be a collaborative effort), but more than likely it will be a project that the teacher has to complete.

Audio-taped versions of narratives should be available to accompany the recorded fiction. A reading of Harriet Tubman's narrative would be especially valuable because she was unable to read or write and told her story to Sarah Branford in order to raise money for the home she created for elderly former slaves. Students listening to her account would be asked to respond to what they hear in her words. They will, of course, read along with the text.

A number of books included in the unit are accessible, particularly *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* and *The Drinking Gourd*. Both of these books provide reliable background information on the Underground Railroad and will support students' participation in the unit.

The students' diaries should be handled as a notebook in which poetry, drawings, and collections of words are welcome. Keeping the diary every day should not be avoided and should not be judged. The student must be free to explore his/her own ideas about the imaginary flight and about his/her own relationship with words. *They will be expected to respond*. The narrative will be handled as described above—as an oral history transcribed by a supporter of the Underground Railroad and published for others to read.

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SOCIAL STUDIES LESSON PLAN

“A PATH TO FREEDOM”

I. New York State Learning Standards

Four of the five New York State Learning Standards will be addressed in this area of the unit:

- Standard 1—Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.
- Standard 3—Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.
- Standard 4—Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and non-market mechanisms.
- Standard 5—Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the U.S. and other nations; the U.S. Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

II. Aim

“How Do You Plot an Escape?”

III. Materials

Diaries

Maps:

- North America
- Underground Railroad Routes
- Unmarked maps of Eastern Seaboard
- Political and topographical maps of North America in the 19th Century

Compasses

Rulers

Chart Paper

Pens, pencils, markers

Reference Books:

Harriet Tubman—The Moses of Her People by Sarah Bradford

Tales from the Underground Railroad by Kate Connell

Bound for the North Star by Dennis Brindell Fradin

The Underground Railroad by William Still

Computer; access to printer and the Internet

Tape recorder and blank tapes

Calendars

Template for class version of *The North Star*

Class scrapbook for personal narratives, original maps and illustrations

Brown bags and slips of paper

IV. Motivation

Students will be read a passage on escape from a slave narrative and then asked the following question: “If you were in this person’s position, would you dare to run away?” After a lively, GRAND CONVERSATION that probably would be characterized by lots of “What I’d do” and “You would not,” the students would be asked the lesson’s motivating question: “How would you travel from Maryland to Canada if

- (1) perfect strangers might have you arrested because you were black;
- (2) you did not have—and were unable to read—a roadmap;
- (3) you had never traveled far beyond the area in which you lived and did not know anyone in the towns along the way; and
- (4) teams of people were chasing you and there was a reward for your capture.

As a MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY students would form teams and go on the Internet to follow the interactive “Path to Freedom” developed by *National Geographic*. This activity places visitors (“runaway slave”) at the crossroads of escape and then propels them through a series of choices:

- Should you risk taking the trip?
- Should you approach the home of a stranger or head back into the woods?
- Should you look for a secret passageway behind a mantel?

The student teams will make the journey. Another Grand Conversation will follow. Students will QUICKWRITE their responses—experiences, surprises, the results of certain choices—in their individual DIARIES.

Then the students will be asked the opening question once again: “How would you travel from Maryland to Canada?”

V. Procedures and Application

This class project will be the centerpiece of the interdisciplinary unit. Students will work in groups to plot an imaginary escape out of slavery to freedom, record

their plans and experiences in diaries, create a freedom quilt that is a roadmap to safe havens, and write personal narratives that describe the journey.

Before the exodus begins, each student will be given a new identity. They will be asked to pull a slip of paper from one of two brown bags (one for girls, one for boys) to discover the name and background of the person they will pretend to be. The language used in these descriptions will echo the wording used on slavery's auction and runaway notices. The information provided should give students clues as to the reasons that this person has decided to escape. For example:

"A tall, healthy, 16-year-old girl Negress known as Mary. She is a good cook and does not talk much, but she is strong-willed and may need to be watched carefully. She was born and raised on the Cooper plantation just outside of Baltimore. She has no family since her mother and brothers were sold to a farm in Virginia."

The slips of paper also will be marked with the name of a group of runaways:

Group 1—"The Drinking Gourd"

Group 2—"The Freedom Train"

Group 3—"The Sweet Chariot"

Students will join their groups and begin their journey together by marking one of the blank maps to indicate where their characters live.

The groups will be told on which day they will be collected by the Underground Railroad conductor; they will mark this date on their calendars.

