# Denise Porcello

# NEH Sailing to Freedom

Title of Lesson Plan: Henry’s Freedom Box

# **Lesson Overview:**

This lesson focuses on the story of Henry Brown, who mailed himself from Richmond, Virginia to Phildelphia, about 350 miles, to escape slavery. With only small air holes, a little water and some biscuits, he survived the 27 hour trip. This story made the headlines in America and in Europe, and Henry “Box” Brown became one of the most famous slaves of the Underground Railroad.

## Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to (“SWBAT”):

* retell the story including main idea and details
* define and use new vocabulary words correctly in discussion and writing
* answer multiple choice and short answer comprehension questions, using proper capitalization and punctuation
* write a “diary entry” from the perspective of Henry about the journey using proper format

## Number of Class Periods:

3-4

## Grade Level:

1-3

## Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/1/) Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.1.C](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/1/c/) Use reflexive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.1.D](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/1/d/) Form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs (e.g., sat, hid, told).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/2/) Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.2.A](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/2/a/) Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.2.B](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/2/b/) Use commas in greetings and closings of letters.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.2.D](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/2/d/) Generalize learned spelling patterns when writing words (e.g., cage → badge; boy → boil).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.2.E](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/2/e/) Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/3/) Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/4/) Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4.A](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/4/a/) Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4.E](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/4/e/) Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/2/6/) Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe (e.g., When other kids are happy that makes me happy).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/2/3/) Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/2/8/) Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/2/1/) Ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/2/2/) Identify the main topic of a multiparagraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/2/3/) Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/2/4/) Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 2 topic or subject area.*

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.10](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/2/10/) By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 2-3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

## Historical Context:

By the 1850s, there were approximately four million slaves living in the United States.   
Between sixty and one hundred thousand slaves escaped on the Underground Railroad, a series of secret escape routes leading north, to freedom. The Underground Railroad was traveled mainly at night, and escaping slaves were led by “conductors” and “station masters” who hid them and led them to safety.

## Materials:

Levine, E., & Dixon, J. (2009). *Henry's freedom box a true story from the Underground Railroad*. Norwalk, Conn.: Weston Woods.

box (cardboard or wooden) approximate dimensions: three feet one inch long, two feet six inches deep, and two feet wide

paper, pencils

handouts

The teacher may want to “antique” copies of journal paper using tea bags, water a few days prior to the lesson

## Procedures:

Day 1

1. Before reading the book have students complete the “What I ‘think’ I know” section of the Slavery and Underground Railroad Thinking Chart. It is important that students understand that some of the information that they write in this section may wind up not being true as they learn more about slavery and the Underground Railroad.

2. Introduce the vocabulary of the story and discuss the meanings of the words.

3. Explain to the students that they are going to read a story about slavery and the Underground Railroad. Before reading, have the students write down questions they might still have about slavery or the Underground Railroad. When the students are finished writing their questions, have them turn to a partner and share questions. By doing this, all students will feel that they have been given a chance to share their thinking. After 2 minutes of sharing, elicit some questions to share orally.

4. Explain to the students that although the book they are going to have read to them is a picture book, it is based on a true story. They will learn a great deal of information about slavery and how slaves were treated. Review the term non-fiction.

5. The teacher reads Henry’s Freedom Box, by E. Levine. Instruct them to write down the information they learn about slavery and the Underground Railroad on their paper when the teacher pauses throughout the story. Pause several times throughout the story to give students an opportunity to write down the ideas/facts they are learning.

Some possible responses students might have are:

* + Slaves weren’t allowed to know their birthdays
  + Slave children can be taken away from their families
  + Slave master’s lived in big houses
  + Slaves could be freed by their owners
  + Slaves could be given away by their masters

6. Have the students go back and look at the first section “What I ‘think’ I know”. Ask students if any of their responses here were proven true by the story. If so, move those ideas from “What I think I know” to the “Facts I’ve Learned” section.

7. Students can also write down any connections they made with the story in the last column.

8. Choose one or two students to summarize the story in their own words.

9. Students will respond to the comprehension questions, using complete sentences.

Day 2

1. Review the vocabulary terms and complete the vocabulary activity sheet.
2. Ask students to review their thinking charts and turn and talk to a partner.
3. Tell the students that they will be writing a journal or diary entry as if they were Henry. Discuss that they will use “I’, “me” and “myself” when writing. Remind them that slaves were not allowed to read or write. Many learned in secret, as Henry did.
4. Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine what they would bring on the trip, reminding them of the time period (no electronics).
5. Have each student take a turn in Henry’s Box.
6. Instruct students to write their journal entries, using their vocabulary words and thinking charts.

Day 3

1. Students will revise their journal entries as necessary.
2. Ask several students to share their responses orally to the group. Student exemplars can be projected for demonstration.

Assessment and Summary:

Students’ journal/diary entries will be graded according to the attached rubric.

Thinking charts will be collected and used for grading if desired. Vocabulary and comprehension sheets can be used for practice or grading.

## Text of Document Excerpts/Source Materials With Citations:

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/collateral_resources/pdf/h/Henry_Quiz.pdf>

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/collateral_resources/pdf/h/Henry_Vocab.pdf>

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/collateral_resources/pdf/h/Henry_answers.pdf>

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/collateral_resources/pdf/h/Henry_Thinking_Chart.pdf>

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/henrys-freedom-box-lesson-plan>

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Henry’s Freedom Box

1. Which word would best describe Henry Brown?

a. boastful

1. b. lazy
2. c. joyful
3. d. determined

2. Henry shipped his box to which city?

a. New York City

b. Washington

c. Pittsburg

d. Philadelphia

3. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is someone who owned slaves.

a. clerk

b. conductor

c. master

d. manager

4. How were slaves treated differently than free men and women?

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5. Most slaves did not know their birthdays. Why did Henry consider March 30, 1849 his birthday?

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6. Why is Henry “Box” Brown one of the most famous slaves of the Underground Railroad?

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## Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Henry’s Freedom Box

## Vocabulary Activity

## Word Bank

## slave master beckoned quilt vitriol pry

## tobacco warehouse

## Directions: Use the words in the word bank above to complete each sentence.

## 1. Max found an old wooden box in his backyard and tried to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ open the cover, but couldn’t.

## 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sold their slaves to other families in order to buy younger slaves.

## 3. Mrs. Morgan made a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to keep her warm during the cold winter nights.

## 4. Sam and Jesse\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us to their lunch table in order to tell us a secret.

## 5. Slaves worked twisting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leaves for their masters to sell for a profit.

## 6. The tobacco was stored in a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ until it was sold.

## 7. It is important to be careful when working with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because it can burn your skin.

## 8. Many \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were torn from their families and sold at a market place.

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**Henry’s Freedom Box**

**Vocabulary**

Slave (n.) a person who is owned by another person and can be sold at the owner's will

Master (n.) an owner especially of a slave or animal

Beckoned (v.) to call or signal to a person usually by a wave or nod

Quilt (n.) a bed cover made of two layers of cloth with a filling of wool, cotton, or down held together by patterned stitching

Tobacco (n.) a tall upright tropical American herb with pink or white flowers that is grown for its leaves

Warehouse (n.) a building for the storage of goods

Vitriol (n.) a compound of copper sulfate chemically combined with water

Pry (v.) to raise, move, or pull apart with or as if with a lever

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Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Slavery and the Underground Railroad

Thinking Chart

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What I “**think**” I know | **Questions**  I still have | **Facts**  I’ve learned | **Connections**  I made |
|  |  |  |  |

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/collateral_resources/pdf/h/Henry_Thinking_Chart.pdf>

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Journal,**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_