

Liberated Through Literacy: The African American Pursuit of Equity in Education

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Abstract

This unit will be directed toward middle school ELA students and will explore the evolution of systemic racism in America as it pertained to the prohibitions against learning to read during slavery, the anti-literacy laws after slavery, the separate but unequal Jim Crow laws, and the current inequities in education which continue to oppress African Americans today. The lessons will use children's books to introduce historical figures who subverted the system, learned to read against all odds, and found creative ways to obtain their freedom. The goal of this unit is to open dialogue that will empower students to think critically and write passionately about the importance of pursuing education wholeheartedly and using any means necessary to rise above their circumstances to achieve freedom and equality for all.

Keywords: slavery, systemic racism, anti-literacy laws, neo-slavery, Black history, education, reading, literacy, ELA, Black educators, resilience, courage

DISCLAIMER: *My colleagues and I began working with Professor Kathleen Brown in February of 2020. We were intrigued by her seminar, "New Approaches to the History of Slavery: The View from the Penn and Slavery Project." From day one, we began to grapple with the issue of how to address the history of slavery in this nation with our students in a way that would both enlighten and empower them. We recognized that different forms of oppression towards African Americans have existed in this nation for four hundred years because the very foundation of America is rooted in pervasive, systemic racism. We wrestled with the question of how to make the history of slavery relevant for our students who are often disconnected from their history. We started working on our curriculum units that same month.*

Then, in March, life as we knew it was interrupted by a global pandemic. The subsequent stay at home orders forced our face-to-face interactions to move online for the remainder of the semester. Throughout the entire semester, we had to remind ourselves that no matter how difficult the subject matter or how disturbed we became by the findings of our research, it was necessary that we open this dialogue and explore this issue with each other and with our students. Then, as we approached the end of semester, the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minnesota incited national and international protests and rioting, opening this nation's wounds and placing them on display for all to see. This shook our worlds again, and suddenly, our curriculum units became extremely relevant, now more than ever.

British statesman and philosopher, Edmund Burke, once said, "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it."¹ This statement has been quoted (and misquoted) over the years, but

¹ Edmund Burke (1729-1797). Similar statements made by George Santayana and Sir Winston Churchill

the essence of this statement still rings true. Many students in the 21st century are disconnected from their history. They do not know or understand the events of the past that afford them the opportunities they can freely experience today, and as such, they cannot truly appreciate and benefit from the rights and privileges that are currently available to them.

This is especially true for students of color in general, and African American students in particular. The history of slavery and oppression in the United States is a long and sordid one, and few people are even comfortable talking about it. Fewer still are comfortable teaching the concept to children. What can be said that does not leave children of color feeling completely disenfranchised, thoroughly depressed, and downright angry? Why should Black history be taught at all?

George Washington Carver said in an 1896 letter to Booker T. Washington, “Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom to our people.”² Carver understood the importance of educating Black people, so when Booker T. Washington invited him to leave Iowa State University and come to teach at the all-Black Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, he accepted. Black history *is* American history, and for far too long it has been left out of what has been taught in our American schools. It is time for our students of color to learn how their history is interwoven into every fiber of this nation’s history.

The purpose of this curriculum unit is multi-layered. Firstly, this unit will use a difficult and painful topic to address the Common Core standards for reading and writing in a middle school English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. Secondly, this unit will help students look critically at this nation’s historical relationship to slavery, including the lack of rights and privileges for those of African descent, and compare them to the rights and privileges available

² Carver to Booker T. Washington, April 12, 1896, Booker T. Washington Papers (online version) vol. 4; p. 159.

to them today. Thirdly, students will look objectively at the following question posed by this researcher, “If all students in the United States now have the right to learn to read and to receive a free public school education, why are so many students reading below their grade level, not fully engaged in the educational process, and seemingly unconcerned about improving their station in life or making positive contributions to society?” Finally, students will formulate their own response to the reality that the legacy of this country dictated that if they were of African descent, they were not considered fully human and deserving of human rights, and as such, were to be denied the right learn to read and receive an education. Will learning of this reality “fire them up” to fight to receive the best education they can, or will they receive this information passively, deciding not to take advantage of all that their ancestors have fought to attain for them, and basically denying themselves the rights that were never intended for them anyway?

The inspiration for this unit originates from the material learned in the Teachers Institute of Philadelphia (TIP) seminar, “New Approaches to the History of Slavery: The View from the Penn and Slavery Project,” taught by Professor Kathleen Brown. The seminar interested me in part because I was an African American undergraduate student at the University of Pennsylvania in the early 80’s and I was deeply disturbed by the deep-seated institutional racism and the unwelcoming (and at times hostile) attitudes of professors during my four years there. Growing up in the South, I expected that an educational experience in the North would be more favorable towards minorities, but I found that this was not the case. I was told on more than one occasion that “we had to accept you because of affirmative action, but we don’t have to let you graduate, and we won’t” and “go back to wherever you came from because ‘your kind’ doesn’t belong here!” These attacks were deeply personal, and I was completely unaware of the fact that they were symptoms of a much larger issue—systemic racism.

It has been disturbing to learn in this seminar that both Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania have historically been complicit in and have profited from the African American slave trade. Furthermore, historically speaking, most institutions of higher learning, such as the University of Pennsylvania, were never intended to educate the masses, and certainly not African Americans. This is a hard pill to swallow, and harder still to teach to children.

This curriculum unit will look at different aspects of slavery in the United States, both from a historical perspective and in a contemporary sense as it is perpetuated through modern forms of neo-slavery and systemic racism. Students will be required to read informational texts, such as biographies and memoirs, as well as historical fiction, poetry, and narratives of escaped slaves. They will view film clips and movies, will express their own ideas through informational and argumentative writing (Informative/Explanatory Writing- CC.1.4.7.A) and (Argumentative Writing- CC.1.4.7.G), and will conduct research and present their findings (CC.1.4.8.V). Students will determine central ideas (CC.1.2.8. A), cite evidence, analyze evidence, draw conclusions, make generalizations (CC.1.2.8. B), and evaluate arguments (CC.1.2.8.H). Students will also use technology extensively in my course, so the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards will be addressed (ISTE Standard 3: Knowledge Constructor, ISTE Standard 6: Creative Communicator, and ISTE Standard 7: Global Collaborator). They will create their own Google presentations to communicate the information they have synthesized.

The middle school students whom I have taught in the School District of Philadelphia have struggled to think critically about various topics, to write informational and argumentative essays, and to cite evidence to support their reasoning. Therefore, writing will be a strong component of this unit. I realize that most middle school students are highly resistant to writing and to the writing process in general, but I have learned that when students get “fired up” about

an issue, they have lots to say! The role of the educator then, is to provide their students with material that they can become passionate about—passionate enough to do their own research and find their own voices. My students have written incredible essays when arguing about their desire to use cell phones, wear hoodies, and reject school uniforms, for example.

Additionally, students need to see the relevance of the information they are learning. If they are unable to connect to the material, they are less likely to be engaged. My students have complained, “Why do we have to learn about this? It happened in the past and it is so depressing! What does this have to do with me?” While it may be true that the subject of slavery in the United States is a painful one to explore, many students fail to recognize that many forms of neo-slavery are still in effect today and the ways that they themselves help to perpetuate them in their ignorance. This brings us back to the opening quote, “Those who don’t know history are destined to repeat it,” or continue to have it repeated against them, and upon them.

This curriculum unit is designed to be taught in a middle school English Language Arts (ELA) classroom at the Tilden Middle School in Southwest Philadelphia. Tilden is a Title 1 school where 95% of the approximately 400 students receive free breakfast and lunch. The student population is incredibly diverse with more than 35 nations represented and many different languages spoken. Approximately 16% of our students are English Language Learners (ELL) and 20% of our students receive special education services. Although 8th graders will be targeted with this unit, it may be appropriate for grades 6 and 7, as well as high school students. Additionally, because I have chosen to use children’s books to explore this topic with my students, this unit may also be appropriate for younger students as well. This unit will also be appropriate for social studies, Black history/Black studies, and American history classes as well.

Background

The Evolution of Slavery in the United States

One of the gravest injustices of slavery in the United States is that the system reduced African Americans to less than human, denying them basic human rights for hundreds of years. Indeed, it served the interest of enslavers and those who profited from slave labor to consider African-descended people as less than human to justify the egregious and blatant disregard for the sanctity of spirit of countless men and women, boys and girls. For no other reason than the color of their skin, they were considered to be nothing more than chattel, property that could be bought or sold. They owned nothing—not their labor, not their offspring, not even their own bodies. They were slaves for life, as were their children. Once Africans survived the Middle Passage and reached the shores of North America, they would not be deemed “free” until centuries later, and some would argue that African Americans are not yet “free,” even today.

