An Overview of Slavery through Rotating Stations

Overview
In this group activity, students will examine various sources in order to learn about the institution of slavery and its effect on the people enslaved. Students will rotate through stations and analyze primary sources, art & images, music, video, and poetry, gaining information through a variety of perspectives. Students will discuss the content at each station with their group mates and complete station assignments such as creating their own poem, writing their own song, creating unique artwork, etc. While all assignments for the stations (as described in the “Procedure” section) are attached, teachers should feel free to substitute or alternate material and/or assignments based on their classroom objectives.

Grade
8

North Carolina Essential Standards for 8th Grade Social Studies
• 8.H.1.1 - Construct charts, graphs, and historical narratives to explain particular events or issues.
• 8.H.1.3 - Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives.
• 8.H.1.5 - Analyze the relationship between historical context and decision-making.
• 8.H.3.1 - Explain how migration and immigration contributed to the development of North Carolina and the United States from colonization to contemporary times (e.g. westward movement, African slavery, Trail of Tears, the Great Migration and Ellis and Angel Island)
• 8.C.1.1 - Explain how influences from Africa, Europe, and the Americas impacted North Carolina and the United States (e.g. Columbian exchange, slavery and the decline of the American Indian populations).
• 8.C.1.3 - Summarize the contributions of particular groups to the development of North Carolina and the United States (e.g. women, religious groups, and ethnic minorities such as American Indians, African Americans, and European immigrants).
• 8.C&G.1.4 - Analyze access to democratic rights and freedoms among various groups in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. enslaved people, women, wage earners, landless farmers, American Indians, African Americans and other ethnic groups).

Essential Questions
• What are the characteristics of the institution of slavery?
• What can we learn about life during slavery from primary sources, poetry, music, art, and modern video recreations?
• In what ways did enslaved persons practice survival and resilience?

Materials
Note: If any of the materials not attached (such as electronic equipment) cannot be accessed, teachers can eliminate that station. Teachers are encouraged to modify station topics and assignments as they see fit.
• Warm-Up assignment, handout attached
• Poetry Station
  o Poetry Station Instructions, attached
  o Copy of The African Diaspora, by Birago Diop (attached) or another poem regarding slavery
  o Dictionaries
• Video Station
  o Video Station Instructions, attached
  o Copy of HBO’s Unchained Memories or another movie/documentary regarding slavery
• Teacher Note: The attached Video Station Instructions should be altered if an alternative video is selected for use
  o TV with VCR or DVD player; or a laptop with a DVD player and speakers or headphones
• Art & Images Station
  o Art & Images Station Instructions, attached
  o Selected pieces of art or primary source images relating to slavery that can be copied/provided for examination; examples attached
  • Teachers can alternatively use their own selected images from the Internet, or rely on books from the classroom or library and tag particular images within.
  o Art supplies (drawing paper, colored pencils, crayons, etc.)
• Music Station
  o Music Station Instructions, attached
  o Laptops with speakers and internet access
  o Headphones (optional but convenient)
  o Excellent websites for exploring music related to slavery are:
    o http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/education/feature.html
    o http://www.du.edu/ahss/lamont/outreach-alumni-summer-acad/spirituals-project/spirituals-project-education-sweet-chariot.html (click Sweet Chariot website here)
  o Teachers who do not have access to laptops can use a CD of slave spirituals and a music player instead; check your local library for CD options
• Runaway Slave Notices Station
  o Runaway Slave Notices Station Instructions, attached
  o Copies of runaway slave notices from VA and NC newspapers, examples attached (Teachers should supplement as they see fit.)

