

### Finding a Narrative

Emotional Engagement	Central Image or Metaphor	Organizing Content into Story Form
<p><b>What is emotionally engaging about the topic? How is it meaningful? Why should it matter to us?</b></p> <p>The story of the Underground Railroad evokes feelings about human rights and dignity and awe at the potential for some people to dehumanize others in a system which treated and saw people as things rather than as beings.</p> <p>Another source of wonder is the creativity used by slaves to find their route to freedom.</p> <p><b>What binary concepts best capture the meaning and emotion of the topic? If this were a story, what would the opposing forces be?</b></p> <p>Slavery/ freedom                      Alternatives: selfishness/ helpfulness; hope/ fear</p>	<p><b>What content most dramatically illustrates the contrast between the binary opposite? Is there a metaphor or image that can do this?</b></p> <p>A slave, in restraints, singing a song about freedom</p>	<p><b>How can we organize the content into a developing story form?</b></p> <p>In this unit, we will want students to experience the tension between slavery and freedom. We could start the unit dramatically by giving students some sense of what slavery entails. The teacher could tell the students that she or he will be taking away their privileges – they can no longer write to each other (or at all) or move about the room freely. If they want to sharpen their pencils or use the bathroom, they must always seek permission (which will rarely be granted). When the lunch bell rings, they may not get their food or go to the playground. They will have no freedom of movement, expression, assembly, etc.</p> <p>Alternately, the teacher could ask students to draw, on ten separate pieces of paper, pictures of the ten things that are the most precious to them (including people, places, objects, songs, food, activities, etc). They should each sit with the ten pictures surrounding them. The teacher will ask various students to explain why they chose one of those things, and why it is important to them. Then, the teacher will remove the pictures, one by one, from all of the students, telling them that they are not allowed to have families, for example, or toys or books or jewellery. The teacher could then ask the students to write about the feelings they had on having all of their rights and treasures removed.</p> <p>The unit will focus on the creative ways slaves overcame slavery to find freedom (including coding messages in songs, lanterns and quilts, memorizing directions, trusting strangers, reading the stars, taking huge risks and demonstrating extraordinary courage).</p> <p>At some point in the unit, we will want students to experience the perspectives of the slave owners (how did they benefit from slavery? what “reasoning” did they use to justify this system of oppression?), as well as the perspectives of those people who helped the slaves escape (what dangers did they face? why did they take such huge risks for others, usually strangers?).</p>

# Developing Cognitive Tools

# A Path to Freedom: The Underground Railroad

Images and Metaphor	Rhythm, Rhyme and Patterns	Drama and Roleplay	Teacher-led/structured ↕ Student-led/open-ended
<p><b>What activities help students develop images, metaphors, other forms of creative depiction?</b></p> <p>Draw an image that represents your future as a freed/ imprisoned slave.</p> <p>Write 2 poems based on metaphors showing the perspectives of two people with very different positions on slavery (e.g. slave owner/ slave or freed/ imprisoned slave). Topics could be family, love, freedom, luxury, safety, etc.</p> <p>What is a world without oppression like?</p> <p><b>What jokes or fantastic stories can be found or invented that relate to the topic?</b></p> <p>Why did slaves not waste time on the Underground Railroad? Because they were trying to e-race (erase) oppression.</p>	<p><b>What activities help students experience and extend a sense of rhythm, rhyme or predictability?</b></p> <p>The journey of the slaves to freedom is marked by its own rhythm of expectation, hope and fear. Students could learn and perform well-known spirituals, such as "Go Down, Moses," and "Follow the Drinking Gourd." These could possibly be sung daily to give students a sense of the rhythm of hope they helped provide for the slaves.</p> <p>The class could write its own songs of freedom and hope, possibly based on the tunes of well-known songs/ spirituals.</p> <p>Folksongs based on the story of the Underground Railroad, such as "Harriet Tubman," could be sung.</p> <p>Students could write triangle poems to visually represent the rhythm the slaves must have felt in moving from one situation to its opposite (slavery/ freedom, hope/ despair, anger/ gratitude, powerlessness/ powerfulness, cruelty/ kindness, etc.).</p>	<p><b>How can the students become characters in the story? How can they be encouraged and aided to contribute to or retell it using their own words, gestures, and actions?</b></p> <p>Students could keep journals, recording the thoughts and feelings of a particular slave on her or his journey to freedom.</p> <p>Students could perform "talk show" interviews, in which the host asks ex-slaves about their journeys, present lives, etc. (Choosing a particular theme, such as elderly slaves, or child slaves, might provide an effective focus.)</p> <p>Students could write monologues capturing a moment or experience in a slave's life. Other students could perform tableaux to dramatically represent the events/ feelings of the monologue.</p>	

## Looking Forward and Concluding

## A Path to Freedom: The Underground Railroad

Towards Further Understanding	Resolution	Assessment
<p><b><i>How can the unit develop embryonic forms of Romantic, Philosophic, Ironic understanding? What cognitive tools characteristic of literacy, the disciplines, or embodied self-awareness can be introduced here?</i></b></p> <p>What other similar oppressive situations have existed in history (e.g. WWII, South Africa)?</p> <p>What outstanding individuals have helped create freedom/ human rights (Gandhi, Martin Luther King, etc.)?</p> <p>In what other oppressive situations have “normal” people demonstrated heroic qualities?</p>	<p><b><i>How does the story end? How are the opposites mediated or resolved?</i></b></p> <p>We will want the unit to end on a positive note, that of the slaves successfully finding their way to freedom.</p> <p>The class could create a play, centering on one slave’s journey to freedom, all the challenges she or he faces (e.g. hunger, cold, bounty hunters, dogs, wild animals, illness, loneliness and despair), and the creativity she or he uses to succeed (e.g. trust in strangers, memorization, intuition, strength, courage). Symbols and songs could be woven throughout the play.</p> <p>Students could transform their classroom into a museum--each student could display an artifact related to the Underground Railroad and a written description of why it was important. Artifacts could include “real” letters written by slaves who had found freedom, lyrics of spirituals, maps of the routes taken by escaping slaves, “recreations” of the inside of typical Quaker homes, etc.</p>	<p><b><i>How can one know whether the topic has been understood, its importance grasped and the content learned?</i></b></p> <p>Did students know about the realities of the daily lives of slaves?</p> <p>Did students express empathy for the struggles slaves endured?</p> <p>Did students understand the legal changes which occurred after the Civil War?</p> <p>Did students understand the importance of symbols and memorization (as a way to retain and convey information for illiterate slaves)?</p> <p>Did students understand how slave owners benefited from this oppressive system (e.g. leisure time, clothes, food)?</p> <p>Did students understand some of the qualities/ values held by those people who helped the slaves escape?</p>