The first Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619. By the time the Transatlantic African slave trade was abolished in 1807, there were over one million enslaved people in the United States, and they appeared in nearly every state. The slave trade and the slave culture were so ingrained in the very fiber of this nation that its pervasive stench suffused the history, the economy, and the soul of this country. Within fifty years, “the 1860 census counted among four million Blacks in the South, more than 250, 000 free African Americans in the slave states, more than fifty thousand of them in Virginia.”³

The United States perfected a system of slavery that was unrivaled anywhere in the world because it generated a perpetual and self-sustaining supply of unpaid labor; labor that was

³ Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans From the Civil War to World War II*. (New York: First Anchor books edition, 2009).

indelibly tied to every institution that has formed this nation. After two hundred years of trafficking in African slaves, Southern plantation owners no longer needed to rely on the Transatlantic slave trade to provide their slave labor. They had developed an internal system of buying, selling, trading, and breeding human commodities.

Yet, African American people have always possessed within them a spirit that has risen up time and time again, determined that their current status was not to be their permanent station in life. They knew deep within themselves that they were created free, meant to be free, had to be free, and would be free, one way or another. They came to understand that knowledge is power and that knowledge came through the ability to read and write. W.E.B. DuBois was one of the first to write about his aspirations for freedom and education for formerly enslaved African Americans in the South. As Christopher Span (2009), noted in his book entitled *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse : African American Education in Mississippi, 1862-1875*, DuBois understood that “black folks equated knowledge with power; they recognized that literacy and education could transform lives and society, that they were vehicles for social change and uplift, and that they created opportunities.”⁴ Education, then, is what stood between where they were in life, and where they wanted to be, but the more they yearned to be free and educated, the more laws and codes and systems were put in place to deny them those very things.

[Slave Codes and Anti-Literacy Laws](#)

Slave laws (codes) were first enacted in the American colonies in the middle of the seventeenth century. The most notorious was the law of maternal inheritance. “Partus Sequitur Ventrem (was) the 1662 Virginia legislation that defined slavery based on the condition of the mother, (and) guaranteed enslavement for enslaved women’s progeny in all American

⁴ Christopher Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2009), 25.

colonies.”⁵ Following the American Revolution, each state that continued to support slavery passed “laws that defined enslaved people as property and enumerated the rights their owners had over them.”⁶ According to the slave codes, enslaved people were prohibited from assembling themselves in public, getting married, owning weapons or property, traveling without their masters’ permission, filing civil suits or testifying in court against a white person, and getting an education, among other restrictions. These laws were basically constructed to give enslaved people no recourse when injustices were inflicted upon them, and no means of improving the conditions in which they found themselves.

Anti-literacy laws were a natural extension of the slave codes. They were enacted early in the nineteenth century, and were intended to keep enslaved people from gaining access to information about abolition, the law, or other news from outside the South. The enforcement of these laws was necessary to keep the feet of the slave owners on the necks and backs of enslaved people in order to keep them under the authority of enslavers. In the book, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, Heather Williams contends that

Maintaining a system of bondage in the Age of Enlightenment depended upon the master’s being able to speak for the slave, to deny his or her humanity, and draw a line between slave consciousness and human will. The presence of literate slaves threatened to give lie to the entire system. Reading indicated to the world that this so-called property had a mind, and writing foretold the ability to construct an alternative narrative about bondage itself. Literacy among slaves would expose slavery, and masters knew it.⁷

⁵ Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017),11.

⁶ Riggs, Thomas. “Slave Codes” from *The Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History* /. Farmington Hills, Michigan: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2015. 1214.

⁷ Heather A. Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 7

According to Edward M. Davis (1845) in *Extracts from the American Slave Code*, 3rd ed., which was published by the Philadelphia Female Antislavery Society, the following southern states passed anti-literacy laws:

Alabama: Prohibited a “free person of color” from interacting with “negro slaves” without written permission of the slaveowner. Penalty was fifteen lashes for the first offense and thirty-nine lashes for each subsequent offense.

Virginia: Prohibited “any slave or free person of color from being found at any school for teaching, reading or writing, by day or by night.” Penalty was no more than twenty lashes. Also prohibited any white person from teaching free colored persons or slaves to read. Penalty was a fine of \$10-100 and up to two months in jail.

Mississippi: Prohibited a white person from teaching a slave to read. Penalty was up to a year in prison. Furthermore, any person of color, whether slave or free, was prohibited from being taught to read or write or meeting for the purposes for being schooled. The penalty was thirty-nine lashes.⁸

South Carolina: Prohibited “any assembly of slaves or freed persons of color from meeting in secret or in a confined space for mental instruction.” Penalty was a fine of 100 pounds and six months in prison.

Similar laws were also passed in Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, Missouri, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia with similar consequences.⁹ These laws supported white supremacy, worked to create black inferiority, and served to widen the “supposed” intellectual gap between the “learned” and “unlearned”. What is so ironic is the fact is the very “people” who were considered to be less than human and intellectually inferior, “needed” laws to prohibit them from doing what they were supposedly incapable of doing in the first place. What is also ironic is the fact that these anti-literacy laws were not successful in accomplishing their intended purposes.

It is not entirely clear as to whether anti-literacy laws were enacted as a response to what was already happening, or as a preventive measure, but I suspect that the former is more likely. If

⁸ Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse*, 46.

⁹ Edward M. Davis. *Extracts from the American Slave Code*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1845), 1-4.

it is indeed true that “knowledge is power,” then these laws were designed to discourage and deter enslaved people and free people of color from gaining the very education that would begin to “level the playing field” and lift them above their circumstances. I also suspect that the very ordinances that were enacted to deter them, actually worked instead to pique the curiosity of the disenfranchised and cause them wonder about what the slave owners were trying so hard to keep them from learning. Is it possible, then, that the diligence with which the enslavers sought to deter and dehumanize enslaved people, only served to inspire them to desire education more? In any case, enslaved people have been covertly circumnavigating prohibitions on learning to read and write for many years, despite the dire consequences for doing so, and were most likely learning to read and write long before the anti-literacy laws even came into existence.

So how did this circumnavigation take place? Enslaved people used whatever strategies and methods were at their disposal to acquire the necessary tools for advancement. “Slaves who worked as house servants took advantage of their proximity to the plantation owner’s family by participating secretly or indirectly in the reading and writing lessons given to the master’s children by private tutors. In addition, because house servants often acted as surrogate parents to the master’s children, the children sometimes secretly taught them to read and write.”¹⁰ Some were even secretly taught by the mistress of the house.

Frederick Douglass is perhaps the most famous person who learned to read while enslaved. His mistress began to teach him to read until she was forbidden to do so by the master. The master contended that teaching a black person to read would render him forever unfit to be a slave. “Taking Auld (his master) at his word, Douglass came to see literacy as power and

¹⁰ Kwasi Densu, *Literacy and Anti-Literacy Laws* In *Gale Library of Daily Life: Slavery in America*, edited by Orville Vernon Burton, Vol. 2. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2008. *Gale In Context: U.S. History*. 79-80.

illiteracy as mental darkness.”¹¹ Douglass then found a new way to learn to read and write, (as did so many others). Whenever he was sent on errands, he would carry his book in his hat and bread in his hand and would coerce whatever white boys he found in the streets to teach him to read and write.¹² He eventually escaped to freedom.

Another example of one who learned to read while enslaved is George Washington Albright who was born in 1846 near Holly Springs, Mississippi. He was taught to read by his mother who worked in the kitchen. She learned by listening as the children of the house did their lessons, and she in turn, taught her son what she learned. His first objective when he became a freedman was to start a school to teach others to read, which he accomplished when he was 18 years of age.¹³ While Albright was only 15 years of age, he became a runner for Lincoln’s Legal Loyal League (4-L’s), which was an underground network to spread news to other slaves. He later served in the Marshall County State Senate from 1874-1879.¹⁴

Belle Caruthers is another example. She was born a slave in Holly Springs, Mississippi in 1847. She once reported, “The baby had alphabet blocks, and I learned my letters while she learned hers.”¹⁵ She was one of many others who learned to read while they were enslaved and later started their own school school(s) when they were emancipated. Caruthers is featured in the WPA Slave Narratives, and is quoted as having once said, “Give me freedom, or give me death.”¹⁶

¹¹ Williams, *Self-Taught*, 25

¹² Douglass, Frederick, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Edited by David W. Blight. New York: Bedford Books, 1993. 57-60. Also see *Bread for Words: A Frederick Douglass Story* by Shana Keller

¹³ Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse*, 33

¹⁴<http://much-ado.net/legislators/legislators/g-w-albright/>

¹⁵ Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse*, 33-34

¹⁶<http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/64/wpa-slave-narratives>. Article about Belle Caruthers.

