**PRIMARY SOURCES AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**

Investigation Designer:

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Grade Level:

9-12

Time Required:

3 class sessions

Investigation Focus:

The understanding of primary documents in the context of the Underground Railroad

State Learning Standards:

New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards:

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| **Social Studies** |
| **6.1 U.S. History: America in the World:** All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities. |

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to

* Recognize the various types of primary documents
* Develop critical thinking skills in analyzing primary documents in the context of history
* Identify components of the document and assess or interpret the actual chain of events

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on their small group presentations in which they will analyze and interpret a primary source about the Underground Railroad using the National Archives’ *Document Analysis Worksheets.* Evaluation of the group’s presentation will be based on the *Analyzing a Primary Source Rubric.*

Materials List:

* LCD Projector
* Computer
* Internet Access (Media Center Lab)
* *Document Analysis Worksheets*

Primary Source document(s) needed:

Students will choose their own primary documents.

Engaging Experience:

Students will be able to comprehend the role of primary documents in gaining a clear perspective and understanding of a time period.

Guiding Question(s):

How can primary documents provide people with a clear understanding of what happened in the past?

What will students do, investigate, research?

* The class will be broken up into groups of 4 or 5 students.
* Each group will choose a different type of primary document about the Underground Railroad to analyze. For types of documents, they should refer to the National Archives’ *Document Analysis Worksheets* webpage. ([http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/))
* Once a group chooses a type of document, they must locate a digitized primary document. Students must use accurate and credible sites such as The Library of Congress, National Archives, Higher Education sites, and subscribed databases.
* Using the appropriate worksheet from National Archives, they will assess and interpret this document as it relates to the understanding of the Underground Railroad. They should use outside sources to analyze the document.
* They will then present their document and findings to the class.
* The group will be evaluated using the rubric from the following website: http://www.cyberbee.com/viewpoints/psrubric.pdf.
* If time allows, the teacher may also provide additional primary documents for discussion that will shed light primary on documents in studying the Underground Railroad.

Presenting Finding and Draw Conclusions:

Students will be encouraged to discuss their perceptions of the Underground Railroad and how they compare to the materials in their primary sources.

What enduring understanding will students have?

* Understanding and analysis of primary sources
* Ability to understand why primary sources are important in the context of American History

References:

*Analyzing a Primary Source Rubric.* Cyberbee.com, Web. 13 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.cyberbee.com/viewpoints/psrubric.pdf>>.

*Document Analysis Worksheets*. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, nd. Web. 6 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/>>.

Kashatus, William C. *In Pursuit of Freedom: Teaching the Underground Railroad*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005. Print.

*New Jersey Curriculum Content Standards: Social Studies*. New Jersey Department of Education, 2014. Web. 6 Aug. 2015. <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/ss/>.