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***Please refer to the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System website: (***[***http://www.pdesas.org/module/sas/curriculumframework/SocialStudiesCF.aspx***](http://www.pdesas.org/module/sas/curriculumframework/SocialStudiesCF.aspx)***)***

***for information on the Pennsylvania Curriculum Framework for Social Studies. You will find much of the information about PA Academic Standards, essential questions, vocabulary, assessments, etc. by navigating through the various components of the Curriculum Framework.***

**LESSON / UNIT TITLE:**

**The American Slave Experience: Using Primary Documents and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin***

**to Explore Fact, Fiction, and Point of View**

**Teacher Name(s):** Jessica Attardo-Maryott

**School District:** Athens Area School District

**Building:** Harlan Rowe Junior High

**Grade Level:** 8-12

**Subject:** U.S. History

**Time Required:** 8 – 40 minute class periods

**Lesson/Unit Summary *(2-3 sentence synopsis)*:** Students must engage in critical thinking to truly engage with and understand historical context. This lesson explores slavery in the United States through literature-based film, primary documents, think-alouds, and student engagement. Students will demonstrate understanding formatively in small groups and summatively through construction of critically written essays.

**Essential Questions for Lesson/Unit**

How accurate is Harriet Beecher Stowe’s depiction of slavery in her 19th Century novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in comparison to oral histories collected from former slaves?

In using primary documents to gather evidence about slavery, what circumstances compel a reader to question the accuracy of historical accounts?

**Pennsylvania Academic Standards Addressed in Lesson/Unit**

***(Include standards numbers and standards statements.)***

**PA Academic Standards - Economics (2002) - Grade 9**

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| ***Category E.6.2.9 Markets and the Functions of Governments*** |
| Statement E.6.2.9.A Explain the flow of goods, services and resources in a mixed economy. |
| Statement E.6.2.9.E Explain the laws of supply and demand and how these affect the prices of goods and services. |
| Statement E.6.2.9.H Analyze the economic roles of governments in market economies. |
| Descriptor E.6.2.9.H.1 Economic growth and stability |
| ***Category E.6.4.9 Economic Interdependence***  Statement E.6.4.9.D Explain how the location of resources, transportation and communication networks and technology have affected United States economic patterns. |
| Descriptor E.6.4.9.D.1 Labor markets (e.g., migrant workers) |
| Statement E.6.4.9.G Describe geographic patterns of economic activities in the United States. |
| Descriptor E.6.4.9.G.1 Primary – extractive industries (i.e., farming, fishing, forestry, mining) |
| Descriptor E.6.4.9.G.2 Secondary – materials processing industries (i.e., manufacturing) |
| Category E.6.5.9 Work and Earnings |
| Statement E.6.5.9.E Define wealth and describe its distribution within and among the political divisions of the United States. |
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**PA Academic Standards - Geography (2002) - Grade 9**

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| ***Category G.7.3.9 The Human Characteristics of Places and Regions*** |
| Statement G.7.3.9.A Explain the human characteristics of places and regions by their population characteristics. |
| Statement G.7.3.9.B Explain the human characteristics of places and regions by their cultural characteristics. |
| Descriptor G.7.3.9.B.1 Ethnicity of people at national levels (e.g., customs, celebrations, languages, religions) |
| Descriptor G.7.3.9.B.2 Culture distribution (e.g., ethnic enclaves and neighborhoods) |
| Descriptor G.7.3.9.B.3 Cultural diffusion (e.g., acculturation and assimilation, cultural revivals of language) |
| Statement G.7.3.9.D Explain the human characteristics of places and regions by their economic activities. |
| Descriptor G.7.3.9.D.1 Spatial distribution of economic activities in Pennsylvania and the United States (e.g., patterns of agriculture, forestry, mining, retailing, manufacturing, services) |
| Descriptor G.7.3.9.D.2 Factors that shape spatial patterns of economic activity both Nationally and internationally (e.g., comparative advantage in location of economic activities; changes in resource trade; disruption of trade flows) |
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**PA Academic Standards History (2002) - Grade 9**