Duration
One-two class periods (depending on how long you allow students to work at each station)

Teacher Preparation
Arrange the desks in your class into five different stations/groups. Desks at each station should be arranged facing one another, except for the video station where desks should be facing a TV or laptop screen. Stations should contain the following:

a) Poetry Station: Copy a class set of the attached poetry station handout and place here, as well as a copy of the poem “The African Diaspora.”

b) Video Station: Place desks at this station facing a TV or computer screen; have the HBO documentary Unchained Memories ready to play (teachers should determine which 10-15 minute section of the documentary to show); copy a class set of the video station handout and place here. Unchained Memories can be rented from a local video store, checked out from your local library.

c) Art and Images Station: Copy, cut out, and if possible mount and laminate art and images representing slavery (examples attached) and leave them at this station. (Teachers can also use images from other text books, art books, etc. For example, From Slave Ship to Freedom Road by Julius Lester and Rod Brown contains very colorful and striking art work representing slavery. If using books, teachers may want to tag particular pages for examination.) Also copy a class set of the Slavery Art and Images reflection handout to place at this station. Lastly, leave art paper and art supplies at this station for student use.

d) Music Station: Place laptop(s) with internet access and speakers or, ideally, headphones, at this station. (Ideally, each group member would have access to their own laptop for exploration; however, sharing is also fine.) Bookmark the laptop(s) with site http://www.du.edu/ahss/lamont/outreach-alumni-summer-acad/spirituals-project/spirituals-project-education-sweet-chariot.html and/or http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/education/feature.html, both of which offer excellent
opportunities for students to listen to and read the lyrics of various slave spirituals, as well as read background information about spirituals in general. If access to laptops is unavailable, place a tape/CD player at this station along with a tape/CD of slave spirituals (check the music out at your local library or purchase). Copy the attached Music Station handout and place here as well (this handout will need to be modified if you use another source for the music).
e) **Primary Source Station (Runaway Ads):** Make around 5-8 copies of the attached runaway slave notices from NC and VA to be left and reviewed at this station. Also, copy a class set of the Runaway Slave Notices Reflection handout and place here.

**Procedure**

**Hypothesis Regarding Slavery**

1. As students enter class, assign them to a particular station/group where they can complete the warm-up and await instructions on the rotating stations activity. Project or handout the following quote and discussion question as a warm-up (handout also attached):

   “The Negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and, in some sense, the freest people in the world. The children and the aged and infirm work not at all, and yet have all the comforts and necessaries of life provided for them. They enjoy liberty, because they are oppressed neither by care nor labor. The women do little hard work, and are protected from the despotism of their husbands by their masters. The Negro men and stout boys work, on the average, in good weather, not more than nine hours a day...Besides they have their Sabbaths and holidays.”

   George Fitzhugh, 1857

   Based on what you already know about slavery, form a hypothesis regarding slavery based on this quote. Do you agree with Fitzhugh? Do you believe slavery was an institution in which slaves enjoyed a pleasant life style? Or do you believe that slavery was not a situation in which those enslaved experienced happiness, liberty, and protection? Write a hypothesis regarding your beliefs on enslaved life. Next, you will be examining evidence which will help you determine if your hypothesis is valid or not.

2. Give students around five minutes to formulate their thoughts on paper, assisting as needed. Once finished, tell them to put their hypothesis aside and explain you will be coming back to it at the end of class.

**Rotating Stations for Exploring Slavery**

3. Next, tell students that in small groups, they will be exploring slavery by rotating through five different stations in class. Explain the following instructions:

   - The room is organized into five different stations/groups, one of which each of you is currently sitting at.
   - At each station, you will explore slavery through a particular medium including poetry, video, art/images, music, and primary sources. You will also be creating your own work based on the material you examine and the information you learn.
   - When the activity begins, you will start working at the station you are currently at. At each station, you will find an instruction sheet, and any relevant materials you will need for completing the station’s assignment. Your group should first read all of the instructions, assist one another if there are any questions, and promptly get started. (If no one in your group is able to answer a question, raise your hand to signal me. Continue working while I make my way to you.)
   - You will have approximately _______ minutes at each station. *(It is important that all students visit each station and that they have enough time to complete the majority of their work at each station. Thus, depending on your class length, you may want to have students spend 15-20 minutes at each station and extend this into a two-day activity.)*
   - I will give you a two minute warming at each station when your time is almost up, and will then signal you when it is time to switch stations by ___________ *(let students know if you will ring a bell, flash the lights, etc.)*
etc.) As soon as you hear the signal, you and your group will rotate clockwise to the next station. You will take a seat and immediately start the next activity.

