

GO DOWN MOSES



SUBJECT: Social Studies

TOPIC: Brief introduction of the Underground Railroad,
3-4 days

GRADE: 5th.

LENGTH:

secret codes, and ownership.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will *recognize and demonstrate* knowledge of vocabulary *relating to* the Underground Railroad.
2. Students will *examine* why slaves ran away and why some chose to stay on the plantation and work.
3. Students will *acknowledge* the magnitude of secret code words and phrases that were embedded in songs used by slaves and abolitionists.
4. Students will *discuss, write about, and illustrate* items that should be owned, and items that shouldn't be owned.

MATERIALS:

- Freedom River by Doreen Rappaport
- Freedom Light Underground Railroad Stories from Ripley, Ohio by Edith M. Gaines
- Songs of the Underground Railroad, recording by Kim and Reggie Harris
- Cassette player
- Transparency with words from the song, “*Go Down Moses*”
- Overhead projector
- Writing prompts
- Copy of vocabulary *Picture Dictionary* worksheet

- White construction paper
- White crayons



- **Watercolor paints and brushes**
- **Transparency of Underground Railroad Routes of 1830-1860**
- **Websites**
- **Projector for use with computer programs OR**
- ***Smart Board*, individual laptops, or computer access**
- ***Inspiration* software**
- ***Underground Railroad* Board Game**
- ***BINGO* vocabulary cards**

PROCEDURE:

DAY 1

- Introduce students to the beginning of the slave trade in this country.
- Introduce Underground Railroad metaphor and vocabulary. Use web site www.beavton.k12.or.us/Greenway/leahy/ugrr/index.htm
- Students illustrate vocabulary by discussing definitions and drawing appropriate illustrations for each vocabulary word. *This will be completed as homework.
- Use transparency to show known routes of the Underground Railroad from 1830-1860. Discuss the importance of this area, as the Ohio River at that time, separated free from slave states.
- Students will use the thinking skills of *Forecasting* from the Talents Unlimited Thinking Skills Program, to brainstorm many and varied causes and effects for slavery.
- Students will use *Productive Thinking* to think of many, varied, and unusual ways to resist slavery or runaway from slavery. Students will then add details to their list.
- To close the lesson, read an excerpt from Freedom Light about Eliza's crossing of the frozen Ohio River.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT – DAY 1:

- Students will be informally assessed during class discussions and group activities.
- Vocabulary *Picture Dictionaries* will be collected and graded to check for understanding of key vocabulary words.
- Students will use their journals to reflect on how they would have felt to be Eliza, struggling for her life across the frozen Ohio River on that cold winter night.

PROCEDURE:

DAY 2

- Review vocabulary from yesterday's lesson using vocabulary *Picture Dictionaries*, and then collect those worksheets.
- Ask students, "If you were a slave, would you attempt to runaway on the Underground Railroad if you were given the chance, knowing that the penalty might be mutilation or death; or would you endure your captivity and remain with your family? Explain to a partner your choice. (Be sure to explain the meaning of the words that have been underlined.)"
- Read Freedom River and discuss John Parker's bravery during the rescue of the slave baby from the master's bedroom.
- Sing, *Go Down Moses* while students think about possible secret codes or phrases embedded in this song.
- Look at a transparency with the words from the song, *Go Down Moses*. Students will pair-share with a partner to identify secret phrases in the song. Students will then share their thoughts with the class and discuss why this secret language was such a necessary part of the Underground Railroad.
- Do a *Forecasting* activity from Talents Unlimited. Think of many, varied causes for wanting to run away and many, varied effects if you are caught as a runaway slave.
- Close the lesson with a discussion about items that should be owned and items that shouldn't be owned.
- Students will write a paragraph about what they think shouldn't be owned, entitled, "Who Owns?"

STUDENT ASSESSMENT-DAY 2:

- Informally assess students during class discussions about group work.
- Collect and grade homework, "Who Owns?"

PROCEDURE:

DAY 3

- Share thoughts on yesterday's reflection, "What would you do if you were a young slave..."
- Students will listen to recordings of slave spirituals while they complete their crayon and watercolor descriptions of "Who Owns?". Students will use a plain white sheet of paper on which they will write highlights from their written description in white crayon. Students will then use watercolor paints to paint over their crayoned descriptions of "Who Owns?"
- Students will then be broken into various groups to do one of the following:
 - A group of students will play the *Underground Railroad Board Game*, in which the spinner will determine if they will escape to freedom or be returned to captivity. Students will then discuss how that compared to a slave's life.



- Two groups of students each will play BINGO using the unit's vocabulary words. They will be provided with an answer sheet to self-check their responses.
- A group of students will create a concept map about the Underground Railroad using *Inspiration* software.
- Students will be given the opportunity to rotate at least once, so that they can participate in at least two different groups.
- Students will then discuss with the class what they learned from each small group experience.
- Finally, students will be given the chance to reflect on the entire unit, by putting their thoughts down in writing. What they didn't know, what they now know, or what they want to know more about, as well as, how they would have felt to be a slave in the early part of our country's history.

