

South or North
Lesson Plan – 5th grade
Eve Evans

Rationale: To uncover students’ preconceived notions of the institution of slavery in both the northern and southern colonies during the colonial period through 1800, and then to use this knowledge to guide a more in-depth study.

Compelling Questions:

- How did geographical location shape the lives of enslaved individuals?
- How did these differences impact the public’s view and “acceptance” of slavery?

Materials:

- copies of runaway slave ads from both northern and southern colonies
- copies of primary and secondary sources (both northern and southern) depicting enslaved lives, treatment, etc. (make sure that any reference to location is eliminated)

Procedure:

1. Provide a copy of each of the sources of information at different areas within the classroom.
2. Provide each student with a recording sheet divided into 3 sections where they should record the number of the information they are working with, a section to indicate where they believe it depicts enslaved conditions/situations within either northern or southern colonies (N or S), and a section where they can provide some evidence/reason for their decision.
3. Divide students into equal groups.
4. Assign each group to a different information source. Allow them time to read and complete their recording sheet. (Depending on your preference or purpose, you can have them do this silently and independently or allow the groups to discuss and debate what they read.)
5. Rotate groups through the stations, reading and recording at each.
6. Once everyone is finished, gather as a whole group. Discuss each piece of information, asking students to share what they believe and the rationale for those decisions. Do NOT reveal the correct location until all the sources have been discussed and ideas have been shared.
7. Share the background for each of the information sources.
8. Ask students to share their surprises, learnings, and wonderings.
9. Use this information to guide & plan future lessons

Assessment:

- Engagement in discussions (teacher observation)
- Sharing of learning and wonderings (teacher observation)

Examples of Slave Life

Rhode Island

(Share only the highlighted text with students)

When my master returned from the island, his wife told him of the affair, but for the present he seemed to take no notice of it, and mentioned not a word about it to me. Some days after his return, in the morning as I was putting on a log in the fire-place, not suspecting harm from any one, I received a most violent stroke on the crown of my head with a club two feet long and as large round as a chair-post. This blow very badly wounded my head, and the scar of it remains to this day. The first blow made me have my wits about me you may suppose, for as soon as he went to renew it, I snatched the club out of his hands and dragged him out of the door. He then sent for his brother to come and assist him, but I presently left my master, took the club he wounded me with, carried it to a neighboring Justice of the Peace, and complained of my master. He finally advised me to return to my master, and live contented with him till he abused me again, and then complain. I consented to do accordingly. But before I set out for my master's, up he come and his brother Robert after me. The Justice improved this convenient opportunity to caution my master. He asked him for what he treated his slave thus hastily and unjustly, and told him what would be the consequence if he continued the same treatment towards me. After the Justice had ended his discourse with my master, he and his brother set out with me for home, one before and the other behind me. When they had come to a bye place, they both dismounted their respective horses, and fell to beating me with great violence.

(title page) A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa: But Resident above Sixty Years in the United States of America. Related by Himself.

Venture

iv, 5-32 p.

New-London

Printed by C. Holt, at the Bee-Office

1798

(Remove the highlighted text from the student version of this text.)

slaves at Mount Vernon had two hours off for meals during the day. Dinner break took place in the early afternoon. While slaves at Mount Vernon toiled throughout the year, there were regular days off as well as a few holidays. Slaves at Mount Vernon typically worked a six-day week where Sunday was generally the day off for everyone on the estate.

Slaves were granted time off to celebrate religious holidays as well, the longest being the three to four days off given for Christmas. Other religious holidays that provided days off were Easter and Whitsunday, also known as Pentecost.

Enslaved persons at Mount Vernon found a variety of ways to fill their time off from work. Evenings were frequently spent with activities to benefit themselves and their families rather than their master. On a daily basis, in addition to their day's work, slaves had their own housekeeping work such as tending chickens and garden plots, cooking, preserving the produce of gardens, and caring for clothing. With little free time and control over their everyday life, Mount Vernon's enslaved population attempted to exert some free will and choice when it came to their private lives.

<https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/private-lives-of-slaves/> Here you will find the documented primary sources that were used to write this piece of text

"The husband and wife sleep on a mean pallet, the children on the ground; a very bad fireplace, some utensils for cooking, but in the middle of this poverty some cups and a teapot."

--Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Mount Vernon visitor, 1798
Runaway transcribed ads from Virginia

Copy of text from two runaway slave ads (Virginia)

1775—Harry . . . a young negro man named HARRY, who can read with him several suits of clothing. I purchase brought him from Scotland, where he had been many years. He has had the smallpox, can speak Scotch, and sings Scotch songs. . . John Aylett, VG, 3 Nov. 1775

1772—David . . . a very likely young Virginia born Negro Man named DAVID, of a yellowish Complexion, and about five Feet five Inches high . . . Though his Hair is of the Negro Kind, he keeps it very high and well-combed; but, as he wants to be free, I imagine he will cut it off, and get a Wig to alter and disguise himself. He had with him thirty or forty Shillings in Silver Money, and a Brass Medal with the Image of our present King and Queen on it, which he will endeavour to pass for Gold. He can read pretty well, and I make no Doubt will endeavour to pass for a Freeman and get himself a forged Pass, and endeavour for some foreign Part, either by getting on Board of some Vessel or stealing some Gentleman's Horse and make for Carolina. He has always been my Waiting Man when I went from home, and is a good Waiter, Driver, and Hostler [stableman], understands something of Gardening, of combing and dressing Wigs and Hair, can plow, work at the Hoe and Axe very well, and is, on the Whole, a very clever active brisk Fellow. . . . Thomas Gaskins, VG, 5 November 1772

Ten Dollars Reward!

RAN away from the

Subscriber, on the night of the 15th instant, a Negro Boy, named *Caspar*, 18 years old, nearly 6 feet high, stout and well made, walks pretty erect, speaks fluently: He wore away a light colored sailor jacket, a mixed green and black swanstown vest, a pair of blue overalls, a Holland shirt, a pair of gray socks, a pair of thick shoes, a brown home-made great coat, and a large old Hat; has a small scar on his left cheek. He has lately been guilty of theft, and made his escape through fear of punishment. Whoever will return said Negro, or secure him so that his master may get him again, shall receive the above reward, and all reasonable charges.— All persons are forbid harboring, trusting or employing said Negro, on penalty of the Law.

SAMUEL MCLELLAN.

Windsor, Connecticut, May 16, 1803.

20 Dollars Reward.

RANAWAY from the subscriber on **TUESDAY** the 30th inst. a bright colored Negro Man named

ABNER,

bought by me of Wm. S. Brown of this city: the said negro is about 21 years old, 5 feet 7 inches high, or thereabout. Very slim and straight, speaks English only, no scars about him perceptible; had on when he went away a blue surtout Coat, a fur Hat, a pair of Bennets Cord yellow Pantaloons, a pair of brokans, and coarse shirt. The above reward and all reasonable charges will paid, for apprehending and lodging said negro in jail, or returning him to the subscriber in Fouché st. one house from Julie-st. No. 43.

WHO HAS FOR SALE,

Two first rate HORSES, a DRAY, and a Negro WOMAN, cook, washer, &c.

D. L. PEIRCE.