- You will need to take notebook paper and a pencil with you as you rotate. All of the other materials that you need will be found at each station. Make sure you take all of your work from each station with you. Do not leave anything behind. Please also ensure that you leave any classroom materials at the station.
- If you do not finish all of your work at a particular station, you will finish it for homework. You are expected to use your time wisely at each station and to work diligently. Take each station handout that you have noted your answers on with you when you leave. We will staple these into a packet at the end of class.
- Remember our group work expectations as you work today. (Review classroom behavior expectations, such as: You are expected to monitor your volume, stay on task, be respectful of one another, and move safely about the classroom.)
- Are there any questions before we begin? Then you may get started at the station you are currently sitting at.

4. Circulate around the room as students work, remembering to give them time warnings before they are about to leave each station. Also, remind students to take the handout that they have picked up at each station with them when they rotate.

5. Once all groups have rotated through all stations, teachers may want to allow students some time to go back over their work and finish anything still in need of completion. This can alternatively be done for homework. Have students staple all of their handouts together, along with any work completed on notebook paper or art paper (such as their poetry, song/rap, art work, etc.)

6. Once students have returned to their original seat, debrief the activity as a class:
   - After participating in that activity, what words immediately come to mind when considering slavery? (Note these on chart paper.)
   - Did you see, learn, hear, etc. anything that you found surprising or shocking? Explain.
   - Which station did you find most interesting, or which station do you feel gave you the clearest picture of slavery, and why?

7. Next, discuss each station with students by allowing them to share their responses to the questions they discussed and answered. Also, allow students time to share their poetry, artwork, group song, etc. that they completed at the various stations. To culminate the debriefing, ask:
   - Based on the culmination of what you did and learned at each station, what is your overall impression of slavery?

8. Lastly, refocus student attention on the quote they responded to at the beginning of class and discuss:
   - What is Fitzhugh’s opinion of slavery? What evidence in his quote makes you think this?
   - Why do you think Fitzhugh felt this way? For what purpose do you think Fitzhugh expressed this opinion?
   - Review the hypothesis you formulated at the beginning of class in which you responded with your own initial concept of slavery. Based on what you have learned at the various stations, write another response underneath your hypothesis, in which you state whether your hypothesis was valid or invalid. You can also add to your original comments based on what you have learned.
   - (After students have had several minutes to note their thoughts, ask them to share.) Did you agree or disagree with Fitzhugh in your original hypothesis of life under slavery? Explain. Based on what you have learned today, did your opinion change? If so, in what way? If not, why not?
     - It is likely that most students will have had enough background knowledge at the start of class to already have noted Fitzhugh’s comments as ludicrous. However, if any students were under a
different impression, hopefully this activity will have helped them note that Fitzhugh’s concept of slavery was invalid and ignorant.

- Teachers should ensure all students understand that those enslaved were not happy with the unjust situation they were forced into. While many exhibited amazing survival skills and made it through each day in the face of such cruelty, such survival skills (i.e. singing, forming community, etc.) should not be confused with any enslaved person being happy having their power and choice oppressed.

• Why do you think some people held such ridiculous opinions such as Fitzhugh’s? In what other ways did southerners justify slavery?

• If you could say anything to Fitzhugh, what would you want to explain to him and why?

• Who needs to learn about slavery and why? Why is it important to understand the details of America’s past, including the hardships endured during slavery?
Warm Up

Read the following quote, then follow the instructions below.

“The Negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and, in some sense, the freest people in the world. The children and the aged and infirm work not at all, and yet have all the comforts and necessaries of life provided for them. They enjoy liberty, because they are oppressed neither by care nor labor. The women do little hard work, and are protected from the despotism of their husbands by their masters. The Negro men and stout boys work, on the average, in good weather, not more than nine hours a day....Besides they have their Sabbaths and holidays.”

~George Fitzhugh, 1857

Based on what you already know about slavery, form a hypothesis regarding slavery based on this quote. Do you agree with Fitzhugh? Do you believe slavery was an institution in which slaves enjoyed a pleasant life style? Or do you believe that slavery was not a situation in which those enslaved experienced happiness, liberty, and protection? Write a hypothesis regarding your beliefs on enslaved life. Next, you will be examining evidence which will help you determine if your hypothesis is valid.
Poetry Station Instructions

At this station you will be exploring slavery through poetry. Read the poem below, discuss it with your group mates, and answer the questions that follow. Once finished, each of you should work on creating your own poem based on the issue of slavery or any relevant theme or emotion.

