

Flow of History

The Turner Family: Resisting Slavery

Overview

Enslaved people were human beings with aspirations, dreams, fears, and families. They constantly resisted their enslavement in small and large ways. These activities are designed to help students see the enslaved as real people, to understand the ways in which the institution of slavery dehumanized them, and to highlight ways that enslaved people resisted and acted with agency to maintain their human dignity.

Grade Level

Middle-High School

Enduring Understanding

Enslaved people were human beings with aspirations, dreams, fears, and families. They resisted their enslavement in small and large ways.

Topic(s)

Transatlantic Slave Trade; Slavery; Resistance to Slavery

Compelling Question(s)

How does Alec Turner's story demonstrate his resistance to being enslaved?

Historical Thinking Skills

Primary Source Analysis; Synthesizing Sources

Summative Task

Enslaved people were human beings with aspirations, dreams, fears, and families. They constantly resisted their enslavement in small and large ways. After examining the primary sources, what hopes, dreams, and fears do you think Alex might have had for his future? Do you think they were different from his father's?

Outline (4 stages)

Activating Prior Knowledge/Building Historical Context:

Begin by viewing [this visualization of the trans-Atlantic slave trade](#) and this [reconstruction video of a slave vessel](#).

Review the [Turner Family Timeline](#), paying particular attention to the beginning through to the Civil War. Connect Alessi's experience to the visualization and video

Formative Assessment

Class discussion; visual thinking strategies

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<p>above. If there is time, students could use the database to connect to the dates and locations of Alessi's capture and transport from Sierra Leone to New Orleans.</p> <p>Visual Thinking: Then use the visual thinking slides to examine the engraving Sale of Estates, Paintings, and Slaves in the Rotunda, New Orleans. Tell students the title of the engraving; after visual thinking strategies are used, discuss what the people in the engraving might have been thinking about and feeling. Who has the power in this image?</p> <p>Discussion: Return to the timeline and listen to Alessi's story. How might Alec Turner's father, Alessi, have felt when he arrived in New Orleans and was sold to John Gouldin? What hopes, dreams, and fears do students think he had? How does having no power impact a person's hopes, dreams, and fears? Can hopes and dreams empower a person?</p>	
Investigation of Primary Sources	
<p>As a class, examine the two pages of the 1850 Virginia slave census for the John Gouldin plantation, where Alec Turner, Alessi's son, was enslaved.</p> <p>What do the students observe? How do the listers describe the people represented by the census pages? Consider who has the power in this written document. What is the impact on a person of being unnamed and just listed by age and gender?</p>	Class discussion
<p>The "Resisting Slavery" activity asks groups of students to examine quotes from primary sources and oral histories and summarize how they demonstrate ways that Alec Turner took actions on his own behalf to resist the condition of being enslaved and envision a future of freedom for himself.</p> <p>After students report out on their documents, discuss:</p> <p>How does the act of resistance empower someone? Stories and images of slavery portray enslaved people with little to no power. The Turner family stories provide a counter-narrative. What do they add to our understanding of slavery?</p>	Sourcing; close read; summarizing; Class Discussion
Summative Assessment	
<p>Enslaved people were human beings with aspirations, dreams, fears, and families. They constantly resisted their enslavement in small and large ways. After examining the primary sources, what hopes, dreams, and fears do you think Alex might have had for his future? Do you think they were different from his father's?</p>	

Visual Thinking

Sale of Estates Pictures and Slaves in the Rotunda New Orleans

William Henry Brook, 1842

Zoom in at this link:

<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/sale-of-estates-pictures-and-slaves-in-the-rotunda-new-orleans-william-henry-brooke/YAHr9QXNcRsS6g>



SALE OF ESTATES, PICTURES AND SLAVES IN THE ROTUNDA, NEW ORLEANS.

5 x 2 Thinking Routine

1. Look at the image for a full minute in silence.
2. On your own, list five words or phrases about what you see.
3. Share from your list with the class or a partner.
4. Repeat steps 1 and 2. Try to add five new words or descriptive phrases to your list.
5. Share a new observation with the class. Have the painting open on the screen so you can zoom into it.

First Look

Second Look

1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Discussion:

What is happening in this engraving?

What do you see that makes you say that?

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: Slave Auction [Excerpt]

We were conducted immediately to the merchant's yard, where we were all pent up together, like so many sheep in a fold, without regard to sex or age. . . . We were not many days in the merchant's custody, before we were sold after their usual manner, which is this: On a signal given (as the beat of a drum), the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamor with which this is attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehension of terrified Africans, who may well be supposed to consider them as the ministers of that destruction to which they think themselves devoted. In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again.

I remember, in the vessel in which I was brought over, in the men's apartment, there were several brothers, who, in the sale, were sold in different lots; and it was very moving on this occasion, to see and hear their cries at parting.

Sensory Prompts

After reading about Olaudah Equiano's experience, what might the people in the painting....

