

FREEDOM AND DIGNITY PROJECT
(Kathy Hack, Miller Middle School
Kingston City Schools)

TOPIC TITLE: Children and Slavery Document Search

GRADE LEVEL: 7 / 8

OVERVIEW:

Curriculum:

This lesson could be integrated into the colonial unit when discussions of slavery center around the labor shortage in all the colonies, the rise of plantations in the South, and the popularity of triangular trade in the North; it could also be used as part of the pre-Civil War unit.

Goals and objectives:

Students should be able to relate both intellectually and affectively to the conditions in which slaves, especially children and teenagers, were forced to exist. Using their knowledge of the economic reasons for slavery, the horrors of the Middle Passage, the impact of slave codes, and the natural human desire for freedom, students should be able to extend their knowledge of the personal tragedy of being a slave.

Learning Standard:

Standard 1: History of United States and New York State
Important ideas, values, beliefs and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

See Curriculum: Unit V. Life in the New Nation

111. F. Slavery and Abolition

1. Review the institution of slavery
2. The meaning and morality of slavery
4. Abolition in New York State

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: What is it like growing up as a slave? Is there any justification for one group of people to hold another group of people in bondage? Why is slavery inconsistent with the ideals of the American Revolution?

TIME: Two to three class periods plus homework.

VOCABULARY: “.....”, abolish, chattels, chillun, deemed and adjudged, Do, estate, freedman, manumitted, proprietor, Providence, quarters, subscriber, peck (see glossary at end of documents)

MATERIALS:

Students:

Instruction sheet, question packet, document packet, scrap paper, white lined paper and pen (Students may do magazine article on computer, if possible and practical); perhaps, index cards with clues to location of answers

Teacher:

Rubric for questions and / or magazine article

PROCEDURE:

Lesson assumes that some instruction on slavery has preceded this activity. For example, students should have some knowledge of the causes of slavery, the Middle Passage, triangular trade, and the spread of slavery throughout the colonies.

1. Pass out instruction sheet and read it with the class.
2. Divide class into small groups; perhaps 3 to a group.
3. Pass out question packet and document packet to each student.
4. Have students search the documents in order to find the answers to the questions; each student should write down the answers to as many questions as the group can answer; however, the group may divide the work up amongst themselves and then share answers.
5. Collect answers and grade papers. See rubric. This step may be omitted if desired.
6. Conduct a whole group discussion of the answers to the questions. Extend the discussion to go beyond actual answers to questions.

Examples:

- What connection is there between document 2 and document 11?
 - Referring to document 10, why is the woman being sold for less money than the boy?
 - Referring to document 13, does the fact that George Washington owned slaves affect how you regard the first president of the United States?
 - Can you imagine your own life and how it would differ if you were born into a slave family?
 - Most of these documents refer to slave conditions in the North. How do you think the life of a slave may be different in the North than in the South?
 - What effect would slavery have on family life?
 - Is slavery ever justified?
 - Is it possible to get a complete picture of slavery from 15 sources?
7. Assign magazine article for homework and give a due date. This should be done separately by each individual student.

NOTE:

This assignment should challenge the stronger students. Many answers require reading between the lines. It can be modified in a variety of ways. Fewer documents and questions can be used. The class as a whole, with teacher help, can work on the question section together. Guides to answers can also be used. Another possibility is that the documents can be turned into a traditional DBQ.

Suggestion for guides: Make 3 separate index cards for each group. Each person in the group will be responsible for finding the answers to their particular questions.

CARD ONE:

Question: 1	Document: 3, 5
4	implied
7	1,4,8,9,13
10	2, 11
14	2

CARD TWO:

Question: 2	Document: 7, 9, 12
5	1, 8, 13
8	implied
12	8, 10, 13
13	1, 13

CARD THREE:

Question: 3	Document: 7, 9
6	4 (subscriber), 8, 9, 10, 12
9	2, 4, 6, 12
11	implied
15	6

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DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT 1:

“Slaves were usually quartered in the cellars of the house. Most cellars were composed of several rooms, only one of which had a fireplace and it was here that the cooking was done to be served upstairs to the household. One of the other rooms served as the sleeping quarters of the slaves. Men, women and children were quartered in the same room, their beds being boards placed directly on the cellar floor and covered with hay or straw. The rooms were damp and dark because of the small cellar windows. A rooster was usually kept in the room to serve as an alarm clock.”