The African Diaspora

Hear more often things than beings,
the voice of the fire listening,
hear the voice of the water.
Hear in the wind
the bushes sobbing,
it is the sigh of our forebears.

Those who are dead are never gone:
they are there in the thickening shadow.
The dead are not under the earth:
they are in the tree that rustles,
they are in the wood that groans,
they are in the water that runs,
they are in the hut, they are in the crowd,
the dead are not dead.

Those who are dead are never gone,
you are in the breast of the woman,
you are in the child who is wailing
and in the firebrand that flames.
The dead are not under the earth;
you are in the fire that is dying,
you are in the grasses that weep,
you are in the whimpering rocks,
you are in the forest, they are in the house,
the dead are not dead

by BIRAGO DIOP
Name: ___________________________________

**Poetry Station Worksheet**

**Discuss and answer the following:**

1. Use a dictionary to look up and define the word Diaspora:

2. Visualize as you read this poem. What to you see and hear in your imagination?

3. What message is the poet trying to convey about those who were enslaved? What evidence in the poem makes you think this? (Cite at least 2-3 lines.)

4. What evidence does the poet offer that “those who are dead are never gone”?

5. What can this poem teach us about slavery?

6. Write your own poem based on slavery or a related theme or emotion. It can be in any style you choose and it does not have to rhyme. It must be related to slavery or a theme present in slavery. It also must be at least 10 lines. If time permits, share your poems with each other for feedback once finished.

f) What is the tone and mood of this poem? Why is this particular tone and mood effective in talking about slavery?
Video Station Instructions

Unchained Memories-Readings from the Slave Narratives

At this station, you will watch 10-15 minutes of actors reading the actual words left behind by those who were enslaved.

Read the following introduction then start the video. (Start the DVD/video at __________ minutes. Press stop at __________ minutes.) Once finished, discuss and answer the questions that follow.

In the late 1930s, an estimated 100,000 former slaves were still alive in the United States. In the midst of the Great Depression, from 1936 to 1938, more than 2,000 interviews with one-time slaves were conducted by the Federal Writers' Project, with the transcripts (written in the vernacular of the time) forming a unique firsthand record of slave life.

You will be watching a clip from Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives, which presents dramatic selections from the extensive Slave Narrative Collection through on-camera readings by over a dozen actors, interspersed with archival photographs, music, film and period images. You may recognize some of the actors speaking on film, but keep in mind that they are reenacting the actual words spoken by people who experienced slavery first-hand.

A. Summarize the experiences described in the narratives you heard.

1. 

2. 

3. 

B. How would you characterize the person’s life that was represented in this reading?

C. What can you infer about the life of an enslaved person based on the section of video you viewed/listened to?

D. Other observations/comments:
BRANDING SLAVES.

Source: weblog.themadeiratimes.com/images/slavery%202.jpg

Source (link not working):
www.biologydaily.com/biology/Slavery
Name: ________________________________

**Slavery Art and Images Reflections**

*Spend time viewing each of the images and art located at this station. Discuss with your group and note your thoughts below:*

1. Which image or art work is most striking to you and why? If you had to give this image a title, what would you title it and why?

2. Choose another image and explain what you think is occurring in the moment pictured. What evidence in the picture gives you this impression?

3. What emotions do you see represented in the various pictures?

4. What can you learn about slavery from these images and pieces of art?

5. Who should see these pictures and why?

*Use the art paper and supplies provided to create your own visual representation of slavery or a related theme. Your art can be literal or abstract.*
1. Go to the website http://www.du.edu/ahss/lamont/outreach-alumni-summer-acad/spirituals-project/spirituals-project-education-sweet-chariot.html (click on Sweet Chariot link). At this site, you will learn about spirituals during slavery.