***Category H.8.1.9 Historical Analysis and Skills Development***

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| Statement H.8.1.9.B Analyze and interpret historical sources. |
| Descriptor H.8.1.9.B.1 Literal meaning of historical passages |

Descriptor H.8.1.9.B.3 Different historical perspectives

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| Statement H.8.1.9.C Analyze the fundamentals of historical interpretation. |
| Descriptor H.8.1.9.C.1 Fact versus opinion |
| Descriptor H.8.1.9.C.2 Reasons/causes for multiple points of view |

Descriptor H.8.1.9.C.5 Author or source used to develop historical narratives

Statement H.8.1.9.D Analyze and interpret historical research.

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| Descriptor H.8.1.9.D.3 Historical questions |
| Descriptor H.8.1.9.D.4 Primary sources |
| Descriptor H.8.1.9.D.5 Secondary sources |
| Descriptor H.8.1.9.D.7 Credibility of evidence |

***Category H.8.3.9 United States History***

Statement H.8.3.9.B Identify and analyze primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important in United States history from 1787 to 1914.

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| Descriptor H.8.3.9.B.2 19th Century Writings and Communications (e.g., Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Brown’s “Washed by Blood,” Key’s “Star Spangled Banner”) |
| Descriptor H.8.3.9.B.3 Historic Places (e.g., The Alamo, Underground Railroad sites, Erie Canal) |
| Statement H.8.3.9.D Identify and analyze conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations in United States history from 1787 to 1914. |
| Descriptor H.8.3.9.D.1 Domestic Instability (e.g., wartime confiscation of private property, abolitionist movement, Reconstruction) |
| Descriptor H.8.3.9.D.2 Ethnic and Racial Relations (e.g., Cherokee Trail of Tears, slavery and the Underground Railroad, draft riots) |

**Lesson/Unit Objectives**

1. Students will critically analyze the historical film *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1987), based upon Harriet Beech Stowe’s 1852 novel, noting the broad range of living conditions in which slavery existed.

2. The teacher will present two oral histories of former slaves utilizing think-aloud strategies, demonstrating the thought processes necessary for critically analyzing primary documents.

3. Students will construct graphic and written demonstrations of understanding of slavery accounts, comparing and contrasting historical fiction to primary documents.

**Vocabulary/Key Terms for Lesson/Unit**

Primary document

Secondary document

\* The primary documents used for this lesson are captured through interviews with former slaves. The verbiage used in the historical accounts is loaded with nineteenth century, southern, cultural dialect. They are best understood when read aloud and words are enunciated phonetically. This is the basis for teacher-led think alouds, necessary for discussion, critical understanding, and comprehension.

**Historical Background for Teachers / Research Narrative**

**Using Primary Documents to Teach**

**the History of Slavery in the United States**

As educators, we are called upon to guide our students in critical thinking and inquiry. To do so requires educators to reach beyond the traditional United States history classroom textbook. The textbooks are riddled with narrow perspectives that emphasize heroes and moral conflicts, tackling the issues in a way that is both abstract and shallow in explanation (Henry, 2011). This holds especially true in teaching United States’ institution of slavery. Students are often led to see slavery and the Civil War as a conflict between good (the North) and evil (the South) (Ogden, Perkins & Donahue, 2008).

Teaching slavery involves more than a general understanding. Students must be guided in challenging the moral dilemmas of forcing people into slavery, debate the whole country’s economic dependence upon slave labor, and the experience of slavery from a human point of view. A collaboration of these perspectives aids students in creating an understanding and meaning for the existence for slavery in the United States (Ogden, et al., 2008), as well as critically analyzing abolitionists’ and slave owners’ conflicting interests.