- Hear
- See
- Smell
- Taste
- Feel

What questions do you have?

Ask 3 questions of this painting.

Question prompts:

- Why...?
- How...?
- What are the reasons...?
- What is the purpose...?
- How would it be different if...?
- What if...?
- What if we knew...?
- What would change if...?

1850 Slave Census Schedule Caroline County, Virginia

In 1850 and 1860, the United States published slave schedules, enumerating the enslaved people in the slave-holding South. The government also published Agricultural and Manufacturing censuses. The purpose of all of these was to assess the economic production of the country.

This document lists the people on John Gouldin's plantation in 1850.

Begin by reviewing the columns with students:

1. Name of slave owner
2. Number of slaves
3. Age
4. Sex
5. Color (B = Black; M = Mulatto)
6. Fugitives from the state.
7. Number manumitted
8. Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic (presumably these were identified because they would have been unable to add to the plantation's profits).

The students should notice that there are no names listed, except for the slave owners. Why might that be?

Students can count how many enslaved people were living on the plantation, figure out how many children there were, figure the average age. See if they can identify families (the census enumerator would have gone from cabin to cabin). Help students to understand that enslaved plantation workers were human beings with aspirations, dreams, fears, and families.

SCHEDULE 2.—Slave Inhabitants in _____ in the County of Seaside State
of Ne, enumerated by me, on the 27th day of Nov, 1850. Thos. H. Anderson Ass't Marshal.

NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.	DESCRIPTION.			Fugitives from the State.	Number manumitted.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.
		Age.	Sex.	Color.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	1	30	M	B			
	1	22	M	B			
	1	14	M	B			
	1	10	M	B			
	1	7	M	B			
	1	3	M	B			
	1	6 1/2	M	B			
	1	62	F	B			
	1	63	F	B			
	1	62	F	B			
	1	40	F	B			
	1	38	F	B			
	1	35	F	B			
	1	32	F	B			
	1	23	F	B			
	1	30	F	B			
	1	20	F	B			
	1	20	F	B			
	1	17	F	B			
	1	14	F	B			
	1	14	F	B			
	1	2	F	B			
	1	2	F	B			
John Gouldin	1	10	M	B			
	1	24	M	B			
	1	35	M	B			
	1	45	M	B			
	1	45	M	B			
	1	35	M	B			
	1	35	M	B			
	1	62	M	B			
	1	60	M	B			
	1	35	M	B			
	1	32	M	B			
	1	24	M	B			
	1	30	M	B			
	1	18	M	B			
	1	20	M	B			
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of

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SCHEDULE 2.—Slave Inhabitants in _____ in the County of Caroline State
of Va, enumerated by me, on the 28th day of Nov, 1850. Thos J. Chaney Ass't Marshal.

1	2	DESCRIPTION.			6	7	8	1	2	DESCRIPTION.			6	7	8
		Age.	Sex.	Color.						Age.	Sex.	Color.			
NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.				Fugitives from the State.	Number manumitted.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.				Fugitives from the State.	Number manumitted.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.
	1	3	M	B					1	23	F	B			
	1	4	F	B					1	14	F	B			
	1	75	F	B			Blind		1	8	F	B			
<u>Rebecca Mary Jones</u>	1	37	M	B					1	1/2	F	B			
	1	35	F	B					1	35	M	B			
	1	18	F	B					1	35	F	B			
<u>Philip Carter</u>	1	45	M	M					1	35	M	B			
	1	64	F	B					1	35	F	B			
<u>Thos Saunders</u>	1	26	F	B					1	40	F	B			
	1	8	F	B					1	10	M	B			
	1	7	F	B					1	16	F	B			
	1	4	F	B					1	16	M	B			
	1	7	M	B					1	12	M	B			
	1	6	M	B					1	11	M	B			
	1	25	M	B					1	8	F	B			
	1	12	M	B					1	6	F	B			
	1	11	M	B					1	1	M	B			
<u>James B. P. Kunkel</u>	1	55	M	B					1	50	F	B			
	1	55	M	B					1	25	M	B			
	1	45	M	B					1	10	F	B			
	1	50	F	B					1	15	F	B			
	1	48	F	B					1	22	F	B			
	1	46	F	B					1	18	M	B			
	1	40	F	B					1	14	M	B			
	1	40	M	B					1	12	F	B			
	1	35	M	B					1	25	F	B			
	1	32	M	B					1	22	M	B			
	1	30	M	B					1	50	F	B			
	1	28	M	B					1	50	M	B			
	1	25	M	B					1	40	F	B			
	1	40	F	B					1	18	M	B			
	1	35	F	B					1	6	F	B			
	1	30	F	B					1	10	M	M			
	1	20	F	B					1	5	F	B			
	1	7	M	B					1	2	M	B			
	1	5	M	B					1	2	F	M			
	1	3/4	F	B					1	7	F	B			
	1	18	F	B					1	7	F	B			
	1	10	F	M					1	7	F	B			
	1	5	F	M					1	3	B				
	1	12	F	B					1	7	F	B			
	1	5	M	B					1	7	F	B			

Resisting Slavery

Group 1: Resisting Slavery

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

Source the document

What is the document?

