

PRE-VISIT LESSON PLAN – THE COMING OF THE CIVIL WAR (GRADES 5 & 8)

OVERVIEW: This lesson plan is intended as an introduction to the Coming of the Civil War tour for grades 5 & 8. It will acquaint students with some of the divisive events which led to the outbreak of the Civil War, from colonization through Reconstruction. This lesson plan will also help orient your class to the layout of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (NURFC), specifically the galleries and exhibits which you will see during your time here. Students will learn about how the philosophical divide over enslavement showed up in virtually every aspect of the US’ social, political, legal, religious, and economic life. Both the pre and post-visit lesson plans and the tour itself underscore that Free States and Slave States were not only reflective of geographic divides but also ethical, cultural, and values-based ones. The activities given here satisfy learning standards from Social Studies, Technology, and Science. The times given for each activity are estimates based on doing all three over one or two days. Depending on how deeply into discussion you would like to go, each can be spread out over a full class day.

OBJECTIVES: Students will:

- » Describe how enslavement lay the groundwork for the Civil War.
- » Understand how enslavement was simultaneously a race-based and economic system.
- » Introduce students to how intertwined enslavement was in the United States’ culture to the point where war was inevitable.
- » Orient future visitors to NURFC’s layout.

VOCABULARY:

- » **Conductor:** on the Underground Railroad, a person who would guide freedom seekers from safe house to safe house or hiding place to hiding place.
- » **Free State:** a state which, prior to the Civil War, prohibited enslavement. This is in contrast to **Slave States**.
- » **Freedom Seeker:** a person who fled African American enslavement in the US South in order to make their way north to freedom, typically in Canada. Also known as an escaped slave or a fugitive slave, “freedom seeker” is the preferred term at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.
- » **Fugitive Slave Act:** a law passed by the US Congress in 1850 mandating the return of captured freedom seekers to their enslavers. The citizens and governments of Free States were required to cooperate.
- » **Grueling:** extremely tiring and demanding.
- » **Skiff:** a flat-bottomed boat typically used in rivers and streams, rowed by one person.
- » **Slave State:** a state which, prior to the Civil War, allowed enslavement. This is in contrast to a **Free State**.
- » **Surface Area:** the total area of the surface of a three-dimensional object.

CONFLICT BUILD-UP ACTIVITY (45 MINUTES TO AN ENTIRE CLASS PERIOD)

This activity satisfies Ohio's 2017 Learning Standards for Social Studies, including:

- » *European exploration and colonization had lasting effects which can be used to understand the Western Hemisphere today (History Strand, p. 19).*
- » *Regions can be determined using various criteria (eg landform, climate, population, cultural, or economic) (Geography Strand, p. 19).*
- » *Disputes over the nature of federalism, complicated by economic developments in the United States, resulted in sectional issues, including slavery, which led to the American Civil War (History Strand, p. 25).*

STRUCTURE: Separate students into groups of about three to five people. Pass around the materials per group for this activity.

MATERIALS PER GROUP: Selections from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, papers and pencils, maps depicting the geography of the United States in the underground railroad era including the major exports of the north and south (eg cotton) and well as which states seceded from the Union, map of NURFC's third floor.

INTRO: The lesson begins with a review of the cultural and physical landscape of the US during the antebellum/ Underground Railroad era; Slave and Free states, the importance of cotton and enslaved labor to the economic prosperity of the South, and the strong abolitionist feelings stirring up North. From here, the teacher should describe *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, including information about the author, characters, general plot, and impact on society. The teacher should then discuss – or recap, if you have already discussed this – Dred Scott, the raid on Harper's Ferry, the election of Abraham Lincoln, Fort Sumter, and the Confederacy's succession from the Union. Explain to the class that these events contributed to feelings of ill will between the North and South.

ACTIVITY: Each group should get some paper and at least one pen or pencil. They should also have a copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or at least some selections from it. Ask students to brainstorm how they might feel about all of these events if they were a wealthy southern enslaver, an enslaved person, a northern abolitionist, a store owner, a poor farmer, or a businessman (who perhaps owned a northern textile factory). From there, students should also find a ten minute scene from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to act out. These scenes should include main characters.

This website provides some good details about Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/educators/curriculum/middle-school/uncle-toms-cabin>

Once students are done, explain that they will learn more about figures like Harriet Beecher Stowe. This will happen in the gallery "From Slavery to Freedom." Ask students to find and circle this gallery on their map.

