

## Teacher's Guide: From Slavery to Freedom in Colonial Times

Recommended Grade Level: 5-8

(also applicable to grades 9-12 for students requiring significant support in learning)

Suggested Time: About 50-60 minutes spread over one or more class periods, plus additional time to complete a writing assignment

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### Goals

Following are the big ideas that students should take away after completing this lesson:

- Resistance to slavery took strength and courage.
- Slavery greatly affected the lives of Africans brought to the Americas
- Freed Africans worked hard to wipe out the effects of slavery on their lives and their families' lives.

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### Vocabulary

(See definitions on page 6.)

- occupation
- purchase
- slaveholder
- slavery
- venture

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### Key Literacy Strategies

Following are the primary literacy strategies students will use to complete this activity:

- Determining important information (screens 4, 6, 7, and 9, writing assignment 2)
- Using background knowledge (screen 5)
- Making inferences (writing assignments 1 and 3)

Note: In addition to using the key literacy strategies listed above, students will use each of the strategies below to complete this lesson:

- Monitoring comprehension
- Synthesizing
- Making predictions
- Developing vocabulary
- Connecting prior knowledge to new learning
- Developing a topic in writing
- Identifying and using text features (photographs, captions, diagrams, and/or maps)

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### Overview

*From Slavery to Freedom in Colonial Times* is a student-directed learning experience. However, while students are expected to work through the lesson on their own, teachers should be available to keep the lesson on track, organize groupings, facilitate discussions, answer questions, and ensure that students meet all learning goals.

The following is a summary of the lesson screens:

- Screen 1: Students learn that they will explore how enslaved Africans in the American colonies were sometimes able to gain their freedom.
- Screen 2: Students read the story of Venture Smith, a boy brought from Africa to Rhode Island colony as a slave, and understand the context for Smith's drive to win his freedom.
- Screen 3: Students learn what the goals are for the lesson, which strategies they will be using to complete the lesson, and the important vocabulary words they will use during the lesson.
- Screen 4: Students first read about Smith's capture and enslavement, and then watch a video about his early experiences with slavery and his unique characteristics. They also write down one to two sentences about the risks inherent in fighting slavery with brute force.
- Screen 5: Students read more about the difference between slavery in the Southern and Northern colonies, and the reasons why slaves could get jobs in the North to earn money. They then write down what they have learned about slavery that they didn't know before.
- Screen 6: Students answer three multiple-choice questions to show their comprehension of slavery in colonial America.
- Screen 7: Students read a passage on how Smith lived in slavery and then won his freedom. After they have finished reading, they list one opportunity that he had and one challenge that he faced in his quest for freedom.
- Screen 8: Students complete an interactive vocabulary activity, and then choose two words from the vocabulary list and write a new sentence for each word. These tasks demonstrate their understanding of the meanings of the words.
- Screen 9: Students use an interactive activity to highlight text that answers two questions about Smith's relationship to slavery.

Final

Assignment: Students select and complete a writing assignment about the lesson topic.

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### Before the Lesson

- Go through each screen of the lesson, including all the interactive activities, so that you can experience ahead of time what students will be doing. As you go through each screen, jot down your own expectations for students' responses.
- Determine if students will be working individually or in pairs on the lesson. Some students may be able to work independently with little or no support. Students who are less familiar with the subject area or who struggle with literacy skills may benefit from working with another student. An effective way to do this is to pair a stronger student with a less able reader. You can also have students work individually on certain tasks and in pairs on others, depending on their experience and needs. If students will be working in pairs on any portion of the lesson, let them know if they will be expected to type in their notes individually or together.

- ❑ Provide instruction on key vocabulary (vocabulary words are defined in the lesson on screen 3, and on page 6 of this guide).
- ❑ Determine what students already know about slavery in the colonial era. You may want to use specific questions to start the discussion, such as: What do you know about slavery in America? Was slavery different between the North and the South of the U.S.? How? How did some enslaved people gain freedom before the Civil War? What did they have to do? Record their ideas on a chart. This will give you a sense of the back-ground knowledge and possible misconceptions that students have before beginning this lesson. If time allows, return to the chart after students have completed the lesson to add new learning and correct misconceptions. Note: You may want to record their new learning in a different-colored ink so they can see how much they've learned.
- ❑ Arrange computers with Internet access so students can work individually or in pairs.
- ❑ Before students begin, suggest a timeline for completing the lesson, mention the different types of media they will encounter, and let them know how you expect them to submit their work. You may want to provide an outline of this information on a chart, chalkboard, or whiteboard, or as a handout.

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### Lesson Assessments

The following are descriptions of the lesson features that will be part of the packet of materials that students will submit. Students will use the packet for reference when writing their final assignment. It also serves as a formative assessment tool to monitor students' work as they're progressing through the lesson.

- **Notes** - Students take notes on screens 4, 5, and 7. If time allows, review their notes before students begin their writing assignment.
- **Multiple-choice questions** - Students complete the three questions on screen 6. Walk around to make sure students answer all three questions in the quiz before they move on. If students click to go to the next page before they finish, their work on the quiz will not be saved.
- **Match It!** - Students complete an interactive vocabulary activity on screen 8. They begin by placing the vocabulary terms into the correct sentences. After they finish and save their work, they will be able to check their answers against an answer key. When they are done, they will be asked to choose two vocabulary words and write a new sentence for each word. Sentences should demonstrate a clear understanding of the meaning of each word. An inappropriate response would be "Stanton was a slaveholder." An appropriate response would be "Stanton was the slaveholder who owned Venture's wife and child."
- **Highlight It!** - Students complete the comprehension activity Highlight It! on screen 9. Students read a passage about Venture Smith's life as an adult and highlight sentences that will help them answer two questions about the text.