They will mark the individual maps at 20-mile intervals (the usual distance between UGRR stations) and study the terrain to be traveled using the topographical map from the 19th Century. They will be reminded to think of these areas as they were during the period and not as they are today (with cities, lights and paved roads). Next they will search the Internet and other research sources to discover where UGRR supporters like the Quakers and Native American nations might be found. These locations also will be indicated on their maps.

Students will mark their maps and calendars to indicate the areas to be traveled on every day. They will be expected to remain aware of the physical conditions of every segment of their journeys—for instance, if rivers or mountains or swamps must be crossed.

At several stages of the lesson groups will be handed situation cards that describe a change of events to which the fugitives must respond to ensure their safety. For example:

"Rainstorm lasts for two days and three nights."

"Patrollers wait at the river."

"Farmer arrives with a wagon and offers to take you along for 10 miles."

Because time will be limited (even within a month-long unit), students will not be able to spend as much time as they would like on the trip. Instead they will be asked to

- chart the course;
- determine the mileage;
- describe the terrain;
- respond to 2-3 hazardous situations;
- describe their stops at 4-5 stations (including the stationmasters); and
- create at least one unusual escape.

These events, stations, supporters, and hazards will be charted on the map, and the approximate day of the encounter/occurrence marked on the calendar. When the SEQUENCE OF EVENTS is in place, students will create a working TIMELINE.

Students will keep a personal record of their progress and decisions in DIARIES (the unit's version of a LEARNING LOG). In these journals they will describe, for example, the time spent hiding in the barn of a free black family or how they gained passage on a ship that crossed the Delaware River.

The geography of the region often will inform the groups' decisions. Students will learn how to use compasses and will discuss other navigational clues such as the position of stars, animal tracks, and moss that grows on the sides of trees.

The economic impact of losing key members of a labor force will be discussed when one group discovers the reward being offered for their capture.

The responses of society will be analyzed by identifying where runaways would be most likely to encounter abolitionists. At the same time, the groups will consider the help extended by groups of Native Americans, and even by some working class whites in the South. Known UGRR stations will be identified and their positions charted on the map; the homes of key UGRR leaders also will be determined.

When all of the steps have been taken and the dilemmas solved, the group will reach Canada and freedom.

VI. Medial Summary

The plotting of this journey is, in fact, the medial summary for the Social Studies portion of the interdisciplinary unit. To determine how students are progressing, their abilities to identify supportive groups and individuals, and to point out the challenges posed by the physical landscape, will be considered.

This approach has been selected because it will reveal how comfortable students are with the dynamics and information discussed. Are they able to recognize people and places that would influence their flight to freedom? Can they come up with responses that are reliable representations of the behavior and options of the characters they have assumed? These are demonstrative acts that will allow the

instructor to gauge how much the students understand about the realities of slavery and the activities of escape.

VII. Content and State Learning Standards

By plotting their own imaginary escapes students should begin to comprehend the bravery and determination exhibited by runaway slaves and the people who helped to facilitate their journeys to freedom. The step-by-step planning will encourage students to appreciate the Underground Railroad as an endeavor of flesh-and-blood human beings instead of a myth.

The history of the United States and the State of New York will be examined in detail: the Underground Railroad would not have been necessary, or a secret, if the issue of slavery had not been so volatile. The decisions to resist by running away increased the tensions between free and slave states, which eventually led to the Civil War. Upstate New York will be examined as a center of progressive and abolitionist activities.

Geography will be very important—both as the landscape upon which the journey takes place, and also as the battleground of the states' antagonisms. Western expansion caused regional conflicts to increase as the pro- and anti-slavery factions struggled to gain more control of the national economy and government.

Economics will be introduced as students consider the rewards offered for the capture of runaways and how these price tags reflect the slaveholders' attachment to free labor. The actual costs of the escapes and the financial contributions of wealthy abolitionists also will be discussed. (It will be important to note, for example, that Harriet Tubman worked as a maid in between trips to earn the money needed for her exploits.)

Understanding the importance of citizenship within a democracy will be one of the key philosophical issues of this unit. Accepting the practice of slavery in the nation was a hypocritical act that many people of conviction could never abide. The elimination of slavery was not accomplished by friendly debate, it was achieved by the sacrifices of individuals who were dedicated to amending the United States Constitution and redeeming the collective conscience of the nation,

VIII. Evaluation/Assessment

Student performance will be evaluated throughout the unit. Participation in the detailed preparations of the escape project will be extremely important. One written examination will be administered to help students feel more confident in their academic progress. However their familiarity with the issues and their ability to apply what they've learned to the activities of the Underground Railroad movement will provide the most valuable insight.