Hurley in the Days of Slavery by Clearwater and Hofler, 1986, p. 3.

DOCUMENT 2:

“Any child born of a slave within the state after the fourth day of July next, shall be deemed and adjudged to be born free: Provided nevertheless that such a child shall be the servant of a legal proprietor of his or her mother until such a servant if a male shall arrive at the age of twenty-eight years, and if a female at the age of twenty-five years.”

New York State Legislature, March 29, 1799.

DOCUMENT 3:

Inscription on Sojourner Truth” gravestone:

BORN A SLAVE IN ULSTER COUNTY
STATE OF NEW YORK IN 18th CENTURY
DIED IN BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN
NOVEMBER 26, 1883. AGED ABOUT 105 YEARS”

Hurley in the Days of Slavery by Clearwater and Hofler, 1986, p28.

DOCUMENT 4:

“FIVE POUND Reward. Run-away from the subscriber, on Tuesday the 15th of April last, a negro manThe said negro took with him a [woman] by the name of Moll, which he claims as his wife, and two negro children; one a boy three years old, the other a girl five months old. The above negroes were seen on Long Island not long since. Whoever apprehends the above runaways.....shall receive the above reward....

Manor of Pelham, June 23, 1777.”

Advertisement placed in the New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury, June 30, 1777.

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DOCUMENT 5: Setting: Africa

“.....As I was the youngest of the sons, I became, of course, the greatest favorite with my mother, and was always with her;In this way I grew up till I had turned the age of eleven, when an end was put to my happiness in the following manner: One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both, and, without giving us time to cry out, or to make resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us as far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house, where the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night. The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced; for my sister and I were then separated.....”

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted to terror, when I was carried on board. “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Chapter 2”

DOCUMENT 6:

“Finally on the 28th of January 1817, Governor Daniel D. Tompkins sent a message to the Legislature [of New York State] requesting the passage of a law abolishing slavery within ten years. Upon his request an act was passed declaring that:

‘Every negro...within this state, born before the fourth day of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety nine, shall, after the fourth of July, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, be free.’ “

Hurley in the Days of Slavery by Clearwater and Hofler, 1986, p. 5.

DOCUMENT 7: Statement from former slave Tempie Cummins, Age Unknown

“The white chillun tries to teach me to read and write but I didn’t larn much ‘cause I allus workin’. Mother was workin’ in the house, and she cooked too. She say she used to hide in the chimney corner and listen to what the white folks say.”

Slave Narratives: Voices and Faces From the Collection, <http://loc.gov/ammem/>

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DOCUMENT 8: (Prepared in order to sell property after death of owner)

“Inventory of all and Singular the goods, Rights Chattels and Credits of the Estate of Mr. Adolph Philipse Deceased... On the manour of Philipsburgh 12th February

NEGROS VIZ:

Cesar		Susan
Diamond		Abigail
Sampson		MassyWomen
KaiserMen	Dina
Flip		Sue
Tom		

Venture
James
Charles Men not fit for work
Billy

Tom	abt 9 years old	Betty	... 3 years old	A Girl”
Charles	9 Do			
Sam	8 Do			
Diamond	7 Do	Boys	
Hendrick	5 Do			
Cesar	2 Do			
Harry	1 & 4 months			

CATTLE VIZ:

6 worken oxen
12 Milch cows
9 3yr old heffers Steers & bulls

HORSES VIZ:

3 Stable Horses
3 horses in the woods
17 Mares and younf horses

Welcome to Philipsburg Manor, Historic Hudson Valley

DOCUMENT 9:

“Few slaves were allowed to attend school. Time spent at school meant time

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away from their jobs, and slaves were valuable to their owners only when they worked. Since slaves usually worked in the fields or in the masters' homes, most colonists did not feel that slaves needed a formal education.Most slave children were educated by their family members and other adult slaves in the quarter. ...By watching adults, slave children learned how to behave in order to avoid punishment. ...Slave children also learned many important lessons through stories and folktales. Parents and elder members of the slave community shared stories with the children to teach them values and morals.Slaves taught their children special skills such as cooking or basket-weaving.... If the skills were useful to the owner, he or she was less likely to sell or hire out the children.”
A Slave Family by Kalman and Bishop, Crabtree Publishing Company, 2003. pp. 18-19.