Lily Grandison (also known as Lilly Ann Granderson) is an example of one who learned to read while enslaved and “taught among her fellow slaves for many years...by night and stealth.” She taught hundreds of enslaved people to read and write. Some of her students started their own schools and some even wrote their own passes, which they used to escape to freedom. When she was emancipated, she opened a school along with two other black female teachers, and charged tuition, \$1-2 per month.¹⁷ One of the lessons included in this curriculum unit features the book, *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and her Secret School* by Janet Halfmann to teach about her tenacity and the tremendous impact she made on the education of so many enslaved and free people.

Ida B. Wells was also born in Holly Springs, Mississippi. She was born a slave in 1862 and grew up during Reconstruction. Christopher Span writes,

Ida, the future crusader for the rights and advancement of African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was born at the crossroads of American history, at a time when enslaved African Americans throughout the South were suddenly realizing their freedom. She was born in the dawn of a new era when black men and women could at last raise their children to be free and upstanding citizens rather than deferential slaves.¹⁸

One of the earliest schools for African Americans began in Mississippi, and Wells was quoted as saying, “Our job was to go to school and learn all we could.” She later became a teacher, a journalist and newspaper editor, suffragist, and a founding member of the N.A.A.C.P. She is famous for spearheading the first national anti-lynching campaign. The New York Times failed to publish her obituary when she died in 1931, but did so in 2018. They also published an

¹⁷ Sparks, Randy J. "The White People's Arms are Longer than Ours": Blacks, Education, and the American Missionary Association in Reconstruction Mississippi." *Journal of Mississippi History* 54, no. 1 (Feb 01, 1992): 1. Also see *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and her Secret School* by Janet Halfmann.

¹⁸ Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse*, 23

article in the same year acknowledging that the city of Chicago named a street in her honor, honoring her at last.¹⁹

James Curry was enslaved in North Carolina and he was taught to read by his master's son. He epitomizes why reading the Bible was forbidden.

When James Curry sneaked into his owner's library on Sunday morning's and carefully took down the family Bible, he somehow made his way to a passage that reinforced the condemnation his slave community had long made of slavery. He "learned that it was contrary to the revealed will of God, that one man should hold another as a slave." Curry recalled that he had always heard it said among the slaves that their ancestors had been stolen from Africa and should never have been enslaved. By reading the Bible, he discerned that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." Curry interpreted the Apostle Paul's message to mean that since God had made all people, no one group was justified in enslaving another.²⁰

There is a common thread that runs among the accounts of those who found ways to learn to read while enslaved—they all understood the importance of becoming literate, and each had a desire to teach others what they had learned. Mothers who learned while cooking in the kitchen taught their children at night. Children who learned from the master's children taught their parents and grandparents. House servants who learned taught field hands, and so on. They inherently understood that they must take responsibility for getting their own education if they were to be educated. They knew that they must, in fact, teach themselves, if they were to learn anything, and they must in turn, teach the generations following. They placed a high value on education. However, this pursuit would continue to be challenged, resisted, and obstructed, over and over again.

¹⁹ "Honors, at Last, for Ida B. Wells." *New York Times*, August 1, 2018, A22(L). *Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints*

²⁰ Heather Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, 21-24. Taken from James Curry, "Narrative of James Curry, a Fugitive Slave" (originally printed in *The Liberator*, January 10, 1840), in *Slave Testimony*, 128, 130-131. The Scripture reference is found in Acts 17:26.

The Freedmen's Bureau

After the Civil War was over, the Age of Reconstruction began. The South had been ravaged by the War and needed to rebuild. The Freedmen's Bureau was established by Congress to "help ex-slaves overcome an extremely hostile, racist environment that included the need to articulate new labor relations structures given the demise of the plantation system, to overcome the limitations on equality legislated by the infamous Black Codes, to address the pressing need to educate masses of highly illiterate black children, and the need to provide protection for freedmen from unscrupulous landowners."²¹

In 1865, John W. Alvord was appointed as the superintendent of education and his first priority was to tour the South to assess the needs of the newly freed African Americans. What he discovered took him by surprise. He wrote in his report, "Throughout the entire south an effort is being made by the colored people to educate themselves...[And] in the absence of other teachings, they are determined to be self-taught."²² Alvord continued enthusiastically,

This is a wonderful state of things. We have just emerged from a terrific war; peace is not yet declared. There is scarcely the beginning of reorganized society at the south; and yet here is a people long imbruted by slavery, and the most despised of any on earth, whose chains are no sooner broken than they spring to their feet and start up an exceeding great army, clothing themselves with intelligence. What other people on earth have ever shown, while in their ignorance, such a passion for education?²³

According to *The Freedmen's Bureau Schools in Texas, 1865-1870*, the Freedmen's Bureau started sixteen schools for "Negroes" in the state of Texas in 1865, despite much opposition from the white population who "feared that education would exacerbate the difficulty

²¹ Richard Fleischman, Thomas Tyson, and David Oldroyd. "The U.S. Freedmen's Bureau in Post-Civil War Reconstruction." *The Accounting Historians Journal* 41, no. 2 (2014): 75-109

²² John Alvord "First Semi-Annual Report on Schools and Finances of Freedmen," (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, January 1, 1866)

²³ John Alvord, "First Semi-Annual Report on Schools and Finances of Freedmen"

of 'keeping the nigger in his place.' Education, many of them reasoned, would make the Negro arrogant, stubborn, and resentful of what they thought his rightful place of social and political inferiority in southern society."²⁴

By 1866, the number of schools for Blacks in Texas had increased to ninety schools, although half were Sunday schools and night schools. This was in comparison to Louisiana that had seventy-three schools and Arkansas that had thirty. Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina had fewer numbers of schools, but more students in those schools.

This progress, however, was met with opposition at every stage. There was a cholera epidemic in 1866, followed by a yellow fever epidemic in 1867, which decreased the number of schools and the number of teachers and students. There were crop failures and violence by the Ku Klux Klan. Teachers were intimidated, students were murdered, and schools were burned. Resentment was high for the white "Yankee" missionary teachers, the "Negro" teachers, the ex-military teachers—anyone who attempted to educate the former slaves. The Bureau was shut down by the government in 1870, but not before enabling 20,000 Blacks to become literate. They now had a solid foundation for educating themselves.²⁵

Black Codes and the Rise of Neo-Slavery

At the very same time that Blacks were beginning to taste freedom and become literate, legislation was passed that placed yet another obstacle in their paths. No sooner did the Slave Codes begin to dissolve than the Black Codes began to emerge. Black Codes were enacted immediately in nearly all of the Confederate states after the Civil war ended, and they defined the legal rights of the former enslaved people. Black Codes were an attempt to re-create the

²⁴ Alton Hornsby. "The Freedmen's Bureau Schools in Texas, 1865-1870." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (1973): 397-417

²⁵ Alton Hornsby. "The Freedmen's Bureau Schools in Texas, 1865-1870." 397-417

Slave Codes and were intended to secure a steady supply of cheap labor and that operated by a system called peonage. The system of peonage used laborers bound in servitude because of debt and leased “convict” labor to contractors, basically ensuring that the newly freed people were re-enslaved in a system from which they could not free themselves. The system was basically “rigged”.

This is how the Black Codes worked: The Southern states rushed to enact new “vagrancy” laws that declared a person to be a “vagrant” if they were unemployed and without permanent residence, which was basically true for every newly freed person unless they happened to agree to continue to work for a former enslaver through sharecropping. A person who could not produce proof of employment and permanent residency could be arrested, fined, and bound out to a contractor if they could not pay the fine, which was usually the case. They were required to “work” off the debt on public projects or private farms, often the very plantation from which they were freed, but because they were constantly being “fined” for any and every infraction, they could never pay off the debt, and therefore remained trapped in yet another system that denied them their freedom.

In order to avoid being arrested for vagrancy, many newly freed blacks returned to the plantations from which they had been freed to work as sharecroppers. They entered in an agreement with their former masters whereby they leased a small plot of land to farm, and were given seed, supplies, equipment, and living expenses in exchange for a portion of the profit from the sale of the crop at the end of the year. Many former masters found ways to cheat the sharecroppers out of their profits by overcharging for the start-up supplies or changing the arrangement so that sharecroppers ended up owing the plantation owner at the end of the year. In this way, the plantation owners could continue to have laborers work for them without paying

them, and the sharecroppers were not free to leave as long as they “owed” the plantation owners. In some cases, the sharecroppers were actually paying their former masters to work on their plantations!²⁶ This system highlighted the fact that it was necessary for free blacks to learn how to read and write and do calculations in order to prevent the plantation owners from cheating them and further enslaving them.