To the advantage of educators, during the Great Depression the Works Progress Administration sent interviewers to collect and record oral histories of over 2,000 persons who survived slavery across seventeen states (Campos, 2006). Utilizing primary documents, such as the captured oral histories of those who experienced slavery, provide educators and students with an opportunity to see history through the eyes of the enslaved. Implementation of primary documents, however, carries a responsibility to walk students through analyzing, interpreting, and understanding the document. Historical documents are often presented in classrooms, but fail to be implemented in a manner that provides context and relevance (Woyshner, 2010). Primary documents are an opportunity to challenge students to think outside of themselves, they are not a decoration to a curriculum. Students can engage with primary sources and develop a critical understanding of the past (Woyshner, 2010), in contrast to the typical rote memorization of events. Primary sources, such as the *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers Project* collection found in Rawick’s edited collection (1972-1979), place students as witnesses to the enslaved losing family members to auctions, disease, or torture all in the name of economic preservation (O’Donovan, 2009).

Although primary documents provide an avenue for students to engage in and understand the lives of the enslaved, it is crucial for educators to discuss the nature of primary documents as part of the process. In first week of school, this author often guides students in breaking the word history into parts – his story. Students of history must always ask who is telling the story and for what purpose. Questioning primary documents must accompany their usage in order to place an appropriate value on accuracy, as primary documents are biased by nature (Nava & Schmidtberger, 2011). This is not to say that their inherent nature as biased deems them invaluable, however they should be accompanied with the understanding of the perspective from which it is presented. For example, the *Slave Narratives* collection includes interviews with survivors of the slavery era during the 1930s. The 1930s were a time when segregation and discrimination were still a great force in the United States. When answering interviewers questions, the reader must consider the pressures the interviewee may have felt to present slavery in a different light than the actual experience. Additionally, the interviewer served as the writer of the narrative, a position that might have also held bias (Campos, 2006).

As educators, we are called to challenge our students’ thinking and, in doing so, ask them to challenge history. In teaching the history of slavery in the United States we can do so through the vast collections of primary documents available for classroom implementation. In turn, we guide students to become critical thinkers with a deep understanding of the enslaved experience. However, we do so with consideration of the source, its purpose, and the method with which it was collected. With careful consideration and in-depth discussion, primary documents are the vehicle for transporting students into a realm of first-hand point of view.

References

Campos, D. (2006). Slave narratives from the federal writers' project 1936-1938: Stories as a

catalyst for historical comprehension. *Black History Bulletin*, *69*(2), 8-14.

Henry, M. (2011). Sacred and profane American history: Does it exist in textbooks?. *History*

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Nava, A., & Schmidtberger, V. (2011). Using primary documents in the social studies classroom:

Connecting history then and now. *Social Studies Review*, *50*(1), 38-40.

O'Donovan, S. (2009). Teaching slavery in today's classroom. *Organization of American*

*Historians Magazine of History*, *23*(2), 7-10.

Ogden, N., Perkins, C., & Donahue, D. M. (2008). Not a peculiar institution: Challenging

students' assumptions about slavery in U.S. history. *History Teacher*, *41*(4), 469-488.

Rawick, George P., et al., eds. *The American slave: A composite autobiography*. 41 vols.

Westport, CN.: Greenwood Press, 1972-79.

Woyshner, C. (2010). Inquiry Teaching with Primary Source Documents: An Iterative Approach.

*Social Studies Research & Practice*, *5*(3), 36-45.

**Instructional Prodedures and Activities**

***(List/describe the step-by-step sequence of procedures and learning activities.***

**Background:**

The teacher should use this lesson as a complement to a Slavery in the United States unit. Additionally, it is strongly advised that the teacher view the film and read the primary documents prior to utilizing the materials in class. There is a need for the teacher to discuss slave culture, especially the use of words during that time period that may be deemed derogatory or offensive to students in the classroom. It is imperative that teachers discuss how and why derogatory terms were used, even within the African American community.

**Class Period #1 – 40 minutes:**

1. Once students have background knowledge about the history of slavery, the teacher should discuss the difference between primary and secondary documents. The teacher should guide students in critically analyzing how and why primary documents may be questioned regarding issues of bias or author point of view.
2. The teacher should review the entire lesson with students, discussing each step, its purpose, and expectations for learning.
3. The teacher should then discuss the language used in both the film and the primary documents. Cultural language as well as derogatory language should be explained to clarify context with students.
4. The teacher should then allow for open discussion and questions students may have as they approach this lesson plan.