Following are some of the statements students may highlight to answer each question:

*Question 1: How did Venture take advantage of his freedom?*

Highlighted information to answer question 1 should include that Smith worked hard once he could keep his wages, and used the money to buy his entire family's freedom. He bought a farm and other land, and helped three other enslaved men earn their freedom. So he used his freedom to help his own family and himself.

*Question 2: How did slavery continue to influence Venture's actions after he was free?*

Highlighted information to answer question 2 should include that Smith had to free his own wife and children from a slaveholder, which took many years of toil on his part, and that he saw slavery all around him, a fact that led him to help others earn their freedom. His final quote, that his freedom was a privilege nothing else could equal, shows that every day he felt both the impact slavery had had on his life and the power of freedom to transform his life.

- **Final Assignment** - Students complete one final writing assignment. You can choose to let students make their own selection, or assign one according to your goals for the lesson. Use the rubric on page 7 to assess the writing assignments.

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## Lesson Aids and Extensions

Use the following suggestions to help students if they are stuck on a particular screen, to prepare students for completing their writing assignments, or as follow-up discussions to reinforce learning.

- **Watching Videos** - Encourage students to watch the video more than once. After the initial viewing, provide students with a specific content focus to frame their next viewing(s) of the video. This will help them draw connections between the main topic and the information that the video has to offer.
- **Participating in Discussions** - Organize class discussions or encourage students to talk about their questions in pairs. You may want to use the following discussion starters.
  - o How did Venture's experience differ from what you knew about slavery?
  - o How did Venture's character and integrity compare with that of his slaveholders?
  - o How did he use these character traits to gain his freedom and become successful?
- **Reading the PDF Text** - Before they read the PDF text on screen 7, ask students to make predictions about how Smith's status as a slave and his relationship to slavery would change as he grew up.
- **Sharing Student Work** - It may be motivational, and a further learning opportunity, for students to post their final essays so that their classmates, peers, and/or parents can see them. This may also provide an opportunity for students to comment on and discuss each other's essays.

If you do not already have access to an online writing community, Teaching Matters™

provides TeXT, free classroom publishing tools that allow teachers and students to create and publish their own online eZine. More information and a free signup are available at Teaching Matters: TeXT (<http://text.teachingmatters.org>).

- **Reflection and Self-Assessment** - After students have turned in their writing assignments, you can choose to have them assess their learning. Bring students together as a whole class or in small groups to discuss the questions below. You may want to return to the chart of their ideas developed before the lesson and record their new learning. You may also have students respond individually to the questions and then convene the class to discuss the chart.
  - o What did you learn?
  - o What was surprising?
  - o What questions do you still have?
  - o What was the easiest for you to understand and do?
  - o What was the most difficult?

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## Vocabulary Definitions

### **occupation**

Your job or the work you do. This can also mean a career.

### **purchase**

To buy something.

### **slaveholder**

Someone who buys, sells, and uses people as slaves.

### **slavery**

Being forced to work without pay, and having all your human and civil rights taken away from you.

### **venture**

A business investment that you hope will make money.

## Final Assignment Rubric From Slavery to Freedom in Colonial Times

1. Why do you think Venture Smith’s story continues to be told today? How might his story be similar to or different from the experiences of other enslaved people?
2. Write an obituary describing Venture Smith’s life. An obituary is a notice in a newspaper of someone’s death that often includes a short description of the important details of that person’s life.
3. As you read in the passage, Venture Smith said, “My freedom is a privilege which nothing else can equal.” Explain in your own words what you think he meant by this.

4	3	2	1
Provides a clear and accurate response to the question. Ideas are elaborated, with three or more relevant supporting details from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.	Provides an adequate response to the question. Topic and ideas are generally well organized, with two relevant supporting details from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.	Provides a generally accurate response, with one supporting detail from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.	Provides an inaccurate response to the question or fails to address the question. May include misinterpretations. Understanding of the topic is not apparent.
Uses at least three vocabulary words (or a form of the vocabulary words) from the lesson, and uses them all correctly.	Uses two vocabulary words (or a form of the vocabulary words) from the lesson, and uses them both correctly.	Uses one vocabulary word (or a form of the vocabulary word) from the lesson, and uses it correctly.	Does not use any vocabulary words, or uses vocabulary words incorrectly.

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## Scoring the Rubric

Here are two suggestions for scoring the final assignment rubric. Select the option that best meets your needs or develop your own grading system.

**Option 1:** This option provides one score for each submitted assignment.

Assign a score of 4 or below for the written response (first row of the rubric) and a score of 4 or below for the use of vocabulary (second row of the rubric), for a total maximum score of 8. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

Score	Grade	Narrative Interpretation
7-8	A	Excellent
5-6	B	Good
4	C	Adequate (Fair)
3 or below	D	Minimal

**Option 2:** This option provides two scores for each submitted assignment: one for written content and one for the use of key vocabulary. An advantage of separate scores is that you can weight students' comprehension and composition differently than you do their knowledge of vocabulary. It can also help you identify specific needs for future instruction.

Assign a score of 4 or below for the written response (first row of the rubric) and a score of 4 or below for the use of vocabulary (second row of the rubric) and then score them separately. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

Score	Grade	Narrative Interpretation
4	A	Excellent
3	B	Good
2	C	Adequate (Fair)
1	D	Minimal

The final grade may look like this: A/B (A for content and B for vocabulary use).