Geography of the East Helps the Success of the Underground Railroad

Overview: This is a unit of study of the Underground Railroad and how the geography of the land helped to provide an escape route for slaves. Analyzing a map of different routes will show the movement of a people seeking a life of freedom.

National Geography Standard 9: The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth’s surface.
People move for a variety of reasons.
- Explain why people move from one place to another, as exemplified by being able to
  - Explain reasons why people may feel forced to leave their current homes to go to a new location (e.g., fear of war, religious persecution, famine).
  - Explain how groups of people may be forced to move against their wills (e.g., African slave trade, Cherokee Trail of Tears, Japanese internment camps in World War II).

Geographic Question:
How did the geography of the land along the Underground Railroad provide a route to help slaves escape to freedom?

Optional Geographic Questions:
- Where were the plantations located? Why?
- How do slaves know where to go to seek freedom, especially if they are traveling after dark?
- Where did the slaves come from? Why?
- Where do the slaves want to go in order to be free?
- Why do slaves want to go there?

Oregon Geography Content Standards
SS.G.5.7. Identify, locate, and describe places and regions in the United States.
SS.G.5.9. Explain migration, trade, and cultural patterns in the United States.

Connections to Common Core- Fifth Grade
SS.HT.5.6 Use primary and secondary sources to formulate historical questions, to examine an historical account about an issue of the time, and to reconstruct the literal meaning of the passages by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, and what events led to these developments and what consequences or outcomes followed.
SS.HT.5.22. Identify characteristics of an event, issue, or problem, suggesting possible causes and results.
L-1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L-2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L-3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

W-9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
SL-1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
SL-4 Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.
SL-5 Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

Objectives:
In completing this unit, students should be able to:
• Explain how African Americans were forced against their will to move: from their native land, from their new “homes” in America
  o Geography themes: movement, region, location
• Explain why slaves were willing to risk their lives to flee north
  o Geography theme: human environment interaction

Method to reach objectives:
Students will view and analyze two images of slaves seeking their freedom by attempting to travel on the Underground Railroad. Students will use a third historical image to create and answer geography analysis questions, create a poster, and present their project.

Grade Levels: 5

Duration/Time: Approximately seven days, each day having a 45 minute block (Dependent upon student progress on final project.)

Materials:
Large pieces of blank poster paper
Watercolor markers
Crayons
Scissors
Glue
Timer
1 historical map of Underground Railroad routes
3 historical images of escaping slaves
3 Geographical Image Analysis Tool handouts
Access to laptops/computer Lab
Class set of magnifying lens/ jeweler’s loop

Background:
This unit will be used during Black History month. Students will have been immersed in the study of civil rights and will be studying the history of segregation. A review of slavery will have taken place prior to the teaching of this unit. Prior knowledge of the slave trade, where slaves originated from, what the expectations of slaves were on the plantations, and famous slaves (Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass) will be covered.

Students will also know the difference between an indentured servant (Person under contract for a period of time before being set free) and a slave (Person who is owned by another human being).

Students will have knowledge of what the Underground Railroad was:
• Who the creator of the Underground Railroad was (Harriet Tubman)
• What the Underground Railroad is (Secret routes for slaves to travel to travel north to gain freedom)
• Why did the Underground Railroad come into existence (Help slaves escape to freedom)
• Who were “Conductors” (White and Black people that helped escaping slaves)
• What were “Depots” (Safe places for slaves to stay while escaping to freedom)
• General direction the Underground Railroad moved (north)

Vocabulary:
• Conductors: people who lead slaves along the escape routes
• Depots: place where slaves could stay safely along the escape routes (houses, barns, cabins, etc.)
• Railroad: method of travel by locomotive
• Underground Railroad: network of secret routes and safe houses used by 19th-century enslaved people of African descent in the United States in efforts to escape to Free states and Canada with the aid of abolitionists and allies who were sympathetic to their cause
• Primary source: an artifact, a document, a recording, or other source of information that was created at the time- firsthand account
• Secondary source: an account or interpretation of an event created by a person without firsthand knowledge or experience
• Geography: the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments.
Lessons:

