



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MINI-UNIT
Upper-Elementary Grades
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OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to identify famous people and events of the Underground Railroad.
2. Students will be able to create a timeline with ten historical events that occurred during the time of the Underground Railroad.
3. Students will be able to create a route to freedom and identify the approximate distances and time for each route.
4. Students will explain three historical facts about the abolitionist they read about.

Materials Needed:

- Video- "The Quest for Freedom" (1992) Grace Products Corp. Richardson, TX: Grace Products Corp.
- Underground Railroad PowerPoint Presentation
- Map of the United States
- Map of local county and state
- "United States" McGraw-Hill (textbook)

PROCEDURES:

Day 1:

Have students individually think of what they know about slavery, Harriet Tubman, the Civil War, Underground Railroad, and any famous people during this era. As a class, have students share what they remember and write it down. Then, share the background student ideas of the Underground Railroad unit with the class.

Introduce the video "The Quest for Freedom" with an explanation of why slavery existed and why others opposed it. Continue with showing of the video. Following the video, group students (4 to a group) and have each group list as many effects of slavery as they can think of. Have each group share their results with the class.

Day 2:

Introduce the Underground Railroad PowerPoint. Show and discuss it to the class. After the presentation, have the class discuss it and tell why they found it interesting or what they learned. List their ideas on the board as they give them.

Using the history text, video notes, and other supplemental Underground Railroad books, students will make a timeline. Timeline dates will begin around mid 1700's and end at the present day. Each student will make his or her own timeline and include at least 10 historical dates. These dates may include events relating to historical people and their accomplishments, political events, or other historical facts pertaining to the Underground Railroad.

Day 3:

Students will be assigned to groups of 3 or 4 students. Each student will be assigned a historical figure from the Underground Railroad era. The student

will read about the figure. The biographies will include: Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglas, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Brown, and William Lloyd Garrison.

1. Each student will read the assigned material of their famous person.
2. Each student prepares a short presentation of their person's life and accomplishments.
3. The student then teaches other classmates about their person.
4. After presentations, students will be given the following writing prompt: Name one major accomplishment each person had and what you found most interesting about that person.

Day 4:

Prepare copies of the Kentucky state map for cooperative groups. Once in groups, have students map out a course from slave territory to free territory. Each group must:

1. Draw out their map
2. Calculate the distance for each route using the distance key on the map.
3. Estimate how long the trip would take. Have the students estimate the average time of 20 minutes to walk a mile. Multiply that time with the total miles of the route to get total hours. Also add in the amount of time needed to eat, rest, etc. Total all the hours for the journey then put into days and months.

Have the groups come back as a whole class and share their results explaining why they chose that route and the distance and time they calculated for the route. This activity would help students appreciate how far some people had to travel on foot to reach free territory.

In a learning journal, have each student write an entry telling 3 historical facts they have learned in studying the Underground Railroad. Explain why these facts are important.

Assessment:

1. Contributions to Think-Pair-Share and class list will be assessed informally through observation.
2. Observations of group discussion and a list of effects of slavery will be assessed.
3. Assessment of time lines will be handed in and checked for 10 correct historical events.
4. Maps will be turned in for assessment.
5. Papers on three important ideas they have learned from the Underground Railroad unit will be assessed for correctness.

Activities References:

United States, McGraw-Hill (student textbook)

- Harriet Tubman (p.455, 476, 480)
- Sojourner Truth (p. 457)
- Frederick Douglass (p. 444, 446-449, 467, 479-480)
- Harriet Beecher Stowe (p.462)
- John Brown (p. 463)
- William Lloyd Garrison (p. 453, 456-457)