

How did enslaved African Americans escape?

Building Background

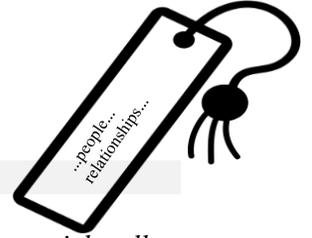
(Teacher Note: Use these pages to include note taking guides, graphic organizers, or short answer questions that correspond with a mini-lecture, video clips, images, or textbook work that prepares students for the investigation with relevant background knowledge.



How did enslaved African Americans escape?

Building Background Knowledge

How did enslaved African Americans escape?



William & Ellen Craft (Source 1)

Headnote: This article was published in *The Anti-Slavery Bugle*, an abolitionist newspaper. The article tells the story of Ellen and William Craft's escape from slavery. Ellen wore the clothes of a man to pass as the master, while her husband, William, pretended to be her servant as they escaped from Georgia. *The Anti-Slavery Bugle* was based in Lisbon, Ohio, and was published from 1845 to 1861.

“William and Ellen Craft, man and wife, lived with different masters in the State of Georgia. Ellen is so near white, that she can pass without suspicion for a white woman. Her husband is much darker. He is a mechanic, and by working nights and Sundays, he laid up money enough to bring himself and his wife out of Slavery. Their plan was without precedent; and though novel, was the means of getting them their freedom.

Ellen dressed in man's clothing, and passed as the *master*, while her husband passed as the *servant*. In this way, they travelled from Georgia to Philadelphia. They are now out of the reach of the blood hounds of the South. On their journey, they put up at the best hotels where they stopped. Neither of them can read or write. And Ellen, knowing that she would be called upon to write her name at the hotels..., tied her right hand up as though it was lame, which proved of some service to her, as she was called upon several times at hotels to “register” her name. – In Charleston, S.C, they put up at the “peculiar institution” say that the slaves cannot take care of themselves.

They arrived in Philadelphia in four days from the time they started. Their history, especially that of their escape, is replete with interest. They will be at the meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, in Boston, in the latter part of this month, where I know the history of their escape will be listened to with great interest. They are very intelligent. They are young, Ellen 22, and Wm. 21 years of age. Ellen is truly a heroine.”

Attribution: Modified from *The Anti-Slavery Bugle*, “William and Ellen Craft,” 23 February 1849. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

AFTER YOU READ...



What does this excerpt help you understand about how enslaved African Americans escaped?

(2) How reliable is this source for understanding how enslaved African Americans escaped?

Reliable -

Unreliable -

3) Box the parts of the source that help you think about the central question.

How did enslaved African Americans escape?



Fayetteville Observer (Source 2)

Headnote: This newspaper article was published in Fayetteville, Tennessee, in 1855. The article describes the suspension of a clergyman in Indiana, Rev. T. B. McCormick, for his participation in the Underground Railroad. He is accused in the story of assisting fugitive slaves in their escapes to Liberia and Canada.

The Indiana Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, lately tried and suspended the Rev. T. B. McCormick, one of their ministers, recently, under the following charge and specifications:

Charge. – Unchristian conduct.

First Specification. – For associating himself with an association known as the underground railroad, whose avowed business is to assist slaves from slave to free territory.

Second Specification. – For actually engaging in the business of assisting slaves in making their escape from slave to free territory, which is contrary to the laws of the United States and Statute laws of Indiana.

Several of the witnesses stated that Mr. M. had boasted to them of the number of slaves he had aided to escape, giving the names and places in Kentucky from which they had escaped, and **one of testified** that he had heard him say that he had never denied belonging to the underground railroad, and that he had said in April, this year, in speaking of the relative numbers taken to Liberia by colonization and to Canada by the underground railroad, that 10,000 had gone to Liberia and 35,000 to Canada by the underground railroad.

One of their papers stated that he visited one of his ministerial brethren in Kentucky, partook in his hospitalities, prayed with his family, and in the meantime arranged matters with his servants to make their escape.

Attribution: Modified from the Fayetteville Observer, “A Presbyterian Clergyman Suspended for Being Connected with the Underground Railroad,” 8 November 1855. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

AFTER YOU READ...



(1) *What does this article help you understand about how enslaved African Americans escaped?*

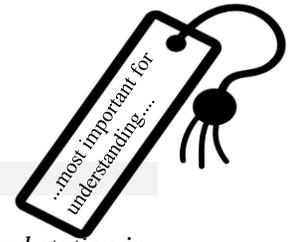
(2) **How reliable is this source for understanding how enslaved African Americans escaped?**

Reliable -

Unreliable -

(3) **Box** the parts of the source that help you think about the central question.

How did enslaved African Americans escape?