SOUTHERN SECESSION AND LINCOLN'S ELECTION ACTIVITY (45 MINUTES TO AN HOUR)

This activity satisfies Ohio and Kentucky's (2017) Learning Standards for Social Studies, including:

- » *The United States government and its policies played a major role in determining how the U.S. economy functioned prior to Reconstruction (Kentucky Standards, Grade 8 Economics).*
- » *Disputes over the nature of federalism, complicated by economic developments in the United States, resulted in sectional issues, including slavery, which led to the American Civil War (Ohio Standards, History Strand, p. 25).*

OBJECTIVE:

- » Students will be able to describe Abraham Lincoln's presidential platform regarding slavery (i.e. that it is morally wrong, should not be extended in the West, and is permissible in the South) and African American rights (i.e. that blacks have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as listed in the Declaration of Independence).
- » Students will be able to describe why Abraham Lincoln's presidential platform alarmed slave owners and caused secession by some southern states (i.e. they lost power in the federal government/Congress and therefore favored individual state rights).

MATERIALS:

Download the lesson plan, along with the following materials, at the bottom of this page at this link: <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/educators/curriculum/middle-school/southern-secession-and-lincolns-election>.

- » A map of NURFC's "Abraham Lincoln and Slavery" reading worksheet: This handout contains various primary source quotes said by Abraham Lincoln. A student copy and teacher annotated copy is included.
- » "Dividing up the Free and Slave States" worksheet
- » Map of the Free and Slave states in the US in 1860
- » "Assignment Expectations for the Abraham Lincoln Campaign Advertisement" chart
- » "Grading Rubric for the Abraham Lincoln Campaign Advertisement" chart

INTRODUCTION:

The teacher will begin the lesson by asking students to answer the following questions:

- » True or False: Abraham Lincoln thought slavery was morally wrong.
- » True or False: Abraham Lincoln thought black and whites were equal.
- » True or False: Abraham Lincoln thought southerners were evil people for having slaves.
- » True or False: Abraham Lincoln did not want slavery to expand into westward territories or states.
- » True or False: Southerners seceded since they would have eventually lost power in the federal government if slavery was ended in the West.

The teacher should explain that there is no right or wrong answer at this point in the lesson. The teacher just wants to determine what the student believes about Lincoln.

The teacher will explain to students that they will later return to these questions. The teacher should then state today's learning objectives. The teacher will point out that many southerners were alarmed by Lincoln's presidential platform. He or she will also state that many historians today find Lincoln's presidential platform distressing. Lincoln is not, in other words, the unambiguous social hero that many Americans believe him to be. Instead his presidential campaign may have started the Civil War, and he himself may have been a racist by modern standards.

PROCEDURE:

Students should study this lesson after first learning basic civil war vocabulary terms (i.e. civil war, secession, union, confederacy, and popular sovereignty) and the causes of the civil war (i.e. the Missouri Compromise, Kansas Nebraska Act, and Dred Scott case).

ACTIVITY 1:

Instruction: Working with a partner, students will complete the worksheet “Abraham Lincoln and Slavery.” The teacher has tried to make these primary sources more accessible to students by:

- » Having multiple sources that cover the same topic
- » Breaking lengthy, complex texts into smaller quotes
- » Defining some advanced vocabulary terms in parenthesis
- » Allowing each student to work with a partner

Once students are done working, the class will discuss each discussion question on the “Abraham Lincoln and Slavery” worksheet. The teacher can call on students at random to see how he or she answered each question. The teacher could also have students raise their hand for the yes/no questions. If they said “yes” they would raise their hand; a “no” response would be signaled to the teacher since the student did not raise their hand.

As the students report their answer to each question, the teacher will facilitate a class discussion regarding Lincoln’s campaign platform. The teacher will ask students to consider:

- » Who is Lincoln’s intended audience for this text?
- » How did pro-slavery southerners view Lincoln at this time? The teacher may need to explain this.
- » What type of voter is Lincoln try to sway to his side through this speech? What will he need to say to win this person’s vote?
- » How could someone read this text and think Lincoln was for black equality and black rights?
- » How could someone read this text and think Lincoln was NOT for black equality and black rights?

The purpose of this discussion is for students to discover that Lincoln was portrayed by the pro-slavery press as a dangerous abolition. The teacher may need to give some history about the Lincoln-Douglas debates here. Lincoln was also trying to sway independent voters, which meant he had to appear moderate and not conservative on the issue of slavery. He had to show, in other words, that the press’s view of him was incorrect. The debate in history is whether Lincoln was carefully selecting his words as to not disclose that he was in fact for black equality or whether Lincoln was indeed proclaiming his viewpoint that blacks were inferior to whites.