In the state of Mississippi, Black Codes made it “illegal for blacks to rent or lease land outside of towns or cities—though they could own land—and by ordering that every black produce proof of employment.”²⁷ This basically made it illegal for free blacks to farm land in Mississippi. According to the vagrancy law enacted by the state legislature of Mississippi in 1865, any “freedman, free Negro, or mulatto” charged with vagrancy could be fined up to \$150 for “unlawfully assembling themselves together, either in the day or nighttime” and said person could be “hired out...to any person who will for the shortest period of service, pay said fine or forfeiture and all costs.”²⁸

The state of Texas enacted its Black Codes in 1866 and made labor contracts mandatory for all jobs that lasted for more than one month. Workers under contract could be “fined for everything from sickness to idleness. If they missed three consecutive days, they lost a year’s wages.”²⁹ This means that once they were under contract, it was difficult to be released. Each Southern state enacted its own form of Black Codes, but all were intended to create a “new” form of the same “old” system of slavery.

²⁶H. Viscount “Berky” Nelson. “Sharecropping.” *Oxford African American Studies Center*, 2009. 1

²⁷ Elliot Jaspin, “In Period After the Civil War, Black Codes Re-Created a Form of Slavery in Southern States: [Final Edition].” *Austin American Statesman*, Jul 09, 2006.

²⁸ John Harwell Moore, “Black Codes of Mississippi.” (Encyclopedia of Race and Racism, 2008, 275-279.

²⁹ Elliot Jaspin, “In Period After the Civil War, Black Codes Re-Created a Form of Slavery in Southern States: [Final Edition].” *Austin American Statesman*, Jul 09, 2006.

In Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil

War to World War II, Douglas A. Blackmon's research uncovers countless documents that attest to this form of neo-slavery that was generally unacknowledged by conventional history.

(I)n the attic and basements of courthouses, old county jails, storage sheds, and local historical societies, I found a vast record of original documents and personal narratives of a very different version of things. In Alabama alone, hundreds of thousands of pages of public documents, attest to the arrests, subsequent sale of thousands of African Americans into mines, lumber camps, quarries, farms, and factories. More than thirty thousand pages related to debt slavery cases sit in the files of the Department of Justice at the National Archives. Altogether, millions of mostly obscure entries in the public record offer details of a forced labor system of monotonous enormity...revenues from the neo-slavery poured the equivalent of tens of millions of dollars into the treasuries of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, Texas, North Carolina, and South Carolina—where more than 75% of the black population in the United States then lived.³⁰

The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, adopted in 1865, abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, except in the case of convicted criminals, but as Blackmon points out, trumped up “crimes,” including vagrancy and changing employers without permission, led to the re-enslavement of thousands of Black Americans, mostly males, over nearly seventy-five more years. Once they were re-enslaved, there was little time or opportunity for education.

The transition from slavery to freedom in the post-Civil War American South featured the efforts of the Freedmen's Bureau (FB) to help ex-slaves overcome an extremely hostile, racist environment that included the need to articulate new labor relations structures given the demise of the plantation system, to overcome the limitations on equality legislated by the infamous Black Codes, to address the pressing need to educate masses of highly illiterate black children, and the need to provide protection for freedmen from unscrupulous landowners.³¹

In his article, Fleischman et al. questions whether “there was a sincere desire to uplift the economic and cultural well-being of the Freedmen in the American South or was the whole post-

³⁰ Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*, 6-8

³¹ Fleischman et al. "THE U.S. FREEDMEN'S BUREAU IN POST-CIVIL WAR RECONSTRUCTION." *The Accounting Historians Journal* 41, no. 2 (2014)

bellum process of readmitting the Confederate states to the Union a thinly disguised attempt to wed newly freed African-Americans to the Republican Party?”³² (I cannot help but wonder whether the same tactics are being used today during this pandemic.) When the Freedmen’s Bureau pulled out of the South in 1869, it became evident that any gains made during this time were short-lived. The southern states continued to find new ways to oppress African Americans.

Jim Crow Laws

The end of Reconstruction gave rise to the Jim Crow Era, which was one of the darkest eras since slavery. The Jim Crow Era began in the final quarter of the nineteenth century and continued until the middle of the twentieth century. The Fourteenth Amendment declared that African Americans were citizens, but Jim Crow laws basically ensured that were in no way “equal” citizens. Blacks were allowed to marry, but there were bans on interracial marriages. Segregated water fountains, trains and buses, restrooms, swimming pools, restaurants, and public schools were identified by signs placed throughout communities indicating which establishments catered to “Whites Only” or “Colored Only.” While these establishments were supposed to be “separate but equal,” they were anything but equal. Jim Crow laws were intended to remind Blacks that they were “subservient and inferior” at all times. Any attempts to violate these laws were met with arrest and/or harsh punishment. With its rebirth in 1915, the Ku Klux Klan intimidated, lynched, and murdered Blacks and even whites who were sympathetic to the plight of Blacks. They burned crosses, homes, churches, and schools during their reign of terror.

The Fifteenth Amendment gave African American men the right to vote, but following the compromise of 1877, new state laws, enacted in most southern states under so-called Redeemer governments, made it nearly impossible for them to exercise their rights. Blacks were

³² Fleischman, 103

asked to pass a literacy test, pay a poll tax, or prove that their grandfather had voted before they were allowed to vote. In most cases, they were excluded from voting. These were tests that most white southern men would not have been able to pass, but illiteracy had a greater impact on Black Americans because they were denied opportunities where others were not.

In the words of William Wells Brown, African American abolitionist and author, “All I demand for the black man is, that the white people shall take their heels off his neck, and let him rise by his own efforts.”³³ These demands have yet to be met.

Institutional Racism and More Neo-Slavery

An Early Look: *Ebony and Ivy* by Craig Steven Wilder

The roots of institutional racism (also called systemic racism), can be traced to the inception of this nation’s first university, Harvard. Craig Steven Wilder writes in *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities* (2013), “The birth of slavery in New England in 1636 was also the dawn of slavery at Harvard...African slavery and the slave trade subsidized the college and the colony.”³⁴ He also states,

Colleges were imperial instruments akin to armories and forts, a part of the colonial garrison with the specific responsibilities to train ministers and missionaries, convert indigenous peoples, soften cultural resistance, and *extend European rule over foreign nations* (italics mine).³⁵

This is deeply troubling to this writer because it implies that the sole purpose of the early American university was to train Europeans to conquer and rule in the land upon which they

³³ William Wells Brown, *The Black Man and his Antecedents* (1863), 47-48, 59.

³⁴ Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 114

³⁵ Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities*, 33

were trespassing. “The fate of the American College had been intertwined from its beginning with the social project of dispossessing Indian people.”³⁶ This flies in the face of the deeply spiritual roots I was led to believe this nation was founded upon. The original Europeans invaded, subjugated, and annihilated the indigenous people (native Americans) and kidnapped, enslaved, and brutalized African people to help them do so. In both cases, Christianity was used as a weapon to subdue and control. This is not consistent with the teachings of Christ.

“Human slavery was the precondition for the rise of higher education in the Americas.”³⁷ Slave owners became college presidents, scholarships were provided by slave traders, and colleges were both funded by and built by slave labor. According to the Penn & Slavery Project website, the majority of the original trustees of the University of Pennsylvania were slave owners, and some even owned slave ships. The students came from slave-owning families, and sometimes brought their personal slaves to the campus. Scholarships were solicited from slave plantations, and ten of the thirty-nine residential “houses” in the university’s first dormitory, The Quadrangle, were named after slave owners.³⁸ (I am glad I did not know this when I resided in the Quad as a freshman!!)

Additionally, writes Wilder,

Students from North America crafted a science that justified expansion and slavery—a science that generated broad claims to expertise over colored people and thrived upon unlimited access to nonwhite bodies. They did not abandon the search for truth—they re-defined truth... (the concept of) race did not come *from* science and theology; it came *to* science and theology (*italics mine*). Racial ideas were born in the colonial world, in the brutal and deadly process of empire building.³⁹

³⁶ Wilder, 150

³⁷ Wilder, 114

³⁸ Penn & Slavery Project website, <http://pennandslaveryproject.org>

³⁹ Wilder, 182

This basically means that “knowledge” was constructed to fit with their own ideologies, rather than based on true scientific research and true Christianity (in accordance with the teachings of Christ and the spirit of the Word of God as portrayed in the Bible). Then, this “knowledge” was disseminated throughout universities all over the United States as “facts”.