Underground Railroad Station (Source 3)

Headnote: The William Maxson home, located in Springdale, Iowa, was an Underground Railroad station in the mid 1800's. The home was where abolitionist John Brown trained with his men for the raid on Harpers Ferry. The house has since been torn down, but was near Springdale, which was home to Quakers and a center of abolitionism.



Attribution: Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Jacoby, Charles, 1890

AFTER YOU READ...

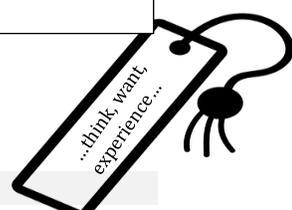
(1) What does the *image of the Maxson home* help you understand about how enslaved African Americans escaped? _____

(2) How reliable is this source for understanding how enslaved African Americans escaped?

Reliable –

Unreliable –

(3) **Box** the parts of the source that help you think about the central question.



Henry Box Brown (Source 4)

How did enslaved African Americans escape?

Headnote: This article was published in *The Sunbury America*, a newspaper from Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. The article focused on the escape by Henry "Box" Brown in 1849. Brown shipped himself in a wooden crate from Richmond, Virginia, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where a group of abolitionists assisted in his journey for independence.

He [Henry "Box" Brown] was transported three hundred miles through a slave-holding country, and by public thoroughfares, in a box, by measurement, exactly *three feet one inch long, two feet wide, and two feet six inches deep*. The following abstract of this story we find in the *Traveler*: of last evening.

While at Richmond, though the box was legibly and distinctly marked "this side up with care," it was placed on end, with his head downwards. He felt strange pains, and was preparing himself to die, preferring liberty or death to slavery, and he gave no sign. He was, however, relieved from this painful position, and encountered no other danger than the rough handling of the box, until it arrived in Washington. When the porters who had charge of it reached the depot there, they threw or dropped it with violence to the ground, and it rolled down a small hill, turning over two or three times.

He arrived in Philadelphia after many hair-breadth 'scapes, and the box was taken to the house to which it was directed. The panting inmate heard voices whispering; afterwards more men came in. They were doubtful or fearful about opening the box. He lay still, not knowing who the people were. Finally, one of them knocked on the box, and, 'Is all right here!' "All right," echoed from the box. The finale of this simple tale was received with deafening shouts. In corroboration of it, Rev. S. J. May said he was in Philadelphia in the midst of the excitement caused by this wonderful adventure.

Attribution: Modified from *The Sunbury America*, Vol. 9, No. 12, "The 'Running of Slaves' – The extraordinary Escape of Henry Box Brown," 23 June 1849.

AFTER YOU READ...



(1) What does the Henry "Box" Brown article help you understand about how enslaved African Americans escaped? _____

(2) How reliable is this source for understanding how enslaved African Americans escaped?

Reliable –

Unreliable –

(3) Box the parts of the source that help you think about the central question.

How did enslaved African Americans escape?



Robert Smalls' Escape (Source 5)

Headnote: This article from Harper's Weekly describes the escape of Robert Smalls, along with several members of his family and friends, from slavery. He freed himself, his crew, and their families from slavery on May 13, 1862, by commandeering a Confederate transport ship, CSS Planter, in Charleston harbor, and sailing it from Confederate-controlled waters to the U.S. blockade.

One of the most daring and heroic adventures since the war commenced was undertaken and successfully accomplished by a party of negroes in Charleston on Monday night last. Nine colored men, comprising the pilot, engineers, and crew of the rebel gun-boat Planter, took the vessel under their exclusive control, passed the batteries and forts in Charleston harbor, hoisted a white flag, ran out to the blockading squadron, and thence to Port Royal, via St. Helena Sound and Broad River, reaching the flag-ship Wabash shortly after ten o'clock last evening.

Robert Smalls, with whom I had a brief interview at General Benham's head-quarters this morning, is an intelligent negro, born in Charleston, and employed for many years as a pilot in and about that harbor. He entered upon his duties on board the Planter some six weeks since, and, as he told me, adopted the idea of running the vessel to sea from a joke which one of his companions perpetrated. He immediately cautioned the crew against alluding to the matter in any way on board the boat, but asked them, if they wanted to talk it up in sober earnestness, to meet at his house, where they would devise and determine upon a plan to place themselves under the protection of the Stars and Stripes instead of the Stars and Bars.

Various plans were proposed, but finally the whole arrangement of the escape was left to the discretion and sagacity of Robert, his companions promising to obey him and be ready at a moment's notice to accompany him. For three days he kept the provisions of the party secreted in the hold, awaiting an opportunity to slip away. At length, on Monday evening, the white officers of the vessel went on shore to spend the night, intending to start on the following morning for Fort Ripley, and to be absent from the city for some days. The families of the contrabands were notified and came stealthily on board. At about three o'clock the fires were lit under the boilers, and the vessel steamed quietly away down the harbor. The tide was against her, and Fort Sumter was not reached till broad daylight. However, the boat passed directly under its walls, giving the usual signal – two long pulls and a jerk at the whistle-cord as she passed the sentinel. The families of the crew have been sent to Beaufort, where General Stevens will make suitable provision for them. The crew will be taken care of by Commodore Dupont.

