



New York City and the Nation
From Seaport City to Metropolis, 1790-1898
Spring Institute 2006

Teacher-Generated Unit Outline Slavery and Freedom in NYC

These unit outlines and sample lessons were produced in advisory groups during the seven-day institute.

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Teacher-Generated Unit Outlines

Essential Question: How is social mobility achieved?

Topic: Slavery and Freedom in New York City

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Introduction to the Unit

This unit focuses on post-slavery New York City of the 1800's when the slaves were granted freedom and their life circumstances were changed. Students will apply new research skills and strategies as they learn about the freed slaves and how they evolved and impacted the economy of NYC. Extensive knowledge will be gained about these freemen as they formed communities, found work to earn an income, and maintained their rich culture within a new environment. Students will understand how the shackles of slavery left their indelible mark on a people.

Students will examine a timeline of historical events, from 1827, when enslaved Africans in NY State were emancipated, up to 1860, when Abraham Lincoln was elected president, and ending in 1865 with the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment, officially ending slavery in the United States. Primary sources such as the Emancipation Proclamation and Draft Riot documents will be analyzed. Students will look closely at maps, images, written documents, and oral histories to draw conclusions based on this evidence. Their connection to literacy is a selection of fiction and nonfiction books to broaden their interpretation of the time period. Field trips will enhance students' learning and give them a better understanding of cultural connections. Students will also conduct research to learn more about history and change in the life of freed slaves. Our students will utilize their strategies for note-taking as they gather information from the Internet and primary and secondary source documents. We want our students to be young historians as they gather, compile and analyze their data in preparation for their final project.

Inside this packet you will find an overarching essential question, some focusing questions, a suggested lesson, and resources to support you as you bring this unit to life in your classroom. The lessons are designed so that each teacher can customize and enrich the teaching points to meet the needs and interests of his or her students. In addition, you can find many approaches to using nonfiction in a project-based social studies curriculum. We hope that during your grade-level meetings and/or your extended professional development sessions you will meet with other teachers to discuss classroom resources and to create additional lessons as you help build a culture of professional learning and collegiality in your schools.

This unit was developed through participation in the New York City and the Nation's Gotham Fellows Program. This professional development program provided the basic concepts, content, and chronologies of American history through the lens of New York City, offered new teaching methodologies, and supported us in the development of this unit of study to pilot in the classroom, and disseminate citywide. The program is funded by "American Journey," a citywide Teaching American History grant from the U.S. Department of Education awarded to the New York City Department of Education. This program is a partnership with the Gotham Center for New York City History/CUNY, City Lore, Historic House Trust, Henry Street Settlement, New-York Historical Society and Brooklyn Historical Society. The combined expertise of these organizations has brought the essential content of American and local history to us in an accessible framework and has supported us in the development of this unit of study.

Social studies is an essential foundation for our students to be informed and active participants in our communities. Each of us must do our part to help students understand the complexities of our world and why we need to be involved citizens. With your help, this unit of study will help our students gain essential skills and strategies as they immerse themselves in their studies. By gaining an understanding of how communities may change over time, students can build upon their growing knowledge about communities, recognizing that they are both alike and different, and that each community has a story that is interesting and unique.

Essential Question

How is social mobility achieved?

Focus Questions	Lessons/Activities
1 What was life like for freed slaves in New York City?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1a• 1b• 1c Daily life and responsibilities of a freed slave in New York City• 1d• 1e
2 How did freeing the slaves impact the economy in New York City?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2a• 2b• 2c• 2d• 2e
3 What role did New York City play in the Civil War?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3a• 3b• 3c• 3d• 3e
Culminating Project: Students will produce an Heirloom Scrapbook. The information in the scrapbook will contain various pieces from a fictional family during the years after slavery was abolished in the state of New York through the Civil War period. These will include personal primary sources from members of several generations of the family, including journal entries, newspaper articles, maps, letters, photographs, drawings, legal documents and other family artifacts. Through this scrapbook, students will be able to tell the story of a family (a story that does not get told in our history books) during this critical period of our country's history.	