In 1765, the University of Pennsylvania became the first university to offer a medical school in the British colonies. There was substantial use of the bodies of Black people in research and for dissection. The medical school harvested corpses from cemeteries where poor people were buried, and African descended people were particularly vulnerable:

Body snatchers trespassed upon the spiritual dignity of their most vulnerable neighbors, in their most vulnerable state, and disturbed the psychic comforts of the living. Doctors and students reached into the graves of those who could not protect themselves in death and practiced upon their bodies, rendering their corpses little more than “meat”...American medicine exploited colored bodies precisely because the racial civilization placed them—free or enslaved, alive or dead, beyond the protection of the law or of moral civilization...As slaveholders and slave traders paid for medical colleges and science faculties, they also imposed subtle and severe controls on science... As Atlantic slavery underwrote the production of knowledge, it distorted the knowable.⁴⁰

It is little wonder that African Americans were not welcome as students at these institutions of higher learning, neither then, nor now, if the truth be told. They were disenfranchised from the very beginning in this nation and have only served as a means to build the wealth of this nation. It was never the intention of the founding fathers to grant “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” to African Americans. The overwhelming majority of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were slave-owners (41 out of 56), twelve of the early presidents were slave owners (beginning with George Washington), and when the Constitution

⁴⁰ Wilder, 207-209, 228

was written, the phrase “all men are created equal” only referred to white, male property/slave owners. The phrase excluded poor white males, all men of color, and all women.

Our nation’s first president, George Washington, set a precedent as a slave owner among U.S. presidents. He owned 316 enslaved people, including a young woman, Ona “Oney” Maria Judge.⁴¹ When Philadelphia became the temporary capitol of the United States, George Washington lived there from 1790 to 1797, with nine of his slaves, including Ona Judge.⁴² In 1780, Pennsylvania passed a law called the Gradual Abolition Act of 1780. This law stated that an enslaved person brought into the state would become free after living six months in Pennsylvania. In order to keep his slaves from becoming free, Washington rotated them out of the state before the six-month mark by sending them back to Virginia. He also made sure that he did not stay in Philadelphia continuously so he could avoid being considered a resident. Pennsylvania residents had to register enslaved people in their possession and free them when they reached six months.⁴³

During her time in Philadelphia, Ona discovered that not all Blacks were enslaved and she began to yearn to be free. When she learned that her mistress planned to give her as a wedding present to her granddaughter in Virginia, she began to plan her escape. She later told a reporter that if she were returned to Virginia, “I would never get my liberty. I had friends among the colored people of Philadelphia, had my things carried there beforehand, and left the Washington’s house while they were eating dinner.”⁴⁴ She escaped on May 21, 1796, and though

⁴¹ Maya Earls "Recalling George Washington's Escaped Slave Ona Judge." *Philadelphia Tribune*, Feb 10, 2017.

⁴² "Memorandum: Honoring the life of Ona Judge." *US Official News*, February 20, 2019. *Gale OneFile: News*

⁴³ Herb Boyd. "Ona Judge, President Washington's Fugitive Slave." *New York Amsterdam News*, Feb, 2017.

⁴⁴ Boyd. "Ona Judge, President Washington's Fugitive Slave."

the Washingtons pursued her relentlessly, she was “never caught.” When slave catchers found her in New Hampshire, she reported, “I am free now and choose to remain so.”⁴⁵

What Does Systemic Racism Look Like Today?

Unfortunately, systemic racism is still alive and well in the year 2020. What, then, is systemic racism? The term was first coined in 1967 by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton in the book *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. They state,

Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two closely related forms: individual whites acting against individual blacks, and acts by the total white community against the black community. We call these individual racism and institutional racism. The first consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury, or the violent destruction of property...and can be observed in the process of commission. The second type is less overt, far from subtle, less identifiable in terms of the individuals committing the acts. But it is no less destructive of human life. The second originates in the operation of established and respected forces in society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first type.⁴⁶

In “Institutional Racism in the United States,” (1974) Terry Jones notes, “The root of racism and its crippling effects exist in the basic institutions in this country. These institutions—schools, banks, housing industry, and private and public employment sources—assign to and maintain blacks and other minorities in inferior positions on the basis of race.”⁴⁷ This basically means that the entire “system” is (and has always been) rigged against blacks and other people of color to ensure that they do not receive equal access to education, financial resources, housing, or jobs, and this is the same system that is evident throughout the periods of slavery, black codes, Jim Crow, and modern day society in America. Today this looks like, but is not limited to the following:

⁴⁵ Erica Armstrong Dunbar. *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*.

⁴⁶ Stokely Carmichael & Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, New York: Random House, 1967, 4

⁴⁷ Terry Jones, “Institutional Racism in the United States.” *Social Work* 19, no. 2 (1974): 218.

- Public school underfunding and inequities in education
- School-to-Prison Pipeline
- Mass incarceration of African Americans (i.e. criminalizing blackness)
- Racial profiling
- Convict labor
- Welfare system
- Redlining
- Lingering racism in medical access, diagnoses, treatment and disparate health outcomes
- Black Lives (still don't) Matter

Jones goes on to say that “institutional racism is comparable to a runaway vine. Often it is difficult to find its root. And as with the vine, you can kill as many branches as you choose, but if you fail to destroy the root, the vine continues to grow...To a certain extent, every major institution in this country functions on the basis that some amount of racial subordination is normal.”⁴⁸

Summary

The forces of systemic racism have been in play since the inception of this nation. African Americans have used whatever was at their disposal to try to survive and overcome in the midst of overwhelming odds. One of the keys that began to unlock doors for the African American people was the ability to read because it paved the way for blacks to begin to educate themselves, to write and circulate their own interpretations of events, and to tell their life stories.

Literacy provided the means to write a pass to freedom, to learn of abolitionist activities, or to read the Bible. Because it most often happened in secret, the very act of learning to read and write subverted the master-slave relationship and created a private life for those who were owned by others. Once literate, many used this hard-won skill to disturb the power relations between master and slave, as they fused their desire for literacy with their desire for freedom.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Jones, “Institutional Racism in the United States.”221

⁴⁹ Heather A. Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 7

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Teaching Objectives

Students will be able to (SWBAT)

- Identify and explain anti-literacy laws used to prohibit African Americans from learning to read
- Explain methods used by African Americans to respond to the injustices of slavery while enslaved
- Identify key characters in the fight to abolish slavery in the US
- Summarize key events in African American History
- Identify strategies used by African Americans to learn to read despite prohibitions both during slavery and after the Emancipation Proclamation
- Compare/contrast early black schools and present-day public schools
- Compare/contrast the attitudes of newly freed African Americans and African Americans in public schools today in regarding getting an education and learning to read
- Explain institutional/systemic racism and give examples of how it is still at work today
- Write an informational essay on a specific topic
- Write an argumentative essay on a specific topic
- Conduct research on a topic of their choice
- Use Google slides and documents to convey information

Teaching Strategies

1. Students will read...
 - Stories of Runaways—escaped slaves
 - Stories of Resistance—abolitionists
 - Stories of Resilience—those who remained in slavery, but found ways to subvert the system
2. Select a book from the reading list about an escaped slave, abolitionist, or educator and create a Google slides presentation that introduces that person to the rest of the class
3. Watch films and movie clips
4. Write an expository essay responding to the following prompt: “What motivated enslaved people to learn how to read despite the laws that made it illegal?”
5. Write an argumentative essay responding to the following prompt: “Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom to our people.”
6. Choose an enslaved person identified simply by name and age from a primary source. Write a short narrative that gives voice and humanity and dreams to that person.
7. Conduct research on a topic of their choice

Lesson Plans (6 lessons, 5-6 weeks)

Lesson 1 - *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans* (AKA- A Brief History of African Americans)

Duration: 6-8 days (90-minute lessons)

Standards:

CC.1.2.8. A – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.2.8. B – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

ISTE Standard 3: Knowledge Constructor: Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

ISTE Standard 6: Creative Communicator: Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals.

Learning Objectives:

SWBAT...

- Explain methods used by African Americans to respond to the injustices of slavery
- Summarize key events in African American History
- Identify key characters in the fight to abolish slavery in the US

Materials:

Text: *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans* by Kadir Nelson
K-W-L-H Chart
Cornell Notes
Journal
Recommended Reading List
Rubric for Grading Book Report

Day 1

Do Now: Question- “What do you know about African American history and the history of slavery in the United States? What do you want to know?” Students will complete the first two columns of the K-W-L-H chart.

Close Read: Read *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans* by Kadir Nelson, Prologue, Chapter 1 “Declarations of Independence,” and “Slavery,” pp. 7-21. Students should be taking notes on their Cornell notes during the close read.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is telling this story? Whose point of view is this story written from? (*female narrator*)
2. Who built the Capitol building in Washington, DC? (*slaves*)
3. Why did George Washington not allow blacks in his army at first? (*he thought if they were given weapons, they might rebel against their slave owners.*) Why did he later change his mind? (*he lost so many of his soldiers to fighting and sickness.*)
4. Why were enslaved people willing to fight in the Revolutionary War? (*they hoped they would earn their freedom and freedom for all the slaves in the colonies.*)
5. What happened to enslaved people at the end of the war? (*they were only freed if they fought on George Washington’s side and lived in New England states that chose to abolish slavery after the war.*)
6. What year was the narrator’s grandfather (Pap) captured in Africa and brought to America? (*1850*) What year did it become illegal to capture and import people from Africa? (*1807*) What do you think about this?
7. What was life like for the enslaved people on the plantation where Pap grew up? (*they were always hungry, poorly dressed, poorly treated*)
8. CHALLENGE: Why didn’t the enslaved people fight back?