Who wrote it?

When was it written?

Close read the document

Circle key words or phrases

Summarize the document

In 2-3 sentences, how does this story demonstrate a type of resistance?

THE DOCUMENT

Alec's Primer, as told by Daisy Turner (Alec's daughter)

"The little missus had somehow obtained a primer.... She was teaching my father ABC, and rat, and things like that. And she told him...that up north in Vermont...the white people would let him be free.... The grandmother came down behind the milk house.... When she found her little granddaughter was teaching Father, and Father had the primer, she undertook to take the primer from Father.... When Father held on and started to fight with her to keep the little primer in his own hands, she struck with the whip across his cheek and cut Father's face.... He bled on the primer...but Father kept it."

Summary:



Group 2: Resisting Slavery

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

Source the document

What is the document?

Who wrote it?

When was it written?

Close read the document

Circle key words or phrases

Summarize the document

In 2-3 sentences, how does this story demonstrate a type of resistance?

THE DOCUMENT

Hiding Money, from Jane Beck, *Daisy Turner's Kin*, 75 (source: interview with John Bruce Turner, grandson)

"Alec began stealing money every time he had the opportunity—penny by penny. He was planning to save enough to buy his freedom. To ensure its safety, he wrapped his money in sheepskin and placed it in a time that he buried in his mother's garden, planting watermelon seeds over it. He would save the watermelons by burying them under a pile of hay, and then bring them out for Christmas, when watermelon season was long past."

Summary:

Group 3: Resisting Slavery

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

Source the document

- What is the document?
- Who wrote it?
- When was it written?

Close read the document

Circle key words or phrases

Summarize the document

In 2-3 sentences, how does this story demonstrate a type of resistance?

THE DOCUMENT—"Bury Me in the Garden" lyrics

"The spiritual 'Bury Me in the Garden' had a special meaning for Alec." (Jane Beck, *Daisy Turner's Kin*, 75)

Bury me in the garden, mother, mother mother.
Bury me in the garden, mother, mother mother.
Bury me in the garden, mother, mother mother.
Down by the sycamore tree.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtraEy7ulno>

Excerpt from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*:

"I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least, such is my experience. I have often sung to drown my sorrow, but seldom to express my happiness. Crying for joy, and singing for joy, were alike uncommon to me while in the jaws of slavery."

Summary:



Group 4: Resisting Slavery

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

Source the document

What is the document?

Who wrote it?

When was it written?

Close read the document

Circle key words or phrases

Summarize the document

In 2-3 sentences summarize the document; how does it demonstrate a type of resistance?

THE DOCUMENT

John Gouldin Affidavit, October 15, 1862

State of Virginia, Caroline County

This day personally appeared before me, M. S. Campbell a Justice of the Peace in and for the Count of Caroline and State of Virginia, John Gouldin... [who said] that he is the legal owner in his own right of the slaves, Daniel, Caroline, Wade, George, Steven, Henry, William, Mary, Rachell, Hewitt, Edmund, Walt, Sally, Alex, Andrew, Arthur, Humphrey, Ned Z, Ned Sale, Peter, Bob, Armistead, Loudon, Adaline, Eliza, Edward, Milly, & Francis mentioned in the foregoing statement, and the they are worth the sum of thirty three thousand and nine hundred dollars (\$33,900.00) that the said **slaves were induced away and abducted by the enemy and lost to him** the sd Gouldin; and that none of the aforesaid slaves been returned, but all of them have run and are now lost to him. Given under my hand this 15th day of October 1862. M. S. Campbell JP

Summary:



Group 5: Resisting Slavery

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

Source the document

What is the document?

Who wrote it?

When was it written?

Close read the document

Circle key words or phrases

Summarize the document

How does this story demonstrate a type of resistance?

THE DOCUMENT

Return to the Plantation, as told by Daisy (Jane Beck, *Daisy Turner's Kin*, 87)

"After he got in the army, the white Yankee soldiers went back to burn the plantation.... Father said old Pusley had been left...overseeing his master's plantation....He was the main one that wanted to be beating him from the time that he'd been a little boy....Everything that Father done, he was ready to abuse....He just seemed to hate him. Old Pusley was upstairs, and he came to the window and wanted to know what they wanted. He said, 'Who is there?' And Father says, 'This is me. This is Alec...I'm going to shoot you.' And he said he shot him right through the stomach, like in his chest.... when he fell he hollered for water—give him some cold water, cold water. But he died right there.... He said that was the first shooting that he done....I've heard him tell that many and many a time."

Summary:

