

Sailing for Freedom: The Underground Railroad

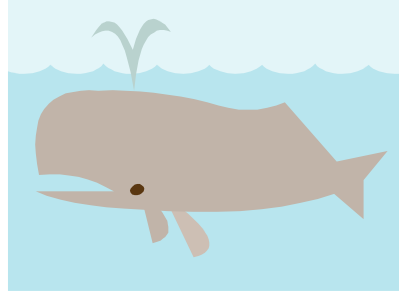
African-American Whalers

Lesson Plans written by Tuquilla Mullins



2013

Lesson Plan – Writing by Tuquilla Mullins,
NEH; Sailing to Freedom-Underground Railroad



Common Core Standards:

See Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12 for more details (page 81).

- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source;
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text;
- Describe how text presents information;
- Integrate visual information with other information in print and digital texts;
- Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

See College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing for more details (page 85).

- Production and Distribution of Writing;
Numbers 4 - 6
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
Numbers 7-10

California State Standards:

8.7 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the South from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.

8.7.2

Trace the origins and development of slavery; its effects on black Americans and on The region's political, social, religious, economic, and cultural development; and identify the strategies that were tried to both overturn and preserve it (e.g., through the writings and historical documents on Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey).

8.7.4.

Compare the lives of and opportunities for free blacks in the North with those of free Blacks in the South.

8.9 Students analyze the early and steady attempts to abolish slavery and to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.

8.9.1 Describe the leaders of the movement (e.g., John Quincy Adams and his proposed constitutional amendment, John Brown and the armed resistance, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass).

8.2.9 Discuss the abolition of slavery in early state constitutions.

Learning Overview and Learning Objectives:

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Yankee whalers prospered economically with the growing need of oil, this is known as the “*Golden Age*” for whalers. Students will learn how African American slaves and freemen made an impact in **New Bedford** as seamen aboard New England Ships. New Bedford took first position in the whaling industry. Although some seamen anticipated returning home, some African American men and fugitive slaves sought to the sea for freedom and fear of being returned to slavery.

Students will read primary and secondary resources such as textbooks, diaries, documents, journals, view charts and graphs, etc., to analyze historical facts and events that took place during the whaling industry with perspectives to the economy, culture, and social standing during the *Golden Age* of whaling.

Student will gain a better understanding of how African American slaves and free black men participated in the Underground Railroad as whalers. In addition, students will learn how abolitionists helped blacks in their struggles to gain freedom.

Students will compile data, analyze and research to summarize the Underground Railroad prior to the Civil War to create power-point presentations, oral reports, skits, etc. based on the activities listed below.

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Teacher Materials:

Patricia C. McKissack & Fredrick L. McKissack. *Black Hands, White Sails; The story of African Americans Whalers*, New York: Scholastic Press, 1999, Print.

Summary: A history of African-American whalers between 1730 and 1880, describing their contribution to the whaling industry. Cheap copies available on-line through Amazon. 10 or more copies for group work or obtain a class sets. Students can also get a copy from the local library.

Bolster, W. Jeffrey, *Black Jacks*, London, England, Harvard University Press, 1997, Print.
African –American seamen in the age of sail, bibliographical references.

Trustees of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society. *The Captian's Specific Orders; Captain Edward S. Davoll*; Whaling Museum Library, New Bedford, Massachusetts, 6/5, 1981; sketch number 81.

The Kendall Whaling Museum, Sharon, Massachusetts. USA 1990. *African Americans in the Maritime Trades: A Guide to Resources in New England*, Mary Malloy.

Sanderson, Ivan I. *A History of Whaling*, U.S.A, Barnes & Noble Books, 1993, Print.

Includes charts, pictures, and journal experts. I used for extended activities see below.

Hendrick, George & Willene. *Fleeing for Freedom: Stories of the Underground Railroad As Told by Levi Coffin and William Still*, Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 2004. Print.

Abolitionist(s) movement and stories of the Underground Railroad.

Billinghurst, Jane. *The Spirit of the Whale, Legend History, and Conservation*. Minnesota, Voyageur Press, 2000. Print

This is a great supplement book for ESL learners of whales and men. The book includes charts and pictures of whalers at sea, scrimshaw art work all which can be used for teaching with photography.

Maps: The United States (Slaves States and Free States) prior to the Civil War; Triangular Slave trade routes with products and human cargo prior to the Civil War. New England Whaling maps.

Other supplies needed: Large Poster board paper, marking pens, tape, computer, and projector.

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Whales, Whales and Whales:

Ash, Christopher. *Whaler's Eye*, New York, 1962, Print. Macmillan Company.