Activity: For this unit, each student will work on a book report that will be due at the conclusion of this lesson. They will choose a book from the recommended reading list, that they would like to find out more information about. The final presentation will be a Google slides presentation that will be shared with the class. During the activity portion of each class, students will be reading the book they have selected to use, and/or working

on their report. They will need to use time outside of class time to complete this report. The book report will be graded using a rubric.

Exit Ticket: What have you learned today? Complete the third column of the K-W-L-H chart.

Homework: Summarize your Cornell notes. Write down any questions you have about today's lesson or any event you would like more information about.

Day 2

Do Now: Choose a student to share 1 question they have about yesterday's lesson, from their Cornell notes. This should be a 5-minute review/discussion.

Close Read: Read *Heart and Soul* Chapter 3 "Abolition" and Chapter 4 "Lincoln's War," pp. 23-37. Students should be taking notes on their Cornell notes during the close read.

Discussion Questions:

1. Chapter 3 opens with a quote by William Lloyd Garrison. He says, "That which is not just is not law." What do you think that means?
2. Why were Southern planters unwilling to abolish slavery?
3. Why didn't the plantation owners want their slaves to learn how to read?
4. Who was the boy on Pap's plantation who taught himself to read? (*Frederick Douglass*) What else was he called? (*The Lion of Anacostia*)
5. What is an abolitionist? (*One who wants to abolish slavery*) Name some abolitionists discussed in this chapter. (*Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman*)
6. T or F. President Lincoln planned to free the enslaved people from the beginning. Explain.
7. Why did he eventually set them free? What was the document called that officially freed the slaves? *Emancipation Proclamation*

Activity: Continue working on book report.

Exit Ticket: Summarize your Cornell notes. Write down any questions you have about today's lesson or any event you would like more information about.

Homework: Work on book report.

Day 3

Do Now: Choose a student to share 1 question they have about yesterday's lesson, from their Cornell notes. This should be a 5-minute review/discussion.

Close Read: Read *Heart and Soul* Chapter 5, “Reconstruction” and Chapter 6 “Cowboys and Indians: Native Americans and Westward Negroes,” pp. 39-51. Students should be taking notes on their Cornell notes during the close read.

Discussion Questions:

1. After the Emancipation Proclamation, what were some of the problems newly freed people had?
2. Some blacks were given 40 acres of land by the Freedmen’s Bureau. Why couldn’t they keep it?
3. What is sharecropping? Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Why or why not?
4. **T** or **F**. Black men were given the right to vote during time.
5. **T** or **F**. Some black men were voted into political office.
6. What group of people, still in existence today, tried to keep black people from voting? What did they do?
7. What are Jim Crow laws? Give some examples.
8. Why were black soldiers called “Buffalo Soldiers”?
9. **T** or **F**. There were some all-black towns in Oklahoma.

Activity: Continue working on book report.

Exit Ticket: Summarize your Cornell notes. Write down any questions you have about today’s lesson or any event you would like more information about.

Homework: Work on book report.

Day 4

Do Now: Choose a student to share 1 question they have about yesterday’s lesson, from their Cornell notes. This should be a 5-minute review/discussion.

Close Read: Read *Heart and Soul* Chapter 7, “Turn of the Century and the Great Migration” and Chapter 8, “Harlem and the Vote for Women,” pp.53-69. Students should be taking notes on their Cornell notes during the close read.

Discussion Questions:

1. At the beginning of WWI, why were blacks and women finally given factory jobs in the North?
2. Name some cities that Blacks migrated to during this time.
3. Name some ways that life was better in the North. Name some ways that things were the same or worse.
4. What caused race riots and lynching in Chapter 7? What is lynching?
5. What famous school was built by Booker T. Washington?
6. Why does the narrator feel that WWI might have been a good thing for blacks?

Activity: Work on book report.

Exit Ticket: Summarize your Cornell notes. Write down any questions you have about today's lesson or any event you would like more information about.

Homework: Work on book report.

Day 5

Do Now: Choose a student to share 1 question they have about yesterday's lesson, from their Cornell notes. This should be a 5-minute review/discussion.

Close Read: Read *Heart and Soul* Chapter 9 "Hard Times and World War II," and Chapter 10 "Black Innovation," pp.71-80. Students should be taking notes on their Cornell notes during the close read. Ask questions to check for understanding.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Blacks have to be careful about becoming successful in farming?
2. What was the Great Depression? How did it affect people? How long did it last?
3. What was happening to Jewish people in Europe during this time? Who was responsible? How was this similar to what had happened to Blacks in America?
4. What event caused the U.S. to enter WWII?
5. Did Black soldiers "fight" in this war? Was there racism in the Army? What kinds of jobs were Black soldiers asked to do?
6. Who were the Tuskegee Airmen?
7. "Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom." Who made this statement?
8. What are some inventions listed in Chapter 10 that you would like to learn about the inventor?

Activity: Work on book report.

Exit Ticket: Summarize your Cornell notes. Write down any questions you have about today's lesson or any event you would like more information about.

Homework: Complete book report slides presentation.

Day 6

Do Now: Choose a student to share 1 question they have about yesterday's lesson, from their Cornell notes. This should be a 5-minute review/discussion.

Close Read: Read *Heart and Soul* Chapter 11 “Jim Crow’s A-Dying” and Chapter 12 “Revolution,” pp. 83-99. Students should be taking notes on their Cornell notes during the close read. Ask questions to check for understanding.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are Jim Crow Laws? Give some examples.
2. Who was the Black baseball player?
3. What lawyer defended Reverend Brown in the Brown vs. Board of Education case in Kansas? What was the outcome of the court case?
4. In what state did the “Little Rock Nine” try to integrate Central High School?
5. Why are schools not fully integrated today?
6. According to chapter 11, why was Rosa Parks “tired” on the day she refused to give up her seat on the bus?
7. What was organized to protest the way Rosa Parks and so many others were treated on the buses? Who organized it? How long did it last?
8. What happened in the Woolworth’s café in Greensboro, NC?
9. Who were the Freedom Riders?
10. Name some of the Civil Rights leaders mentioned in chapter 12.
11. Why wasn’t President Kennedy able to pass a civil rights bill? Who was able to pass the bill?

Activity: Final day to work on book report.

Exit Ticket: Summarize your Cornell notes. Write down any questions you have about today’s lesson or any event you would like more information about.

Homework: Complete book report. Oral presentation tomorrow.

Days 7-8: Presentation of Book Reports

Lesson 2 – *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life by Ashley Bryan* (AKA: **The Price of Human Property?)**

Duration: 3 Days

Standards:

CC.1.2.8. A – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.2.8. B – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

ISTE Standard 3: Knowledge Constructor: Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

Learning Objectives:

SWBAT Choose an enslaved person identified simply by name and age from a primary source and write a short narrative that gives voice and humanity and dreams to that person.

Materials:

Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life by Ashley Bryan (book and/or DVD)

Journal

Cornell Notes

Primary Resource: Slave auction document, slave sale document

Rubric for grading Google document

Activities:

Do Now: Name some ways that people can be bought or sold today. What determines how much a person is worth? Can a price truly be put on a human being?

Close Read: Read *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life* by Ashley Bryan book or watch DVD (44 minutes). Students should be taking notes on their Cornell notes during the close read or video.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think each slave has a different price assigned to them?
2. Why do you think they were listed along with cows, hogs, and horses?
3. Which 2 enslaved people sold for the same price as a horse? What do you think about that?
4. What does this tell us about the value the plantation owner placed on slaves?
5. What value did the slaves place on themselves?

Activity: Students will choose an enslaved person from a primary source and write a short narrative that gives voice and humanity and dreams to that person, just as Ashley Bryan has done. They will think about ways to transform each slave from a name or description and a price to a person. On day 2 of the lesson, students will continue to work on their narrative. On day 3, students will share their narratives with the class by way of oral presentations. Students will use Google docs to create an illustrated document following the format of Bryan's book.

Exit Ticket: Journal—What point is Ashley Bryan trying to make by writing this book?

Homework: Summarize your Cornell notes. Write down any questions you have about today's lesson or any event you would like more information about.

Lesson 3 – *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School* by Janet Halfmann

Duration: 3-5 Days

Standards:

CC.1.2.8. A – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.2.8. B – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

Learning Objectives:

SWBAT...