Day 1: Anticipatory Hook

1. Display a copy of the primary source: Underground railroad map of the United States, ca. 1838-1860 (Appendix A, Document camera)
2. Engage students by asking questions:
   • What is this a picture of? (map)
   • How can you tell?
   • What do you think this map shows?
   • What type of source is it? (primary)
   • Why are maps important?
   • Do all maps show the same thing?
   • Can anyone share a time that they used a map or been with someone who used a map?
   • How old is this map? (1838-1860)
   • Would this map still be used today?
   • What changes to the map may have happened since it was created?
   • Are maps used today? What types? Why?
3. Hand out a copy of the map to each student along with a handheld magnifying lens. Allow students five minutes to study the map up close.
4. Lead a class discussion using the Map Analysis Tool questions to guide a class discussion. Be sure to keep questions grouped according to each category: Observe, Reflect, and Question. (Appendix B)
5. Teacher creates a class poster of questions that they have about the map?
6. How would they be able to find the answers to their questions?

*For teacher use only*
Map Analysis Tool: https://2016orgeo.pbworks.com/w/file/91172385/Map_AnalysisTool_Dec2014.doc
(Appendix B)

Handouts:

Map: Underground Railroad map of the United States, ca. 1838-1860.
https://www.loc.gov/item/75696205/ (Appendix A)
Assessment: Informal class discussion and teacher created question poster.

**Day 2:**

To help build knowledge of the Underground Railroad, show video from Discovery Education: *Animated Hero Classics: Harriet Tubman*
https://app.discoveryeducation.com/learn/videos/1B1523CD-0DD4-4CDE-A06B-1301419EFBCE?hasLocalHost=false

This video is the story of Harriet Tubman being born a slave, her struggle with the desire to be free and her amazing ability to help fellow slaves escape north to freedom. Using the cover of dark, Harriet Tubman became the first conductor on the Underground Railroad. Her successful escape created an intricate web of routes for escaping slaves to follow.

The video is a very introductory start to the Underground Railroad. Students will need to take notes on what they notice the slaves are doing, how the slaves interact with each other and the owners/overseers, what they do to figure out an escape route and how the Underground Railroad was mapped for them to follow.

Informal assessment:
Teacher will create a class KWL (K: what a student knows, W: what a student wonders about, L: what a student learns) based on the Geography Question: How did the geography of the land along the Underground Railroad provide a route to help slaves escape to freedom?

**Day 3**

1. Hand out historical image page 1 (Appendix C), allow students 5 minutes to study image.
2. Explain to students that they will be answering some questions that will be easy to answer, other questions that will be difficult to answer, and some that may generate even more questions.
3. Hand out Image Analysis Tool page 1 (Appendix D)
4. Students will have 20 minutes to fill out Image Analysis Tool page 1.
5. Discuss answers, be sure NOT to agree/disagree with answers or to lead students in coming up with analysis of the photo.
6. Discuss with students:
   - Which section of the Analysis Tool was easier to fill out?
   - Which section was more challenging?
   - How could students find out answers to questions that they were unsure of?
   - Did students have questions about the photo?
7. Teacher creates a class poster of questions they have about the photo to be displayed within the classroom.

Handouts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the form of the image (painting, print, photograph, drawing)?</th>
<th>What place or region does this image show?</th>
<th>How do the clothing, buildings, transportation and/or landscape reflect the economic, political, or societal conditions for the time when the image was created?</th>
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<td>Describe who is in the image.</td>
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<td>What types of transportation are in the image?</td>
<td>What is the most likely purpose (audience) for this image?</td>
<td>What geographic questions would you like to ask the creator of this image?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Analysis Tool: page 1

See Attached File: Small Analysis Tool Image 1 (Appendix D)
**Day 4**

1. Review Analysis Tool document that was used in the prior day’s activity.
2. Review expectations of using writing standards when answering questions. (L.1, L.2, and L.3)
3. Hand out Historical Image page 2 (Appendix E), allow students 5 minutes to study the image.
4. Hand out Image Analysis Tool page 2 (Appendix F), remind students that some questions are easier to answer compared to others. All questions must be answered in complete sentences.
5. Students will have 20 minutes to fill out Image Analysis Tool page 2.
6. Discuss answers, be sure NOT to agree/disagree with answers or to lead students in coming up with analysis of the photo.
7. Discuss with students:
   - Which section of the Analysis Tool was easier to fill out?
   - Which section was more challenging?
   - How could students find out answers to questions that they were unsure of?
   - Did students have questions about the photo?
8. Create a class poster of the questions students have about the image, include ideas of where students could research to find the answers to their questions. Display completed poster within the classroom.
Handouts:
Analysis Tool: page 2
(Appendix F)

**PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSERVE</th>
<th>REFLECT</th>
<th>QUESTION</th>
</tr>
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<td>What place or region does this image show?</td>
<td>How do the clothing, buildings, transportation and/or landscape reflect the economic, political, or societal conditions for the time when the image was created?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of transportation are in the image?</td>
<td>Can you identify a geographic theme (region, place, movement, physical system, human environment interaction) for this image?</td>
<td>Why is this image significant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the landscape and physical features in the image.</td>
<td>What seems to be missing from the image?</td>
<td>What geographic questions would you like to ask the creator of this image?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

Image 2: *The Underground Railroad*
[https://www.loc.gov/resource/ph.3a29554/](https://www.loc.gov/resource/ph.3a29554/)

(Appendix E)

Assessment: Collect Analysis Tool to review student answers and whole class discussion.
Days 5-7 (May need to be longer, teacher discretion)

1. Lead a class discussion about what they know about slavery and the Underground Railroad.
2. Students will be grouped into teams of 3 or 4 students.
3. Groups will decide who will be the transcriber.
4. Explain to students that they will be given a photo from the 1800’s that they are to study.
5. The group will work together to create a list of as many questions as they can produce about the photo.
6. Transcriber will write down every question that the group comes up with.
7. If a statement is made, it must be reworded into the form of a question.
8. No discussion, judgements or answers to the questions are allowed.
9. Tell students they will have 20 minutes to complete their list of questions.
10. Hand out the photo (Appendix G)
11. Set timer for 20 minutes.
12. When timer goes off, allow additional 5 minutes for students to review their questions checking to be sure all are in question form.
13. Review what Closed-Ended questions are. (questions with yes or no, one word answers) or Open-Ended questions (questions that require an explanation for their answers)
14. Each group is to mark Closed-Ended questions with a “C” and Open-Ended questions with an “O”. Have students count each category.
15. Ask:
   • What do you notice about the amount of each type of questions?
   • Is one type of question easier to ask than the other?
   • Which type of question is easier to answer?
   • How would you go about answering these questions?
16. Have groups work together to pick the three most important questions. (one Closed-Ended question and two Open-Ended questions)
17. Students will use the Image Analysis Tool (Appendix H: blank form) to record their questions. (Students must have at least one (no more than three per category) question for each category: Observe, Reflect, and Question)
18. Groups will now work together to research the answers to their three questions.
19. Each group will need to design a poster(s) that has:
   • Questions on the poster along with their researched answers.
   • Title
   • Map of the Underground Railroad which includes;
     o Title of map
     o Map key
     o Compass
     o Slave states
     o Free states
     o Locations of main depots
At least two routes of the Underground Railroad that slaves used to get to safety

- Primary source photos of:
  - Conductors
  - Depots
  - Slaves who traveled on the Underground Railroad

20. Give students copies of the scoring rubrics (Appendix I and Appendix J)

Handouts:

Analysis Tool: blank
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf
(Appendix H)
Image 3: Fugitives Escaping from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. 
https://www.loc.gov/item/2002698205/

(Appendix G)

Presentation rubric: 
(Appendix I)

Project rubric: 
https://www2.uwstout.edu/content/profdev/rubrics/middleschresearchrubric.html  
(Appendix J)

Assessment:

Groups of students will present their poster explaining the questions they researched and the answers that they found. Each member of the group must share orally. Use rubrics for scoring.

Presentation rubric: 
(Appendix I)

Project rubric: 
https://www2.uwstout.edu/content/profdev/rubrics/middleschresearchrubric.html  
(Appendix J)
Extensions and/or Adaptations:
This lesson could be adjusted for a lower grade by bringing in picture books about the Underground Railroad to share with students. Discussion of primary and secondary sources would be discussed. Geography maps of their city and state could be used to have students learn the importance of following directions and how maps used historically could save lives.

Suggested Historical Fiction:
* Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* (Picture Puffin) Paperback – December 1, 2000 by Alan Schroeder (Author), Jerry Pinkney (Illustrator)

* Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* (Reading Rainbow Books) Paperback – July 10, 1995 by Deborah Hopkinson (Author)

* Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad* Hardcover – January 1, 2007 by Ellen Levine (Author), Kadir Nelson (Illustrator)

* Get on Board: The Story of the Underground Railroad Paperback* – January 1, 1995 by Jim Haskins (Author)


* What Was the Underground Railroad? (What Was...?) Dec 26, 2013* by Yona Zeldis McDonough and Lauren Mortimer

* If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad (If You...)* Jul 26, 2016 by Ellen Levine and Larry Johnson

Adult resources:

* The Underground Railroad: The History and Legacy of America's Greatest Abolitionist Network* Nov 5, 2013 by Charles River Editors

* The Underground Railroad, a Comprehensive History* Jun 1, 2015 by Wilbur Siebert

Primary Source Images:

Sources:
Appendix A


https://www.loc.gov/item/75696205/
### Appendix B

Map Analysis Tool:
https://2016orgeo.pbworks.com/w/file/91172385/Map_AnalysisTool_Dec2014.doc

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the title of this map?</th>
<th>What was the most likely purpose for this map? How do you know?</th>
<th>Why is the map significant or important?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the date of this map? When was this map published? Are there other dates referenced on this map?</td>
<td>What do you know about this time period? What do any other dates on this map represent?</td>
<td>What is the significance of the date of the map? How does this map connect to other time periods and the time period under study?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the author or cartographer of this map? Who produced this map?</td>
<td>Does this map illustrate or describe spatial patterns (movement, connections, etc.)?</td>
<td>If you were the cartographer, how could you change this map? How could you use this map to understand the present?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the orientation of this map? How can you tell directions on this map?</td>
<td>Describe the spatial patterns illustrated on this map (movement, connections, ecosystems, etc).</td>
<td>How does this map illustrate human, physical, economic, societal, cultural, and political conditions for the time when the map was made?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What area of the world does this map represent? Does this map show a large area of the Earth's surface or a small area? What is the scale of this map?</td>
<td>What was the motivation of the organization or person making the map?</td>
<td>What sources may have been used to make this map?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there words on this map? If the words are not in English, can you identify what language is used?</td>
<td>Have you ever seen a map similar to this one?</td>
<td>How could you (as an individual) use this map?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of symbols are on this map?</td>
<td>What features on the map represent place, region, and/or theme?</td>
<td>Do you see any bias / perspective in this map?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of grid (latitude-longitude, alphanumeric) does the map use?</td>
<td>What does the map show (physical characteristics, human patterns)?</td>
<td>What else do you think should be included on the legend for this map?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of labels are on this map?</td>
<td>How does this map represent and/or illustrate geographic themes (places, regions, human-environment interaction, movement, physical systems, etc.)?</td>
<td>How can you use this map to connect with situations today and predict what might happen in the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What colors are on the map?</td>
<td>What is the bias or point of view of this map?</td>
<td>How does this map connect to other primary, secondary, or tertiary resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a legend on the map?</td>
<td>How does this map compare to current maps of this place? How</td>
<td>What else did you observe about the map?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does this map prepare people today to deal with issues today?</td>
<td>map? What questions do you have about this map? What other information do you need to make sense of this map?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other information can you infer from the map?</td>
<td>About what does this map leave you curious?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What seems to be missing from the map?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix C**

Image 1: *A Bold Stroke for Freedom*

https://www.loc.gov/item/2002698412/

### Appendix D

Analysis Tool Image 1

Name ______________________________

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Appendix E

Image 2: *The Underground Railroad*

[https://www.loc.gov/resource/ph.3a29554/](https://www.loc.gov/resource/ph.3a29554/)

Appendix F

Analysis Tool for Image 2

**PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL**

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**FURTHER INVESTIGATION**
Appendix G

Image 3: Fugitives Escaping from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. 
https://www.loc.gov/item/2002698205/

### Appendix H

Analysis Tool for images (blank form)
To be used with Image 3: *Fugitives Escaping from the Eastern Shore of Maryland*
[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf)

### PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL

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**FURTHER INVESTIGATION**
Appendix I

Scoring Rubric for Oral Presentations:


Appendix J

Scoring Rubric for Project:

https://www2.uwstout.edu/content/profdev/rubrics/middleschresearchrubric.html