The quality of writing exhibited in their diaries and *North Star* articles will be evaluated using the ELA standards. As students incorporate their understanding of United States history and the anti-slavery movement into their creative work and projections, their command of the Social Studies material will be demonstrated.

IX. Summary

Escaping from slavery is a romantic notion until one does the math, adds up the mileage, and considers the violence that accompanies capture. This project will place human conviction and valor within the reach of middle-school students. Plotting and executing such an escape is an experience that would benefit students of all races: it is an adventure inspired by empathy and an introduction to active and dedicated citizenship.

Hopefully, this lesson will not only leave its mark on the youngsters' understanding of the Underground Railroad. If this expedition is worthwhile, the lessons that students learn about humanity will continue to resonate as they experience the world and its inequities: instead of awaiting a super-heroic act, they will stop and consider what an individual can do to make things better.

“HOW HAVE PEOPLE OF CONVICTION CHANGED SOCIETY?”

**DISCOVERING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIT**

**THE ARTS LESSON PLAN
*“A PICTURE OF THE LAND”***

SHARON FITZGERALD

CTGE 5215-002: THE ARTS IN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
FALL 2004**

“HOW HAVE PEOPLE OF CONVICTION CHANGED SOCIETY?”

**DISCOVERING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIT**

**THE ARTS LESSON PLAN
“A PICTURE OF THE LAND”**

“Then one day I was sewin’ a patch on a pretty blue blanket. The patch looked just the same shape as the cow pond near the cabins. The little stitches looked like a path going all around it. Here it was—a picture that wouldn’t wash away.”

Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt

By Deborah Hopkinson

Illustrated by James Ransome

I. New York State Learning Standards

All four of the New York State Learning Standards will be addressed in this area of the unit:

- Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts
Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theater, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.
- Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.
- Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.
- Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts.
Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of the past and present society.

II. Aim

“How were patterns and symbols used on the Underground Railroad’s road maps to freedom?”

III. Goals

Students will create a quilt using symbols that reveal a secret route to be taken on the Underground Railroad.

IV. Materials

Large sheets of drawing paper
Lightweight cardboard
Crayons, markers, pens and pencils
Rulers
Scissors
Fabric—remnants of material contributed by students' families
Sewing needles—some of heavier weight with larger eyes
Thread
Twine
Detailed map of the eastern United States in the early 1800s.

V. Background

In the ELA unit students will read the book *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993). It is the story of an enslaved young girl who decides to find her mother and escape to freedom. Before embarking on this dangerous journey, Clara, who works as a seamstress on the plantation, charts her course carefully and creates a quilt that conceals the landmarks and paths that she must take.

Clara obtains the information she needs by talking to the slaves she trusts and by listening carefully to the stories told around her. This element of learning will introduce students to the significance of oral histories among people for whom reading and writing were illegal.

As Clara's understanding of the surrounding landscape expanded, she created quilt squares that codified the terrain she needed to travel and positioned these squares in ways that made her quilt a road map for herself and others. When she at last escapes she has committed each stitch and design to memory. She leaves the quilt behind so that others can interpret its message and follow in her footsteps.

VI. Approach

To simplify and personalize this imaginary journey, I would ask students to envision themselves as slaves on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. As the birthplace of both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass this region has special significance. It also will be easier for students to chart an escape route from there to Philadelphia and then onto New York.

Using the map and including guides to the area's topography, students will determine what it was like to travel in this area between 1830-1865, the years during which the Underground Railroad movement was most active. Where were the forests, lakes, rivers, towns, and what animals might they encounter

along the way?

Students will measure the path charted and determine how many miles are represented. Because it is estimated that there were approximately 20 miles between “stations,” students will determine how long it would take runaways to complete their journey.

The patterns and symbols used by quilters as codes for fugitive slaves will be described carefully. On a “sampler quilt” that I will create, students will be shown examples of the patterns that some historians believe directed runaway slaves along the Underground Railroad. Students will learn that these samplers were used by quilters to familiarize potential runaways with the code and with the significance of sequencing the patterns. (For example, the Wagon Wheel pattern urges fugitives to pack the necessities, Tumbling Boxes means it is time to go.) This sampler will be displayed in the classroom throughout the unit. Of course, the messages encoded in the patterns will be discussed.