- discuss how Lilly Ann Granderson risked her life to teach others
- why she needed to teach at “midnight
- how she inspired her students to read and write
- why other enslaved students risked their lives to go to Lilly Ann’s secret school
- why education for all people is important and meaningful
- how slavery prohibited basic rights for people and caused many to risk their lives for an education

Materials:

Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School by Janet Halfmann
Teacher’s Guide:

https://www.leeandlow.com/uploads/loaded_document/461/MIDNIGHTTEACHER_TG.pdf

The publisher of this book, Lee and Low, has developed a thorough teacher’s guide to teaching this book. LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest minority-owned children’s book publisher in the U.S., specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. This guide can be modified for your own use. This book was the 2018 Read Across America text.

**Lesson 4- *The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read* by Rita Lorraine Hubbard
Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson by Jen Bryant and Cannaday Chapman**

Duration: 3-5 Days

Standards:

CC.1.2.8. A – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.2.8. B – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

CC.1.2.8.I -- Analyze two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

CC.1.4.8. A --Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concept

Learning Objective:

SWBAT group related information together within and across categories of information **IOT** clearly communicate written information.

Materials:

The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read by Rita Lorraine Hubbard

Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson by Jen Bryant and Cannaday Chapman

Cornell Notes

T-chart Graphic Organizer

Essay Graphic Organizer

Activities:

1. Read and discuss both books. Take notes using Cornell notes and summarize notes. (Days 1 & 2)
2. Review notes. Clarify questions. Compare/contrast the desire of Mary Walker and August Wilson to learn to read and be educated to the attitude of your peers towards education. (T-Chart) (Day 3)
3. Write a 5-paragraph expository essay responding to the following prompt: “What motivated enslaved and newly freed people to learn how to read despite the laws that made it illegal?” (Days 4 & 5)

Exit Ticket: Summarize your Cornell notes. Begin to document evidence to support the essay prompt.

Homework: Begin completing graphic organizer for essay. Essay due on Day 5.

Lesson 5 – Current Event Application

Duration: 5 days

Standards:

CC.1.4.8.G --Write arguments to support claims.

Materials:

Video Clip on Systemic Racism
Essay Graphic Organizer

Learning Objective:

SWBAT compose a piece of writing that provides an argument and explains that argument using facts and/or definitions in an organized way with an introduction and conclusion **IOT** clearly communicate a written claim or opinion on a topic of interest.

Activities:

Do Now: Watch “Explanation of Systemic Racism” (infographic video) by John Alfred Nelson <https://www.facebook.com/100009059364128/posts/2481236955521592/>

Essay: Topic: “Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom to our people.”

What have you learned from this unit and from what is going on in the world (current events) that supports or refutes this statement? You must support your response with three or more examples from this class, your research, and/or current events. Your final product will be a 5-paragraph argumentative essay.

Lesson 6—Culminating Activity: Research Project-Who’s Who in African American History

Duration: 5 days

Standards:

CC.1.4.8.V – Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

ISTE Standard 3: Knowledge Constructor: Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

ISTE Standard 6: Creative Communicator: Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals.

Activity:

Students will choose a person or topic from the project list to research. This report should incorporate all information learned in this unit. Teacher will combine all completed projects into one document entitled “Who’s Who in African American History” that can be printed out or electronically shared with all the other students in the class/grade.

Students will follow the guidelines laid out in the Applied Digital Skills lesson, “Explore A Topic: Innovators” to complete a digital research project. Video instruction will take the students step-by-step to completing the project. Final project may use any combination of Google Docs, Drawings, Sheets, Sites, and/or Slides and will be graded using a rubric. Project

will be due on Day 5 or whenever teacher determines. Oral presentations will be given to introduce their research to their classmates.

<https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/c/middle-and-high-school/en/explore-a-topic-innovators/overview.html>

Research Project Topics List (for Lesson 6)

Black Educators

Lilly Ann Granderson
Mary McLeod Bethune
George Washington Carver
Booker T. Washington
W.E.B. Du Bois
Mary Jane Patterson
Sarah Mapps Douglass
Fanny Jackson Coppin
Inez Beverly Prosser
Fannie C. Williams
Ernest Everett Just
Susie King Taylor
Ida B. Wells

Black Inventors

George Washington Carver
Garrett Morgan
Madame C.J. Walker
Lewis Howard Latimer
Elijah McCoy
Sarah Boone
Frederick McKinley Jones
Alexander Miles
Marie Ban Brittan Brown
Otis Boykin
Frederick M. Jones
Dr. Charles Drew
Annie Malone
Granville Woods

Fugitive Slaves

William & Ellen Craft
Henry Box Brown
Ona Judge
Frederick Douglass
Robert Smalls
Harriet Tubman
Harriet Jacobs
Eliza Harris
Josiah Henson
Jane Johnson
Francis Fedric
Selena & Cornelia Jackson

Black Abolitionists

Sojourner Truth
Maria W. Stewart
Sarah Parker Remond
Charles Lenox Remond
Sarah Mapps Douglass
William Wells Brown
William Still
Mary Ann Shadd Carey
Ida B. Wells
Harriet Tubman
James Forten
Margaretta Forten

Laws

PA Gradual Abolition of Slavery (1780)
Three-fifths Compromise
Anti-Literacy Laws
Fugitive Slave Act of 1850
Jim Crow Laws

Optional Activities:

1. Watch “Underground Railroad: The William Still Story” (full length)

<https://www.pbs.org/video/underground-railroad-william-still-story-underground-railroad-william-still-story/>

2. Play “Test Your Knowledge of Slavery in the United States” (Kahoot)

https://www.nationalgeographic.org/interactive/test-your-knowledge-slavery-united-states/?utm_source=BiblioRCM_Row

3. Show “The Atlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes

http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_history_of_american_slavery/2015/06/animated_interactive_of_the_history_of_the_atlantic_slave_trade.html

4. Show any of the videos included in the appendix. You may also show relevant clips from any of the movies listed.

Evaluation Tools

Rubrics

1. Book Report slides presentation
 - A. Choose a book from the recommended reading list to read and report on
 - B. Create a Google slides presentation with at least ten (10) slides
 - Title of Book, author, picture of cover, your name, your class/section 10 pts
 - Who are the main characters? What is the setting (time and place)? Point of view? 10 pts
 - Plot—Summarize the key events in the book. 20 pts
 - Theme(s)- What universal message is being communicated by the author/narrator? 10 pts
 - Image on each slide 10 pts
 - Choose 2 quotes from the book and explain why they are meaningful to you. 10 pts
 - Pretend that your book is being made into a movie. What 5 songs would you use to create the music soundtrack, and how do they connect to the theme of the book? Include name of song, who sings the song, and how each one connects to the book. 20 pts
 - If you could ask the main character a question, what would you want to know? 10 pts
- Total Points 100 pts

Extra Credit: Write a paragraph review of this book. What did you like and why? What didn't you like and why? Would you recommend this book to others? Why or why not? (10 pts)

2. Freedom Over Me (Brief Narrative)

Students will use the same format as Ashley Bryan in writing their creative narrative. This is not an essay. Final product may be prose or poetry but must include the following elements:

- Name (birth name, nickname)
- Age of person
- Place of birth (African country or state)
- Where they live now. Have they lived anywhere else?
- Family members, if any
- Type of work done
- What a typical day is like
- Special gifts or talents
- Greatest desire (freedom, find family member(s), etc.)
- Any additional information you want to share

Students should creatively tell their story, not just answer the questions. This assignment is worth 100 points.

3. Informational/Explanatory Essay

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Scoring%20Guidelines%20and%20Formula%20Sheets/English%20Language%20Arts/Writing%20Informative-Explanatory%20Scoring%20Guidelines%206-8.pdf>

4. Argumentative Essay

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Scoring%20Guidelines%20and%20Formula%20Sheets/English%20Language%20Arts/Writing%20Argumentative%20Scoring%20Guidelines%206-8.pdf>

5. Research Project

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1avgpGu6viXm8C39Yh9kTD82w1Px7LHSnayscDpb-tWw/edit#gid=1088718421>

Graphic Organizers

Compare/Contrast, Drawing Conclusions, Summarizing, Making Inferences, Cause/Effect, Concept Definition, Identifying Author's Purpose

https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/lesson-plans/migrated-files-in-body/graphic_organizers.pdf

Main Idea/Supporting Details, T-Chart, Fact/Opinion, K-W-L-H

http://www.pearsonlongman.com/ae/download/shiningstar/graphic_organizers_6_10.pdf

Cornell Notes Template

<https://www.honolulu.hawaii.edu/sites/www.honolulu.hawaii.edu/files/care-resource-notes-template.pdf>

APPENDIX

Websites:

400 Years of Slavery Timeline

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/aug/15/400-years-since-slavery-timeline>

Timeline of Slavery in America 1501-1865

<http://sharondraper.com/timeline.pdf>

Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/about-this-collection/>

Slave Narratives Resources for Teachers (Library of Congress)