ACTIVITY 2:

The class will then complete the “Dividing up the Free and Slave States” worksheet. This worksheet shows the break down of the US along the lines of free and slave states. To complete this worksheet:

1. Students will first examine a free and slave state map of the US in 1860. A sample map can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/127liho/127locate2.htm> Many textbooks also include this map in their curriculum.
2. Students will then fill out the first chart on the “Dividing up the Free and Slave States” worksheet. The teacher will call on students at random to identify whether each state is a slave holding state or a free state. The teacher can model filling out the worksheet using a smart board or overhead projector
3. The teacher will pause after the first chart is completed and ask the class how many votes each side had in the Senate. The class should notice that at this point each side has an equal number of votes in the Senate.
4. The class will then fill out the second chart, which includes the admission of Missouri, Maine, California, and Kansas.

The teacher will then ask the class how many votes each side had in the senate. The class should notice that Free states have 4 more votes in the senate over slave states.

5. The teacher will then ask students whether President Lincoln would have approved a request by a western territory to be annexed to the US as a slave state. Lincoln's campaign platform showed that he would have vetoed such a request. In other words his election is one (among others) reasons southerners seceded. Many states secede knowing they would lose power and their way of life. They argued for self-government and state's rights over federal power.

As another checking for understanding activity the teacher would return to the true/false questions from the mental set and discuss the correct responses with students. The answers are...

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. True

ACTIVITY 3:

The teacher will ask students to design a campaign poster, song, cartoon, or speech regarding Lincoln. Students will work individually on their campaign advertisement.

ASSESSMENT:

- » Students will complete and discuss the mental set True/False questions.
- » Students will read and discuss the "Abraham Lincoln and Slavery" worksheet.
- » Students will complete and discuss the "Dividing up the Free and Slave States" worksheet
- » Students will complete their own Lincoln presidential advertisement.

Pass around maps of NURFC's third floor. Explain that "From Slavery to Freedom" includes a display about the Civil War. Ask students to locate this gallery again.

FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT ACTIVITY (45 MINS)

This activity satisfies Ohio's 2017 Learning Standards for Social Studies, including:

- » *The practice of race-based slavery led to the forced migration of Africans to the American colonies. Their knowledge and traditions contributed to the development of those colonies and the United States (History Strand, p. 25).*
- » *Westward expansion contributed to economic and industrial development, debates over sectional issues, war with Mexico, and the displacement of American Indians.*

STRUCTURE: Have students separate into groups of three to five. If possible, have chaperones sit at tables or circulate among them.

MATERIALS:

- » Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 Essay https://d43fweuh3sg5l.cloudfront.net/media/media_files/Fugitive_Slave_Act_of_1850_Handout_yzLykmm.pdf
- » Harriet Jacobs on the Fugitive Slave Act https://d43fweuh3sg5l.cloudfront.net/media/media_files/Harriet_Jacobs_on_the_Fugitive_Slave_Law_P2SB2aq.pdf
- » Pen and paper, map of NURFC's third floor.

INTRO: This activity focuses on the Fugitive Slave Act, one of a series of compromises intended to forestall the Civil War. Instead, it inflamed abolitionist opposition to enslavement. Inform students that they are to analyze the Act of 1850, its impact on enslaved people, and how it influenced the abolitionist movement.

ACTIVITY: Pass around the two documents. Explain that the first one is a write-up of the Fugitive Slave Act and its overall impact. The second one is written by Harriet Jacobs, a formerly enslaved woman who described the impact the Act had on her. As students read them, have them discuss first in smaller groups, and then as a larger class:

- » Describe the main principles of the Fugitive Slave Act and how it impacted enslaved people who escaped to free states or territories.
- » Who are the fugitives mentioned in this essay? Using evidence from the text, what was life like in the North after the passing of this law?
- » How did the passing of this law embolden abolitionists?
- » Who was Harriet Jacobs? What specific facts about her life are present in the text? What can you infer about her character from reading this passage? Use examples from the text to support your answer.
- » Describe a few of the stories she mentions about the ways this law impacted people of color in New York City.
- » How does Jacobs describe her own experience living in New York City after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed?
- » According to Jacobs, how did the African American community in New York City respond to this law?

Pass around maps of NURFC's second and third floor. Explain that the film *Brothers of the Borderland*, which plays in the "Flight to Freedom" theater across from the "Escape" Gallery, touches on the practical impact of the Fugitive Slave Act. Have students find and circle the theater where *Brothers of the Borderland* plays. From there, ask them to locate the "From Slavery to Freedom" gallery on the third floor, as that contains information about both the Fugitive Slave Act as well as a replica of Harriet Jacobs' hiding place.