The following patterns will be represented:

Bear’s Paw Trail
Bow Ties
Cathedral Church
Crossroads
Double Wedding Rings
Drunkard’s Path
Flying Geese
Log Cabin
Monkey Wrench
Shoofly
Stars (“North Star”)
Tumbling Boxes
Wagon Wheel

It will be important to introduce students to the importance of craft artisans and the works that they created. The “everyday” forms of artistic design should not be overlooked in favor of painting and sculpture. Also, these contributions by enslaved Africans often reflected their cultural origins and retentions, as well as the adaptive abilities demonstrated when they arrived in America.

The textiles and ironwork produced by different African people will be presented to the students. These artifacts will be displayed next to images of works created by the enslaved people. Students will begin to identify symbols and motifs; they will begin to apply their visions to the coded messages.

If the Smithsonian Collection still has its reproductions of 1800s fabric available, I will display swatches in the classroom.

VII. The Project

Creating their own coded quilt will be an exciting yet exacting project that the students will develop and fulfill over the course of three weeks. [I would invite mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and cousins who like to sew to visit the classroom to participate in the final piecing—the added assistance will be needed, but it is also important for the students to recognize the community spirit that christened the creation of quilts.]

The design of the quilt will be prepared on paper by the students beforehand. Using the road map created during their Social Studies unit they will be asked to decide what arrangement of colors and designs would best convey the escape route that they have charted. I hope that they will agree to take a clue from the “Freedom Quilt” created by Clara; her use of the Nine Patch design would be much simpler to manage and the students could decorate the plain squares with coded patterns or appliqués.

The students will select and arrange colors, fabrics and textures to manifest their secret code: dark green, for example, could mean that an area is covered with a forest; streaks of blue could indicate that a river flows nearby. The design will be copied onto squares of carefully measured paper and numbered so that the students will remember the arrangement.

As a practical part of the lesson I will teach them about stitching. Some historians believe that the undersides of coded quilts reveal a grid that was read by runaways and guided them to landmarks and sources of food while alerting them to the distances between stations and the routes to be taken. (The children’s book describes Clara sewing on the back of her quilt for this reason.) The variations in the number and the length of stitches (and the arrangement of ties and square knots) were part of the code used by enslaved people as they created this visual language.

[Pictures of surviving slave quilts will be on display as the unit unfolds; towards the completion of the project I would introduce images of story quilts so that the students can begin to appreciate how the art of quilting has continued to evolve.]

Once the design is determined, the students will begin cutting the fabric using pieces of soft cardboard as patterns to ensure uniformity. The fabric for each square, a needle, thread, and a copy of the pattern will be placed in a brown-paper lunch bag; another copy of the pattern will be attached to the outside of this bag to make identification easier. As students complete a square they will place it in the bag and take another. In this way we can create excitement and a slight competition among quilters.

The map of the region being traveled will be on display at all times to encourage students to imagine themselves in another time and place. Some of the students' group sewing sessions will be taped so that their period-appropriate comments can be transcribed and used as an oral history of the project.

Those students who do not wish to sew will be expected to design their own versions of a coded quilt on art paper and to paint or color its design. These smaller representations of the art form will be accompanied by the students' brief written description of the symbols chosen and displayed alongside the sampler and the class quilt.

However it will be very important to inform the students that while quilting is generally considered a utilitarian art form created by women, in African cultures (and certainly in the current quilting movement), some of the most outstanding quilters have been men. Pictures of the works of Michael Cummings and Dr. Raymond Dobard will be exhibited alongside the creations of Elizabeth Scott (mother of celebrated artist Joyce Scott), Carolyn Mazloomi, and Faith Ringgold.

When the students' squares are complete I will invite family members to visit the class to help piece the blocks together. It is likely that a family member has helped the student with this "homework" all along and will be interested in the seeing the project completed. In any case, the students will take home an explanatory letter about the project and its significance, as well as a copy of the design that the students created. This package will help to keep parents informed and I hope it will inspire a few to contribute to our classroom's quilting community.

VIII. Assessment

Students' understanding of the quilting symbols and their use as coded messages on the Underground Railroad will be the standard upheld in this lesson. The facility and imagination demonstrated while creating this class project will be identified in several ways:

- Students' participation in the creation of the coded road map.
- The selection and arrangement of fabrics that convey the messages being communicated.
- The handling of materials, including the care with which students measure and assemble their pieces.
- The demonstration of stitching—patterns and lengths— that accurately reflects the distance to be traveled by fugitive slaves.
- The students' abilities to discuss and explain their work and its meaning.



Source: *The Underground Railroad: Official National Park Handbook.*

“DISCOVERING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD”

UNIT CLUSTERS

Subject Study

- Read books about UGRR Conductor Harriet Tubman
- Compare what has been written about her life with the personal account Tubman gave to Sarah Bradford.
- Write a short story or a narrative poem about Harriet Tubman.