2. Click “Freedom & Equality” on the menu at the top. Then click “Spirituals During Slavery” and read the introductory paragraph on this web page, which reads:

In the period of captivity that began with the arrival of the first cargo of Africans in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 and continued until 1865 (when legalized slavery ended with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation), spirituals gradually evolved to serve a variety of purposes in the fight for freedom. These purposes included: 1) singing as an expression of democratic values and community solidarity; 2) singing as a source of inspiration and motivation; 3) singing as an expression of protest; and 4) singing as coded communication. Of course, many songs served multiple functions in different times and places. However, it is instructive to examine a few examples of songs that can be understood – at least at one level – as illustrative of each of the four categories.

3. Examine the four purposes of spirituals further by clicking on the categories listed on the left hand side of the screen. (Do not click the links in the paragraph; they no longer work.) This will allow you to read about slavery and spirituals, listen to various spirituals within each category, as well as read the lyrics. After exploring the songs for approximately 10 minutes, choose 2 spirituals to reflect on below:

   A. Song’s title: ________________________________________________________________

   ~Based on reading the lyrics to this song and/or listening to an excerpt, what do you think this song is about?

   ~When and why do you imagine enslaved persons would have sung this song?

   ~What is the mood of this song? How does it make you feel hearing/reading the lyrics today?

   ~What can we learn about slavery based on this spiritual?

   B. Song’s title: ________________________________________________________________

   ~Based on reading the lyrics to this song and/or listening to an excerpt, what do you think this song is about?

   ~When and why do you imagine enslaved persons would have sung this song?

   ~What is the mood of this song? How does it make you feel hearing/reading the lyrics today?

   ~What can we learn about slavery based on this spiritual?
4. As a group, create your own modern day song, rap, spiritual, etc. based on slavery or any related theme (i.e. survival, culture, resilience, etc.) Write your lyrics on the back of this handout.
PRIMARY SOURCES:
RUN AWAY SLAVE NOTICES FROM NORTH CAROLINA and VIRGINIA

Ashville Highland Messenger, April 1, 1842
TWO HUNDER DOLLARS REWARD
RANAWAY from the subscriber on the 18th of March, while crossing Paint Mountain, THREE NEGROES, which I purchased from D.L.M. Alexander, to wit:

James,
About 33 years of age, very black, 5 feet 6 or 8 inches high; had on when he left a Kentucky jeans coat, black fur hat, and some home-made mix’d jeans pants; of a downcast look and slow spoken.

Sally,
About 25 years old, of a yellow complexion, and when she left had on a copperas colored dress—very free spoken.

Edward,
About 14 years of age—well grown—about 5 feet 9 or 10 inches high; had on when he left a drab coat, striped cotton pants, and white wool hat.

The above reward of two hundred dollars will be paid for the apprehension of said Negroes, if confirmed in any jail within the states of Tennessee, North or South Carolina.

It is probable that they will attempt to go to South Carolina, as they were originally purchased in the neighborhood of the Basin Springs, in that State.

Virginia Gazette (Parks),
Williamsburg, From March 31 to April 7, 1738.

RAN away from the Subscriber, in Edgcomb Precinct, North-Carolina, on the 26th Day of December last, a Servant Man, named Darby Tool: He is a Shoemaker by Trade, hath but one Leg, and is an Irishman. Whoever will bring the said Servant to me in Edgcomb Precinct, or secure him, so that I may have him again, shall have Four Pistoles Reward, besides what the Law allows, paid by me, William Whitehead. N.B. He is suspected to be gone to Cherry Point, on Potowmack; and had in Company with him, one Mary Cullen, an Irish Woman, whom he calls his Wife.
Virginia Gazette (Parks),
Williamsburg, From March 10 to March 17, 1738.

RAN away from the Subscriber, living at Urbanna, in Middlesex County, on the 27th of October last, a Servant Man, named Patrick Flood: He is a pretty tall lusty Fellow, of a black swarthy Complexion; is a Baker by Trade, and is an Irishman, but speaks pretty good English. He had on, when he went away, a dark Cinnamon colour'd Drugget Coat, a good new Hat, new Leather Breeches, and several new Shirts. He took with him a young Bay Mare, with a Star in her Forehead, and one white Foot. He went in Company with one Sarah Carrol, who formerly travelled to Carolina, where they are both suspected to be gone, having been seen on the road thither: She is a tall slender Woman, with a wry Look, and a swarthy Complexion; is a Weaver by Trade; and had with her a white Cotton Gown, and a good new plaid Gown. Whoever will secure the said Servant Man, so as he may be had again, shall have four Pistoles Reward, paid where they shall please to direct, by John Mitchell. N.B. I have been informed he has a forged Pass, and his Indentures discharged.

