

# Chasing Freedom

Examining Escape Stories

and

Mapping Routes Along the Underground Railroad

## OBJECTIVE(S)

### **National US History Standards**

Era 4 – Expansion and Reform

Standard 2D – The students understand the rapid growth of the “peculiar Institution” after 1800 and the varied experiences of African Americans under slavery.

Identify the various ways in which African Americans resisted the conditions of their enslavement and analyze the consequences of violent uprisings.

Standard 4A – The student understands the abolitionist movement.

Analyze the changing ideas about race and assess the reception of proslavery and antislavery ideologies in the North and South.

Era 5 – The Causes of the Civil War

Standard 1A – The student understands how the North and the South differed and how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.

Explain how events after the Compromise of 1850 and the Dred Scott in 1857 contributed to increasing sectional polarization.

### **National Geography Standards**

Standard 1 – How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a special perspective.

### **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)**

**History.** The student understands how political, economic, and social factors led to the growth of sectionalism and the Civil War.

compare the effects of political, economic, and social factors on slaves and free blacks;

analyze the impact of slavery on different sections of the United States; and compare the provisions and effects of congressional conflicts and compromises prior to the Civil War, including the roles of John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster.

**Geography.** The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of the United States, past and present. The student is expected to:

- locate places and regions of importance in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries
- compare places and regions of the United States in terms of physical and human characteristics
- analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major historical and contemporary events in the United States

**Citizenship.** The student understands the importance of the expression of different points of view in a democratic society. The student is expected to:

- identify different points of view of political parties and interest groups on important historical and contemporary issues

**Culture.** The student describes the historical development of the abolitionist movement;

- evaluate the impact of reform movements
- understand the major reform movements of the 19th century.

**Social studies skills.** The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology

- analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions
- organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps
- identify points of view from the historical context surrounding an event and the frame of reference which influenced the participants
- evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author; and

**Social studies skills.** The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

- use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation
- create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

### **Texas State Eighth Grade Social Studies TAKS Objectives**

SS.8.7C – Analyze the impact of slavery on different sections of the United States in the eras preceding the Civil War.

SS8.10B – The student is expected to answer questions about geographic distribution and patterns shown on maps, graphs, and charts.

SS8.11C – The student will analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major historical events in the United States.

SS.25 – The student will describe the issues and leaders of the Abolition movement and evaluate its impact.

SS.8.07B – The student will analyze the political, economic and social impact of the Abolition movement on slaves and free blacks in the North and South.

SS.8.10 – The student uses geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data.

**Introduction:**

Display a transparency of the engraving "Resurrection of Henry Box Brown"

Distribute copies of *Analyzing a Work of Art* to analyze the engraving. Give them the following information for the top portion –Title--"Resurrection of Henry Box Brown", Location—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Artist--John Osler

Take students step by step through the analysis, discussing each section before moving on to the next. The most important section will require you to coax inference from the students based on the evidence of what is in the picture. Students need to articulate both their inference and some evidence in the picture that they used to reach that inference.

*"Resurrection of Henry Box Brown"* Engraving by John Osler



[http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/hist/NEHworkshops/NEH/resource/images/brownBox\\_use.jpg](http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/hist/NEHworkshops/NEH/resource/images/brownBox_use.jpg)

*Analyzing a Work of Art* Worksheet

<http://clear.houstonisd.org/cms/lessonresources/16400.pdf>

**Concept Development:**

Provide background information on the engraving discussed during the Introduction activity and introduce the concept of the Escape Story by reading Ellen Levine's and Kadir Nelson's *Henry's Freedom Box* or showing Alfre Woodard's and Karyn Parsons's *The Journey of Henry Box Brown*. Discuss the story or DVD and inform students that this is one of the many stories of the Underground Railroad.

Distribute Dr. Matthew Pinsker's Underground Railroad: A New Definition; students will use this reading to complete graphically organized reading notes.

Note: This will provide students with a definition and overview of the Underground Railroad. You may also consult the following website for further research.

Defining the Underground Railroad

<http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/hist/NEHworkshops/NEH/resource/textbooks.htm>

**Key Concept(s):**

The institution of slavery led people take extreme measures to obtain freedom.