Learning Logs

- Keep a learning log in the form of a diary written by either a runaway slave or a conductor on the UGRR.
- Log will contain notes, maps, quickwrites, personal responses and reflections.

Maps & Diagrams

- Read a topographical map of North America from the 1800s.
- Draw a map of the free and slave states.
- Draw a map that indicates the UGRR's most successful routes.
- Draw a map that indicates the route to be taken on an imaginary escape.
- Create a timeline that mentions some of the most famous escapes of enslaved people up until the start of the Civil War.
- Create a timeline of important political events and legislation that influenced the practice of slavery.

K-W-L Chart

- Use to introduce unit.
- Use to present essential questions and interlocking themes.
- Use to identify important people and terms.
- Use to conclude unit.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, 2, *UNIT CLUSTERS*

Technology

- Investigate Internet sites that examine the UGRR, including www.historychannel.com and www.pbs.org.
- Work in pairs to follow the UGRR's path to freedom on www.nationalgeographic.com.
- Develop CD-ROM or Powerpoint presentation on imaginary escape.
- Audiotape accounts of imaginary escape and personal narrative.
- Listen to audiotaped version of the book *The Drinking Gourd*.

Word-Study Activities

- Make word posters of key UGRR terms.
- Make word maps.
- Create word sorts.
- Create word chains.
- Create an alphabet book about the UGRR that includes coded terms.

Content-Area Textbook

- Teach students to approach textbook as a first source of information.
- Have students listen to teacher read section on UGRR before reading this together in groups.
- Have students create an outline of material presented in text and add new information, thoughts, and questions to K-W-L chart.

Literacy Skills & Strategies

- Read expository text using the efferent stance.
- Record research information gathered on charts and graphic organizers as well as in learning logs.
- Learn how to distinguish primary and secondary source materials.
- Strengthen research skills by using parts of books—tables of content, indices, bibliographies.
- Learn how to identify and read historical documents, including photographs and

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, 3, *UNIT CLUSTERS*

public notices.

- Teach cross-referencing of information from different sources.
- Create timelines.
- Use the SQ3R study strategy.
- Use clusters to organize research material.

Centers

- Draw a map of free and slave states.
- Draw a map of UGRR's most successful routes.
- Research UGRR on the Internet.
- Read books in text set.
- Listen to audiotaped books on UGRR.
- Audiotape personal account of imaginary escape, an oral history.
- Create a quilt using symbols that present a roadmap for fugitive slaves.
- Create a scrapbook of an imaginary escape and personal responses.
- Sort words from the Word Wall.

Word Wall

ABOLITIONIST

BAYOU

CONDUCTOR

DEEP SOUTH

DRINKING GOURD

GREAT DISMAL SWAMP

MAROONS

MASON-DIXON LINE

NORTH STAR

OVERSEER

PASSENGERS

PATROLLERS

QUAKERS

STATIONMASTERS

STATIONS

STOCKHOLDERS

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Cubing

- Make a cube about slavery, the abolitionist movement, political developments, and the UGRR.

Projects

- Keep a diary ("learning log") of UGRR developments and

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, 4, *UNIT CLUSTERS*

experiences adopting the voice of either an abolitionist, UGRR conductor or fugitive slave.

- Draw maps—of the most successful UGRR routes, of the free and slave states, and of the route students would take on an imaginary escape.
- Write a short story (historical fiction), narrative, or narrative poem about Harriet Tubman.
- Examine methods of navigation: discuss tracking methods, learn to use a compass and how to follow the stars.
- Prepare a timeline that mentions some of the UGRR's most famous escapes.
- Readers Theater that dramatizes a real or imaginary escape on the UGRR.
- Create a dictionary of the UGRR's coded terms.
- Create a quilt that replicates those used along the UGRR as roadmaps to freedom.
- Create a chronology of the political events and legislation that influenced the practice of slavery.
- Create a newsletter ("The New North Star") that records the unit's progress and discoveries.
- Create a scrapbook of original escape narratives similar to the renowned collection of abolitionist William Still.
- Create a choral poem or hymn using the UGRR's religious codes and symbols.
- Imagine, plan, and record an escape along the UGRR route from Maryland to New York.
- Research the UGRR's documentary evidence—public notices, correspondence, photographs and drawings.

Field Trip

- Visit the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Tour of the Art & Artifacts and Photos & Prints divisions; talk with curators.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, 5, *UNIT CLUSTERS*

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