Lesson Title: Daily life and responsibilities of a freed slave in New York City

Unit’s Essential Question: How is social mobility achieved?

Focus Question: What was life like for freed slaves in New York City?

Skills/Strategies

- Gathering and using information using the following:
 - Photographs and illustrations
 - Other primary sources
- Critical thinking skills
 - Point of view

Materials, Supplies, and Equipment

- Primary source documents, particularly: Gannett, Henry. Occupations of the Negroes. Baltimore, 1895. “Occupations of the Negroes, From Slavery to Freedom: The African American Pamphlet Collection, 1824-1909.” Library of Congress.

Mini-Lesson

The teacher will lead a discussion about what the slaves did in New York after they were freed. The teacher will provide a list of common jobs that “freemen” had, and show photographs and other primary sources to help students understand what life was like after slavery.

Independent Work Time

Students will work in cooperative groups to create a schedule for the day in the life of a “freeman” in New York. They may take the position of a woman, man, or child and describe the daily activities this person may have been involved in. Goal of the lesson: Students will understand the difficulties faced by “freemen” and question the extent of their freedom.

Share/Assessment

Students will be selected to share their schedules with the rest of the class.

Connection to Culminating Project

This schedule can be included in the Heirloom Scrapbook.

Resources

Teacher Background References

Books:

- Dubois, W.E.B. Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880. NY: Free Press, 1st reissue edition, 1998.
- Gellman, David Nathaniel. *Jim Crow New York: A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship, 1777-1877*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.
- Osofky, Gilbert. *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto*. New York: 1890-1930. New York: Harper, 1966.
- Ottley, Roi, and William J. Weatherby, eds. *The Negro in New York: An Informal Social History, 1626-1940*. New York: Oceana, 1967; Praeger, 1969.

Other:

- Gannett, Henry. Occupations of the Negroes. Baltimore, 1895. "Occupations of the Negroes, From Slavery to Freedom: The African American Pamphlet Collection, 1824-1909." Library of Congress.
 - Charts: "Portion of the Population and its elements which were engaged in gainful occupation in 1890," "Classification of the Wage-earners by Race and Nativity and by Occupations."
 - Photocopied images and text excerpts
- Images from New-York Historical Society's "Slavery in New York" exhibition binder

Field Trips and Excursions

- African Burial Ground
- American Museum of Natural History, Hall of African Peoples
- Brooklyn Historical Society
- New-York Historical Society: "Slavery in New York" Exhibit
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Classroom Materials

- Primary sources (photographs and maps)
- Art supplies: glue, scissors, construction paper, strings, pictures
- Video, film (oral history)
- Transparencies

Websites and Technology Support

- <http://memory.loc.gov>
- <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/>
- <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/freedom/narratives.html>
- <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/misc/chicago/317749.html>
- <http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/prba/perspectives/springgsummer2002/cureton.pdf>

Appendix

Assessment:

In order to evaluate the children's understanding of the unit Slavery in New York, the following can be used:

- Before teaching the unit, ask questions to find out what the students already know or don't know. By having the students answer these questions, you can get a better idea of what information you need to teach, the needs of your students, and the level of difficulty of the lessons.
Possible Questions:
 1. What do you know about slavery?
 2. Where do you think slavery originated?
 3. In what part of the United States do you think slavery existed?
 4. What is the difference between a slave and a freed slave?
 5. How long do you think slavery existed in this country?
 6. What was life like for a slave/freed slave?
 7. Who thought there was a need for slave labor?
 8. Why do you think NYC had slaves?
- Culminating project: Heirloom Scrapbook
- Teacher-made tests (could be the same questions as above, but use them at the end of the unit)
- Rubrics
- Bloom's Taxonomy
- Cooperative group work
- Role playing
- Inquiry-based questions: give students questions they can find on their own by using resources such as books, Internet, museum visits, etc.
- Progress sheets, to be used during the course of the unit
- Quizzes
- Maps, such as Dutch Settlement of Manhattan 1827-1840, Hudson River, The Ports of New York City and other port cities on the east coast