DOCUMENT 10:

“To be sold, a Black Woman named Peggy, age 40 years, and a Black Boy her son Named Jupiter, age 15 years. Both of them the property of the subscriber [Russell]. The woman is a tolerable cook and washerwoman and perfectly understands the making of soaps and candles....price....\$150. For the boy \$200, payable in three years with interest from the day of saleBut one-fourth less will be taken for ready money.”

Many Thousand Gone by Virginia Hamilton, Alfred A Knopf, 1993. p. 42.

DOCUMENT 11:

“By an act of the Legislature of the State of New York passed the 29th, March 1799 - the overseers of the poor were allowed \$3.50 per Month for support of abandoned Black Children after they were 12 months old - Which act remained in force until the first Day of Oct. 1801.” from the records of Peter Roosa, Supervisor of the Town of Hurley

“Jacob Heermance abandoned a female child named Belinda born the 15th febr 1800, which after deducting 1 year leaves 7 months & 16 days at \$3.50 Amounting to	\$26.36
& from 1 Day of Oct. 1800 til the 26th March 1802 being 5 Months & 26 days at \$3	17.60
From the 26th March 1802 til 15th febr 1804 being 1 year 10 Months & 20 Days at \$2	45.33
	<hr/>
	\$89.29”

from receipts found in Roosa files

Hurley in the Days of Slavery by Clearwater and Hofler, 1986, pp.12-13.

DOCUMENT 12:

“Moses Brown of Providence manumitted his slaves after being convinced that

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‘the buying of men of what colour soever as slaves is contrary to the Divine Mind’.
Another master in Westchester County, New York, freed his slaves ‘believing it to be consistent with the will of kind Providence, who hath created all nations with one blood.’
.....The most generous provisions for young freedmen were usually made by the slaveholders who manumitted by will. Thomas Hadden of Scarsdale, New York, directed his executors to have his young slaves taught to read,”
Black Bondage in the North by E. J. McManus, Syracuse University Press, 1973, pp 144 & 147.

DOCUMENT 13:

A description of conditions on George Washington’s Mount Vernon in 1798:
“We entered some negroes’ huts, for their habitations cannot be called houses.
.....The husband and wife sleep on a miserable bed, the children on the floor. A very poor chimney, a little kitchen furniture stands amidst this misery - a teakettle and cups.A small orchard with vegetables was situated close to the hut. Five or six hens, each with ten or fifteen chickens, walked there. This is the only pleasure allowed to negroes. They are not permitted to keep either ducks or geese or pigs. They sell the chickens in Alexandria and buy with the money some furniture. They receive a peck of Indian corn every week, and half of it is for the children, besides twenty herrings in a month. They receive a cotton jacket and a pair of breeches yearly.....

The Negro in Virginia, pp. 67-68.

To Be A Slave by Julius Lester, Scholastic, Inc. 1968. pp.62-63.

Glossary of terms:

..... words left out
abolishing - legally ending
chattel - slaves
chillun - children
deemed and adjudged - legally considered
Do - ditto (repeat what is on the line above)
estate - property left to heirs after a person has died
freedman - a free African American
manumitted - freed (usually by individual slaveowners)
proprietor - owner
Providence - God
quarters - living space
subscriber - person who took out and paid for the add

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INSTRUCTIONS

Final Task: You will be responsible for writing a “magazine” article for an imaginary publication. Using information from your knowledge of social studies and from the documents provided, you will have to describe the life of an enslaved child living in the United States during the late 1700’s and early 1800’s. You will also be asked to express your opinion regarding the institution of slavery as it existed during this time period.

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to help you understand what it might be like to live your childhood as a slave. Also, it is intended to give you practice using documents to gain the answers to specific questions.

- Steps:**
1. Read the section entitled historical background.
 2. Read the section entitled task.
 3. With your partner / partners read the questions on the next page. Then use the documents to answer as many questions as possible. Within the parenthesis () note which document / documents gave you the answer to that particular question. It is possible that you will not be able to find the answers to all the questions by using specific documents. The answers to some questions are implied in the documents rather than stated outright.
 4. In the space provided make a note of the question numbers that you could not answer by using the documents.
 5. After the classroom discussion, use the yellow sheet of paper to write a rough draft of your article. You will not work with a partner for this section of the assignment. Proofread your work.
 6. Using the white essay paper, write your final draft.
 7. Hand in the assignment on time.