<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/narratives-slavery/>

George Washington Albright (and other early black legislators)

<http://much-ado.net/legislators/legislators/g-w-albright/>

Slavery by Another Name Official Site (Interactive Map and Timeline)

<http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/home/>

Test Your Knowledge of Slavery in the United States (Kahoot)

https://www.nationalgeographic.org/interactive/test-your-knowledge-slavery-united-states/?utm_source=BiblioRCM_Row

Slavery in the United States

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/interactive/slavery-united-states/>

Slavery in America

<https://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/jimcrow/timeline/slavery.htm>

Abolition of the African Slave Trade

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/congress-abolishes-the-african-slave-trade>

Penn and Slavery Project
<http://pennandslaveryproject.org>

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850
<https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/Fugitive-Slave-Law-1850.pdf>

50 African Americans Who Forever Changed Academia
<https://www.onlinecollege.org/50-african-americans-who-forever-changed-academia/#:~:text=Founders,through%20education%20and%20hard%20work.>

5 Daring Slave Escapes
<https://www.history.com/news/5-daring-slave-escapes>

Explore a Topic: Innovators
<https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/c/middle-and-high-school/en/explore-a-topic-innovators/overview.html>

PA ELA Standards:

CC.1.2.8.A – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.2.8.B – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

CC.1.2.8.H -- Evaluate authors' argument, reasoning, and specific claims for the soundness of the arguments and the relevance of the evidence.

CC.1.2.8.I -- Analyze two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

CC.1.4.8.V – Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

PA Writing Standards:

Informative/Explanatory Writing

CC.1.4.8.A --Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concept

Argumentative Writing

CC.1.4.8.G --Write arguments to support claims.

ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) Standards

Grades 6-8 Digital Tools and Collaboration

ISTE Standard 3: Knowledge Constructor: Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

ISTE Standard 6: Creative Communicator: Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals.

Recommended Reading List for Students

Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Grandison and her Secret School by Janet Halfmann

Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans by Kadir Nelson

The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read by Rita Lorraine Hubbard

Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives, and Dreams Brought to Life by Ashley Bryan
(Book/ or DVD)

Bread for Words: A Frederick Douglass Story by Shana Keller

Before She Was Harriet, by Lesa Cline-Ransome

Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom by Carole Boston Weatherford

Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters by Andrea Davis Pinkney

BOX: Henry Brown Mails Himself to Freedom by Carole Boston Weatherford

Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson by Jen Bryant and Cannaday Chapman

Journeys for Freedom: A New Look at America's Story by Susan Buckley and Elspeth Leacock

The People Could Fly by Virginia Hamilton

Many Thousand Gone: African Americans from Slavery to Freedom by Virginia Hamilton

Escape from Slavery: Five Journeys to Freedom by Doreen Rappaport

Never Caught: The Washington's Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave by Erika Armstrong Dunbar

Rise! From Caged Bird to Poet of the People, Maya Angelou by Bethany Hegedus and Tonya Engel

DK Life Stories: Katherine Johnson by Ebony Joy Wilkins

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs

Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, The Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement by Carole Boston Weatherford

We've Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children's March by Cynthia Levinson

Seeds of Freedom: The Peaceful Integration of Huntsville, Alabama by Hester Bass and E.B. Lewis

Who Was Ida B. Wells? by Sarah Fabiny

You Should Meet Shirley Chisholm by Laurie Calkhoven and Kaitlyn Shea O'Connor

Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon by Kelly Starling Lyons, Laura Freeman

Lifting as We Climb: Black Women's Battle for the Ballot Box by Evette Dionne

The Unstoppable Garrett Morgan: Inventor, Entrepreneur, Hero by Joan Diccico and Ebony Glenn

Sing a Song: How "Lift Every Voice and Sing" Inspired Generation by Kelly Starling Lyons and Keith Mallett

The Story of Civil Rights Hero John Lewis by James Haskins, Aaron Boyd, et al

A Song for Gwendolyn Brooks by Alice Faye Duncan

One Person, No Vote: How Not All Voters Are Treated Equally (A Young Adult Adaptation)
Carol Anderson and Tonya Bolden

Poet: The Remarkable Story of George Moses Horton by Don Tate

Who Were the Tuskegee Airmen? by Sherri Smith

You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen by Carole Boston Weatherford

Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box by Michael S. Bandy, Eric Stein, et al.

Eliza's Freedom Road: An Underground Railroad Diary by Jerdine Nolen and Shadra Strickland

Dream March: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the March on Washington by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson and Sally Wern Comport

Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco

Black Heroes: A Black History Book for Kids: 51 Inspiring People from Ancient Africa to Modern-Day U.S.A. by Arlisha Norwood

Hidden Figures (Young Reader's Edition) by Margot Lee Shetterly

Sugar by Rhodes Jewell Parker

Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down by Andrea Davis Pinkney

Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by Jonah Winter

Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad by Ann Petry

Gaither Sisters Trilogy (One Crazy Summer, P.S. Be Eleven, Gone Crazy in Alabama) by Rita Williams-Garcia

Juneteenth for Mazie by Floyd Cooper

All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom by Angela Johnson

A Taste of Colored Water by Matt Faulkner

The Unspoken: A Story from the Underground Railroad by Henry Cole

Ida B. Wells: Let the Truth Be Told by Walter Dean Myers

Seven Miles to Freedom: The Robert Smalls Story by Janet Halfmann

Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery by William Miller

For Older Readers:

This Is My America by Kim Johnson

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, written by Himself

Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: Or, the Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery by William and Ellen Craft

Hand in Hand: Ten Black Men Who Changed America by Andrea Davis Pinkney and Brian Pinkney

Up from Slavery by Booker T. Washington

Letters from a Slave Girl: The Story of Harriet Jacobs by Mary E. Lyons

The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. Du Bois

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs

Dear Martin by Nic Stone

Warriors Don't Cry: The Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High by Melba Pattillo Beals

Changing the Equation: 50+ US Black Women in STEM by Tonya Bolden

Brave. Black. First.: 50+ African American Women Who Changed the World by Cheryl Willis Hudson

Sugar Changed the World: A Story of Magic, Spice, Slavery, Freedom, and Science by Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos

William Still and the Underground Railroad by Kathleen Stevens

The Seeds of America Trilogy (Chains, Forge, Ashes) by Laurie Halse Anderson

Recommended Reading List for Teachers

Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II by Douglas A. Blackmon

From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862-1875 by Christopher Span

Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom by Heather A. Williams

Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities by Craig Steven Wilder

Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies edited by Leslie M. Harris, James T. Campbell, and Alfred L. Brophy

Educated in Tyranny: Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's University, edited by Maurie D. McInnis and Louis P. Nelson

The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved from Womb to the Grave, in the Building of a Nation by Daina Berry Ramey

From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century by William A. Darity

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing by Dr. Joy A DeGruy

Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present by Harriet A. Washington

The Souls of Black Folk (reprint, 1994) W.E.B. DuBois

Black Reconstruction in America (reprint, 1964), W.E.B. DuBois

The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America by Richard Rothstein

American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses by Theodore Dwight Weld

Shackles of Iron: Slavery Beyond the Atlantic by Stewart Gordon

Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora by Stephanie Smallwood.

The Captive's Quest for Freedom: Fugitive Slaves, the 1850 Slave Law, and the Politics of Slavery by R.J.M. Blackett

Suggested Movies/Videos: (some may not be appropriate for all age groups)

13th

Selma

Rosewood

Harriet

Fruitvale Station

12 Years A Slave

Amistad

Hidden Figures

Just Mercy

Loving

Glory
Black Wall Street Burning
Queen Sugar
Ruby Bridges
Sankofa
Best of Enemies
The Great Debaters
Roots

Underground Railroad: The William Still Story (full length)

<https://www.pbs.org/video/underground-railroad-william-still-story-underground-railroad-william-still-story/>

The Segregation Myth: Richard Rothstein Debunks an American Lie | NowThis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2roWLzrqOjQ>

Explanation of Systemic Racism (infographic video) by John Alfred Nelson

<https://www.facebook.com/100009059364128/posts/2481236955521592/>

The Three-Fifths Compromise Explained: US History Review

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBjMZ3u WeM>

Jim Crow and America's Racism Explained

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_gOtZ--4WE

When Heritage = Hate: The Truth About the Confederacy in America

<https://www.youtu.be/QOPGpE-sXh0>

The Atlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes

http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_history_of_american_slavery/2015/06/animated_interactive_of_the_history_of_the_atlantic_slave_trade.html

A Speech of Frederick Douglass <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>

A Video of Nikole Hannah-Jones https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/analyze-and-discuss-1619-project-video-introduction-27998?utm_source=email&utm_medium=educationnewsletter&utm_campaign=7012020