Asheville News, August 3, 1854

$20 REWARD
The above reward will be given for the apprehension and safe keeping of a Negro man by the name of ABRAHAM
so that I can get him uninjured. Said man is about 27 years old, the rise of four feet high; hip dislocated, and walks lame in consequence of one leg being shorter than the other, a scar right across the shin made with an adz, but not more than an inch and a half in length. Said boy has lived in Henderson county, N.C., and was raised in Franklin county, Va. He is thought to have forged papers, or a white man for a conductor under pretence of being his master. Said negro is a mulatto. Any information may be communicated to Dr. ALEXANDER CLEMENT, Big Creek, P.O., Forsythe county, Ga.
Whereas a Negro Man, nam'd Berwick, of a middle Size, Yellowish Complexion, and has lost the middle Finger of his Right Hand, belonging to Mr. Thomas Mingham, Clerk of the Court of the County of Elizabeth City, was, on the 18th of this Instant April, committed to the Goal of said County, on Suspicion of Felony; and hath since made his Escape, and is suppos'd to be gone towards Carolina: Whoever shall apprehend the said Negro, and deliver him to the Sheriff of the said County, before the 20th Day of May next, shall have a Pistole Reward, paid by John Tabb, Sheriff.

Virginia Gazette (Parks),
Williamsburg, From July 29 to August 5, 1737

Nansemond, July, 14, 1737. RAN away some Time in June last, from William Pierce, of Nansemond County, near Mr. Theophilus Pugh's Merchant; A Convict Servant Woman, named Winnifred Thomas. She is a Welsh Woman, short black Hair'd, and young; mark'd on the Inside of her Right Arm, with Gunpowder, W.T. and the Date of the Year underneath. She knits and spins, and is suppos'd to be gone into North-Carolina, by the Way of Curratuck, and Roanoke-Inlet. Whoever brings her to her Master, shall be paid a Pistole, beside what the Law allows, paid by William Pierce.
WILLIAMSBURG, May 13, 1770. COMMITTED to James City prison, a Virginia born mulatto slave named HENRY, about 21 years of age, 5 feet 4 inches high, has on an old brown duroy coat, blue cloth waistcoat, Negro cotton breeches, and white yarn stockings. He says he belongs to Daniel Nance, of Brunswick county, who is desired to send for him, and pay charges.

WILLIAM SEALY LANE.

Ashville Highland Messenger, October 22, 1841
COMMITTED
To Jail, in this place, on the 19th instant, a Negro Boy, who says his name is JACK, and that the belongs to John M. Thompson of Anderson District, S.C. Said boy is about 5 feet 11 inches high; very dark complexion; has a scar on his forehead, and several on his feet, which he says were made by an axe. He had on when taken up, checked cassimere pantaloons; blue jeans coat, and black fur hat. The owner is requested to come forward, prove property, pay charges, and take him away, or he will be dealt with according to law.
J.M. SMITH, Jailor

Sources:
http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/browse/browse_main.php
http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/runaways/ (link not working)
Runaway Slave Notices from North Carolina and Virginia

At this station you will find copies of newspaper advertisements that were placed in North Carolina and Virginia papers around 200 years ago. Examine the ads and pay close attention, since for many of these human beings mentioned in the ads, it is the only memory of them what so ever. Choose 4 ads and answer:

<table>
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<th>What is the date of the ad?</th>
<th>What is the purpose of this ad? For what audience was the ad written?</th>
<th>What are three things the author wrote that you think are important?</th>
<th>List two things the ad can tell us about life at the time it was written.</th>
<th>What does the ad tell you about the enslaved person mentioned?</th>
<th>If you could ask the author of the ad any question, or the person sought after in the ad, what would you ask?</th>
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