Historical background:

Slavery has existed in the Americas since shortly after Columbus discovered the New World. The Europeans were interested in making a profit out of their discovery and they needed a large, inexpensive workforce. At first, they tried to enslave the Native Americans, but this was unsuccessful. They then turned to Africa to provide laborers for the colonies. The Englishmen in Jamestown brought slaves to Virginia to work on the tobacco plantations. Slavery soon spread to all of the 13 English colonies. Many Africans had to endure the horrific Middle Passage before they were sold to the highest bidder. New Englanders were involved in the profitable Triangular Trade. The Middle Colonies put slaves to work on farms, in businesses, and in craft shops. Large numbers of slaves grew tobacco, rice and indigo on plantations throughout the Southern colonies. After the American Revolution the invention of the cotton gin increased the demand for slaves in the South, but in the North slavery was gradually abolished. In 1861 the Civil War broke out and all slaves were freed by the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The legacy of slavery, however, continues to impact our nation in many ways.

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INSTRUCTIONS (continued)

Task continued: It is now time to write your article. You will do this without the assistance of your partner. Base your magazine piece on your knowledge of social studies and on the documents. Be sure to include information on most of the following topics in your article:

- how a child became a slave
- how a slave child gained his / her freedom
- where and with whom a slave child live
- how valuable a slave child was to its master
- the fears and hopes a slave child had
- the education a slave child might receive
- why a slave child might be abandoned or sold by his / her owner
- why did some people feel that slavery was wrong
- how slaves were viewed as property rather than human beings

Your article should have

- a title, dateline, and a by-line
- an introductory paragraph
- a factual section that includes items listed above
- an opinion section in which you discuss your reaction as a reporter and as a foreigner to the institution of slavery
- a conclusion.

Watch your spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure.

Be sure to cite the documents when you use them in the article.

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QUESTIONS

Task: You are an English writer working for a popular monthly magazine. Your editor has sent you to the United States with instructions to write an article about the institution of slavery. You have never been in the United States before but you have followed all the news stories about the rebellion of the colonies and about the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. You have read much about the slave trade and about the living conditions of the enslaved individuals. This is your chance to learn first hand about the new nation and about slavery. You are especially interested in how slavery impacts the life of the very young slaves.

You know that it will be necessary to do some research in order to get information. Before you start your research you write up some questions that you would like your research to answer. You find a collection of primary and secondary sources on slavery. Now you and your assistants are ready to study the sources. You plan to reread your questions, study the sources, and write down any answers that you find. It is possible that you will find an answer in more than one source. Be sure to write down the number of the document. Remember, you might not find the answers to all your questions by using these sources. You may have to travel, observe, and talk to people.

QUESTIONS

1. How did a child become a slave?

a. _____

_____ (document # _____)

b. _____

_____ (document # _____)

2. How would a slave child get an education?

(document #)

3. What kind of an education might a slave child receive?

(document #)

4. How might a slave child answer the question “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

(document #)

5. Where would a slave child live?

(document #)

6. Who owned the slave child?

(document #)

7. With whom would a slave child live?

(document #)

8. What type of dreams and hopes for the future might a slave child have?

(document #)

9. How could a slave child gain his / her freedom?

(document #)

10. What evidence is there that slaves were viewed as property instead of humans?

(document #)

11. What kind of fears might a slave child have?

(document #)

12. Why might a slave child be sold by his / her owner?

(document #)

13. Describe the living conditions of the slave child.

(document #)

14. When did New York State pass a law freeing all new-born babies of slave mothers?

(document #)

15. When did New York State pass a law freeing all slaves in the state?

(document #)

What questions were you unable to answer by reading the documents?

Go back and see if you can complete these answers using your knowledge of life and of social studies. Leave the document section blank.

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RUBRIC (optional)

Rubric for questions:

- 0 - no attempt to find or write down answers; showed no interest in whole group discussion
- 1 - limited attempt to find answers; written answers mostly incomplete or wrong; did not participate in class discussion
- 2 - some attempt to find answers; 4 - 6 answers at least partially correct; relied on teacher assistance to find answers; limited participation in class discussion
- 3 - satisfactory attempt to find answers; required little teacher assistance;
7 -10 answers are correct and complete; actively participated in class discussion
- 4 - worked independently to find the answers for 11 or more questions; answers showed good understanding of the material in the documents; answers are correct and complete; actively participated in class discussion, adding new information and insight into the documents