**Class Periods #2-4 – 120 Minutes:**

1. Students will view the film *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (CITE). Each of the three class periods will cover slave life and treatment at one of three different plantations.
2. Students should have a list of cast names available to aid in their note-taking of important elements of the film.
3. At the beginning of class, the teacher should review with students using questioning techniques. Student should be asked to consider the relationships between differing characters in the film. Additionally, they should be guided in comparing plantation owners and their treatment of the slaves. This analysis will be necessary for the latter part of the lesson plan, where compare and contrast exercises will take place.

**Class Periods #5 & ½ of #6 – 60 minutes:**

1. Students should be provided copies of both Mary Reynolds’ and Tempe Herndon Durham’s historical accounts of slave life.
2. Due to the dialect, cultural, and time period language, the teacher should read the oral history documents aloud to students. The teacher should use think-aloud strategies while reading, modeling the critical thinking that should be taking place during the reading. Additionally, the teacher should use think-aloud strategies to guide the students in questioning the documents and their parallels to the film. This will aid students in identifying how each of the women’s stories is similar and different to the historical fiction account found in the film.
3. While the teacher is reading, students should be encouraged to highlight or note sections of the passage that can be compared or contrasted to the film.
4. The teacher should address any questions or concerns students have in understanding the primary documents.

**Class Periods ½ of #6 & #7 – 60 minutes:**

1. If needed, students should be instructed as to how a Venn is used to graphically delineate comparisons and contrasts.
2. Students should be placed in small groups of 4-5 students.
3. Students should all be provided a copy of the Venn diagram for each primary document.
4. In small groups, the students will complete the Venn diagram, demonstrating understanding of the relationship between the historical fiction film and primary document.
5. The teacher should rotate through small groups, clarifying questions and ensuring the proper completion of the exercise.

**Class Period #8 – 40 minutes:**

1. The teacher should administer the summative assessment, which asks students to write essays comparing and contrasting the historical fiction film to primary documents.
2. The teacher has the option of allowing students to use the Venn diagrams completed in class as a pre-write for the summative assessment.

**Suggested Strategies for Differentiating Instruction**

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|  | ***Lower-Ability Students:***   1. Choose small groups for students to ensure lower ability students are working with higher ability students. 2. Highlight or mark important sections on the primary documents prior to think-alouds, to provide students with a guided reading experience. 3. Choose different slave narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project that are shorter in length: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/index.html> 4. Ask students to make a compare and contrast list or identify listed items as a means of summatively assessing students in lieu of essay writing.   ***Higher-Ability Students:***   1. Require students to read primary documents and complete Venn diagrams individually prior to participating in small group exercise/discussion. 2. Students complete summative essay assessment without use of Venn diagram. 3. Assign students various slave narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project and have students report their findings to the larger group: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/index.html> 4. Students can be challenged with replacing the video version with Harriett Beecher Stowe’s novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin.* |

**Assessment of Student Learning (Formative and Summative)**

**Formative Assessment:** Students will complete a Venn diagram to demonstrate their ability to compare and contrast the historical fiction film for each of the two primary documents.

**Summative Assessment:** Students will construct two essays, each providing facts and complementing details to demonstrate their understanding as to how the historical fiction film and primary documents are related. The essays will provide evidence of the students’ critical analysis of the state of slavery in the United States during the nineteenth century.

**Materials and Resources**

***(Include text, supplementary resources, primary source documents, websites, handouts, charts, maps, etc.)***

**Links to Federal Writers’ Project Slave Narratives:**

* Tempe Herndon Durham: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/durham1.html>
* Mary Reynolds: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/reynold1.html>

**Addendums:**

* Formative Assessment - Venn diagram for each primary document
* Summative Assessment – essay questions exam

**Video Needed for Lesson:**

* Nelson, J. (Producer), & Lathan, S. (Director). (1987). *Uncle Tom’s cabin* [Motion picture]. United States: Republic Pictures.

**Author(s) of Unit/Lesson Plan**

Jessica Attardo-Maryott, Athens Area High School, Athens Area School District

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