



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

# Teacher-Generated Unit Outline Slavery in New York

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 does prosperity depend on inequality?

**Topic:** Slavery in New York

**Contents:**

- Unit Outline
- Sample Lesson
- Resources

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## Essential Question

### How does prosperity depend on inequality?

Focus Questions	Lessons/Activities
<b>1 How did slavery change people's lives?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1a What is slavery and when did it begin?</li><li>• 1b Where did slaves come from and go to?</li><li>• 1c Why do people enslave others?</li><li>• 1d Who was affected by slavery?</li><li>• <b>1e Who were the slaves and their owners?</b></li></ul>
<b>2 What was the relationship between New York City and slavery?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2a What was the basis of NYC's economy in the 1800s?</li><li>• 2b How did NYC benefit from slavery?</li><li>• 2c Triangle Trade: a dramatic presentation</li><li>• 2d The Middle Passage: journey of tears</li><li>• 2e Why was NYC called the Empire City?</li></ul>
<b>3 What were the socioeconomic repercussions of emancipation?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3a Who benefitted/suffered from slavery?</li><li>• 3b Who were the abolitionists and what did they do?</li><li>• 3c A trip on the Underground Railroad</li><li>• 3d The empowerment of former slaves</li><li>• 3e How did the US/NYC economy change after emancipation?</li></ul>
<b>Culminating Project:</b> Students will create a profile, or <b>portfolio</b> , of a New Yorker in the 1800s. They will research the period and then create a portfolio covering the life of their character. Portfolios will include short biographies, journal entries, letters, images, artifacts, and a dialogue between the character portrayed and another character. The unit will conclude with a dramatic presentation of the character dialogues.	

**Lesson Title:** Who were the slaves and their owners?

**Unit's Essential Question:** How does prosperity depend on inequality?

**Focusing Question:** How did slavery change people's lives?

**Skills/Strategies**

- Draw inferences from data
- Collect and organize information
- Craft of writing

**Materials, Supplies and Equipment**

- Slave biography, New-York Historical Society "Slavery in New York" exhibition
- Paper/pencil
- Ken Burns' Civil War on DVD
- DVD player

**Mini-Lesson**

Read aloud a biography of Peter Vogelsang and review major facts of his life as you list them on chart paper.  
Select an experience and model writing a journal entry in Peter's voice reflecting on his experiences. Emphasize that this is a day's reflection, not a life story. Make connections with the study and writing of memoir.

**Independent Work Time**

Students read slave biographies at their tables, and make a list of the major facts of one slave's life. Based on these facts, students write one day's journal entry in this person's voice. The techniques of memoir should be used to develop the character: voice, demeanor, stature, emotion, etc.

**Share/Assessment**

Two or three students will share their entries with the class. The class will identify important facts and details about the character, and discuss the use of the techniques of memoir.

**Connection to Culminating Project**

The journal entry will serve as the basis for one of three to be included in the final portfolio.

## Resources

### Books

- Collier, James Lincoln and Christopher. Jump Ship to Freedom. Yearling, 1987.
- Haskins, James and James Ransome (illustrator). Building a New Land: African Americans in Colonial America. Amistad, 2005.

### Exhibition materials

- New-York Historical Society's "Slavery in New York" exhibition materials

### Film, video, and audiotapes

- W.P.A. slave narrative recordings
- The Civil War: A Film by Ken Burns. Dir. Ken Burns. PBS, 1990.

### Websites

- America Begins in New York, "NYC 100: The Centennial Celebration of Greater New York"  
[http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/nyc100/html/cultural\\_inst.html](http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/nyc100/html/cultural_inst.html)