Ellis, Richard. *The Book of Whales*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1985.

Ellis, Richard. *Men and Whales*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1991

View [Video](#) on “*SpermWhales*”. See National Geographical Site.

Internet Sites of Interests:

http://www.whalingcity.net/pictures_aa_whaling.html

Excellent for teaching with photos on whales and history on New Bedford.

http://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr/discover_history/underground_map.htm

<http://www.history.com/videos/abolitionists-and-the-underground-railroad#abolitionists-and-the-underground-road>

Student Materials:

Interactive notebook for writing notes, terms, summarizing facts, and group work activities, etc.
USB flash drive to store data for power-point, or CDs.

Lessons: Block period schedule

Teacher presents overview of the Underground Rail Road. Students should know that the Underground Rail Road was a network of fugitive slaves who escaped from slavery with the help of many abolitionists. (See National Geographic web site for risks of escaped slaves.) Whereas the terrain on land was very difficult, escaping on whaling vassals offered many opportunities for fugitive slaves seeking their freedom.

Begin lesson: Block Periods

1. Assign *Black Hands, White Sails: The story of African-American Whalers* as primary reader.
2. Students read assigned paragraphs or sections of *Black Hands, White Sails* in groups or in pairs to determine central ideas on why some African American slaves became whalers. (Common Core Reading Standard # 2).

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3. After students have completed their section, they will summarize and organize facts, draw out concrete details and present to the teacher. Group work should be drafted out in their notebook, and then finalized on poster paper. Encourage the students to be creative. The teacher checks each group for understanding on:
 - a. terms/vocabulary words, any unfamiliar words and
 - b. Comprehension on reading assignment (Common Core Reading #2, #4, #8).
 - c. Teacher gives an overview of the section that they have just read

4. Students will write (self generated) questions from their assigned section(s) to be used later for writing exercise. (Note: each group will present their own section orally in front of the class).

5. Students will use the internet to further explore African-American Slaves and free black seamen, analyze charts such as crew men logs, read journals, diaries, and economic data of communities for research. (Common Core Writing number s #7-10: Research to build and present knowledge through writing).

6. After each group has presented their section to the class, display posters around the room, allow a gallery walk.

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Assignment questions-- for *Black Hands, White Sails; the Story of African American Whalers*.

1. Explain how whaling jobs offered economic growth in communities, give examples.
2. Compare and contrast how whaling industries and slave labor s became the two most important aspects in changing the world, between 1830s and 1865.
3. The Quakers and Abolionists both helped influence equality in their communities. How did this help those free blacks, slaves, and seamen?
4. Examine the years between 1815 and 1865. Discuss why it was considered the *Golden Age* of whaling.
5. Each student will write a research paper to support their understanding of the Underground Railroad in the United States through the eyes as a whaler. (Common Core Writing – see #5).

Extended Activities: Can be done in groups

1. Write out new whalers commandments, place on poster board, and explain reasoning for each commandment. (*All levels*)
2. Read Seamen’s Protection Certificate paper and compare with immigration application or visa application process that we use today. (*Group activity – all levels*).
3. Read and analyze Reward bulletins for fugitive slaves (*group and class discussion – all levels*).
4. Read, discuss, and analyze the effects of the Fugitive Slave law 1850 (*group and class discussion – all levels*).
5. Write daily reflections from class reading, group work and place notebooks.
6. Map out latitude and longuide on whaler ships ports from New England to Europe or different places covered in book. (*Teacher will need to write out places—see whaling ports*).
7. Measure the length of a Sperm Whale (outdoors), determine the weight and height. Next, compare the whale (ton) with compact cars, draw a diagram. (*Teacher and students, tape measure needed, picture of compact car, I used a Honda Civic*).
8. Create abolitionists trading cards and Underground Railroad Key-people trading cards (*Can be ideal for ESL students and summary review*).
9. Create a time-line of events with pictures starting from 1812 to 1865. (*Great for Gallery walk, visual aids, and historical events in history*).
10. Create whaling shanties and share with the class (*Students -Music and drama theme*).

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Supplemental assigned reading: Optional or extra-credit

Read excerpt “*Late Noon in the West- (American III)*”, pages 240-246.

A History of Whaling, Ivan T. Sanderson, Barnes & Nobel Books, New York, 1993.

Student will read about the adventures of John W. Nathan Captain on a whaling ship. Students will analyze, discuss, and interpret information to be used for creating their research papers. This book is also good for history of whales, chronology of whales and comparing whales.

Read page 76, “Uses for a Sperm Whale” and “Articles made of Whalebone”, page 92 from *Spirit of the Whale*.

Students will find this interesting.