Various routes and methods were taken and used by escaping slaves.

**Key Vocabulary:**

Underground Railroad, Fugitives, Statutes, Vigilance Committees, Impunity,

Escape Story Abolition, Harriet Jacobs, Henry "Box" Brown, Emeline Chapman, Ellen and William Craft

**Key Question(s):**

What is the Underground Railroad?

Who were the key figures in the Underground Railroad?

How was the Underground Railroad different in the north than in the south?

What are the effects of the Underground Railroad?

What methods did slaves use to escape?

Where did most of the slaves find freedom?

What was an abolitionist?

What factors do all the routes have in common?

## **Concept Development**

Tell the students that for as long as there has been slavery in America, there have been slaves who have tried to escape to places where they would be considered free. Also tell them there have always been people willing to help slaves escape slavery. Have students brainstorm various ways escaping slaves could have escaped and where they would go.

Place students in groups of two to four.

Each group is given one escape story. Students will read their story as a group

Each group will then answer the questions on the worksheet, plot the cities listed (if any) in the story, and map out the route the escaping slave took (with a line connecting all the locations).

Each group will select a spokesperson who will give a brief overview of their person and the route they took.

At the same time, each group will select a recorder who will plot the cities and trace the route taken on a large map or a map on a transparency on the overhead as it is being described by the spokesperson thus creating one large combined map of all the different routes taken.

While the students are observing the other trails being included on the large map, they will draw in the other routes onto their group map.

After all the presentations have been made, the students will answer the questions below the map.

## **Assessment**

Student will create an escape story, which incorporates the following: geographic references to places and or routes along the Underground Railroad, references to key figures involved, and the effects or outcome of the escape. In addition the story should include an element of surprise. This story should be a first person narrative—from the point of view of a runaway slave.

## **Closure**

Review key questions.

Remind students that the institution of slavery led people to take extreme measures to obtain freedom. Point out that the general direction taken by the escaping slaves was to the north and have them brainstorm why. Explain to them that these are just a handful of stories and that many other routes were taken, as well as the ones they mapped. Discuss possible ways geography may have influenced the routes that were taken. If time permits, have the students brainstorm possible routes slaves in the Deep South and Texas may have taken and their possible final destinations. Have students complete an exit ticket in which answers the following: ***What would you do for freedom?***

## **Materials**

### **Engraving**

*“Resurrection of Henry Box Brown”* Engraving by John Osler

[http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/hist/NEHworkshops/NEH/resource/images/brown\\_Box\\_use.jpg](http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/hist/NEHworkshops/NEH/resource/images/brown_Box_use.jpg)

### **Analyzing a Work of Art Worksheet**

<http://clear.houstonisd.org/cms/lessonresources/16400.pdf>

### **Handout**

Underground Railroad: A New Definition by Matthew Pinsker, PhD.

### **Graphic Organizer**

Graphic Organizer-- Underground Railroad: A New Definition Reading Notes

### **Websites**

<http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/hist/NEHworkshops/NEH/resource/index.html>

### **Escape Stories**

Henry Box Brown

<http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/hist/NEHworkshops/NEH/resource/ugrrDocs.htm>

Harriet Jacobs

<http://www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/jaco-har.htm>

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*--Harriet Jacobs:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2924t.html> for Harriet Jacobs' story and  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h1541b.html> for Harriet Jacobs' Runaway Ad

William and Ellen Craft

William Wells Brown describes the Crafts' escape, *The Liberator*, January 12, 1849

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/craft/support1.html>

[http://www.georgiawomen.org/\\_honorees/craftes/index.htm](http://www.georgiawomen.org/_honorees/craftes/index.htm)

Emeline Chapman/Susan Bell's story

<http://deila.dickinson.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/ownwords&CISOPTR=25670&CISOSHOW=25627>

[http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/ugrr/img\\_escape.cfm](http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/ugrr/img_escape.cfm)

## Underground Railroad: A New Definition

The Underground Railroad was a metaphor used by northern abolitionists and free blacks to describe and publicize their efforts at helping runaway slaves during the years before the Civil War. While secrecy was often essential for particular operations, the general movement to help fugitives was no secret at all. Underground Railroad operatives in the North were openly defiant of federal statutes designed to help recapture runaways. These agents used state personal liberty laws, which aimed to protect free black residents from kidnapping, as a way to justify their fugitive aid work. Vigilance committees in northern cities such as Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Detroit formed the organized core of this effort. These committees often worked together and provided legal, financial and sometimes physical protection to any black person threatened by kidnappers or slave-catchers. Notable vigilance leaders included William Still in Philadelphia, David Ruggles in New York, Lewis Hayden in Boston and George DeBaptiste in Detroit. There were also thousands of other individuals, usually motivated by religious belief, who helped fugitives in less systematic but still bravely defiant ways during the decades before the Civil War. Though all of these Underground Railroad figures operated with relative impunity in the North and Canada, southern operatives faced grave and repeated dangers and thus maintained a much lower profile. This is one reason why Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave herself, was such a courageous figure. Her repeated rescues inside the slave state of Maryland became the basis for her legendary reputation as "Moses." Though Underground Railroad agents such as Tubman freed only a fraction of the nation's slaves (probably no more than several hundred each year out of an enslaved population of millions), their actions infuriated southern political leaders, dramatically escalated the sectional crisis of the 1850s, and ultimately helped bring about the Civil War and the end of slavery in the United States. (310 words)



William Still (1821-1902)



# Underground Railroad: A New Definition

## Reading Notes

Define  Underground Railroad
How were the actions of the operatives in the north different from those in the south?  North:          South:
What were the key northern cities along the Underground Railroad?
Who were the key figures?
What were the effects of the Underground Railroad?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

### **FOLLOWING THE TRAIL**

**DIRECTIONS:** Use the reading you have been given to answer the following questions.

1. Who is this story about?
  
2. Why did this person escape?
  
3. Where was this person when they first escaped?
  
4. What places did this person go through when they escaped?
  
5. Where did this person finally stop running?
  
6. Did anyone help them and if so, who and where?
  
7. What method(s) did this person use to escape? In other words, how did they escape?
  
8. How long did it take for them to escape?
  
9. What dangers did this person encounter on his/her escape?
  
10. What did this person do after they escaped?

**When you have finished the questions above, go to the back of this sheet.**

**MAP DIRECTIONS:** Use the information above to trace the route the escaping person followed. All of the places listed in the questions above must be located and marked on the map. Make sure you mark all the major stops with both a large dot and the name. Then, connect all the locations with a line. Copy the other trails discussed by the other groups on your map. After you have included all the routes on your map from the different presentations, then answer the following questions.



1. What are the general directions all the trails follow?
2. What methods of transportation were used by the people escaping?
3. What cities did at least two of the stories have in common while on the trail?
4. Use your imagination and look at your maps. What other places could slaves escape to?

## Escape Story Rubric

Create an escape story, which incorporates the following: geographic references to places and or routes along the Underground Railroad, references to key figures involved, evidence of key themes--**migration, self determination, freedom/liberty, and community/family**, and the effects or outcome of the escape. In addition the story should include an element of surprise. This story should be a first person narrative—from the point of view of a runaway slave. See the information below for an explanation of requirements and point values.

Geographic References 20 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

You story should include references to cities, towns, plantations, and other geographic features—rivers mountain ranges, etc. along the Underground Railroad.

Key Figures 20 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

While you are not retelling the story of one of the runaways discussed in class, your escape story should include references to those key figures involved in the Underground Railroad.

Key Themes 20 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

Your narrative should include evidence of one of the key themes—migration, self determination, freedom/liberty, and community/family. For example, in northern cities the African American community assisted runaways upon their arrival. This would be evidence of the theme community/family.

Element of Surprise 20 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

The escape stories examined in class included an element of surprise. For example, the Crafts disguised themselves in order to escape and Henry Box Brown mailed himself in a crate.

First Person Narrative 20 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

This story should be told from the point of view of a runaway slave. You will invent this character; you are responsible for providing some background information—place of birth, parents, plantation, etc.

Grammar/Mechanics -1 pt per error \_\_\_\_\_

You escape story should be free of grammar and spelling errors; in addition to errors in sentence structure.