Attribution: Modified from Harper's Weekly. Courtesy of Library of Congress, "The Steamer 'Planter' and Her Captor," Harper's Weekly, vol. 6, pp. 372, 14 June 1862.

AFTER YOU READ...



(1) What does the Robert Smalls article help you understand about how enslaved African Americans escaped? _____

(2) How reliable is this source for understanding how enslaved African Americans escaped?

Reliable –

Unreliable –

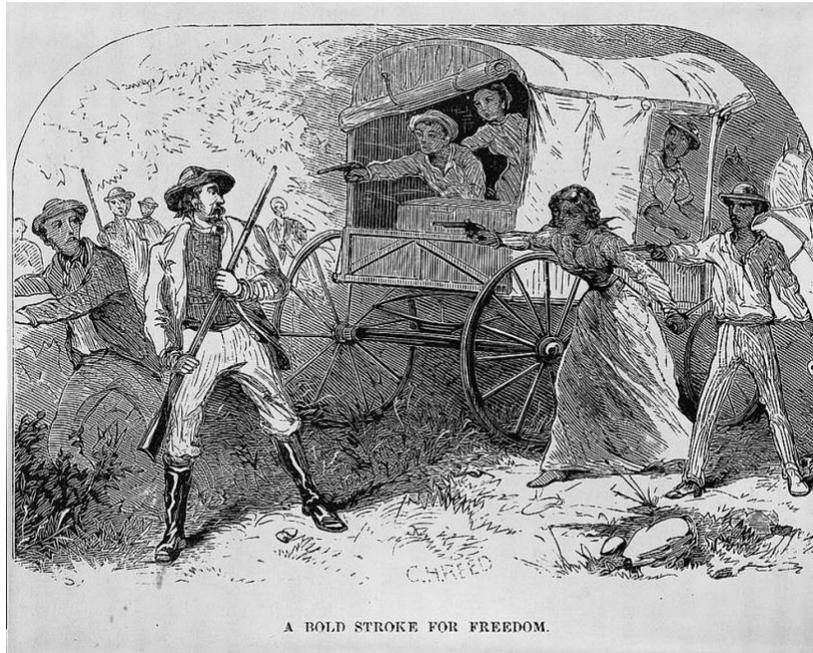
3. the parts of the source that help you think about the central question.

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Bold Stroke for Freedom (Source 6)

Headnote: The 1872 illustration shows African Americans, likely fugitive slaves, with a wagon, pointing guns at slave-catchers. The cartoon is thought to depict Christmas Eve of 1855, when patrollers caught up with a group of teenaged slaves who had escaped by wagon from Loudon County, Virginia. But the posse was driven off when Ann Wood, leader of the group, brandished weapons and dared the pursuers to fire. The fugitives continued on to Philadelphia.



Attribution: Courtesy of Library of Congress, Still, William, "A Bold Stroke for Freedom," 1872

AFTER YOU READ...



(1) What does the illustration help you understand about how enslaved African Americans escaped?

(2) How reliable is this source for understanding how enslaved African Americans escaped?

Reliable –

Unreliable –

(3) **Box** the parts of the source that help you think about the central question.

How did enslaved African Americans escape?

Your Assignment: Email your representative

The Iowa State government is building a new statue to commemorate enslaved African Americans who escaped by fleeing to or through Iowa. The statue will include a plaque that explains how enslaved people escaped. State representatives are debating whether enslaved people relied more on the help of abolitionists or themselves to escape.

Your Assignment: Write an email to your local state representative that makes a one-sided argument (an “interpretation”) in response to the question, **“How did enslaved African Americans escape?”** Defend your claim using evidence and reasoning.

How did enslaved African Americans escape?

Mentor Text

Directions: For each part of the argument (claim, evidence, reasoning), discuss: How do you know which part of the argument it is? What do you see the writer is doing in that part of the argument? Does that part of the argument strengthen the overall argument? Why or why not?

Mentor Text Background: A memorial to celebrate the anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment is being built in your town. There will be a plaque that describes who was responsible for passing the amendment that granted women the right to vote. Write an email to your local representative that makes a claim about who was responsible for the passage of 19th amendment.

Dear Local Representative,

The new memorial to celebrate the 19th amendment should highlight the efforts of women, not the efforts of male law makers. Speeches and images created during the suffrage movement show that women created the moral and legal arguments for suffrage, and it was women who organized marches and protests that influenced the public and lawmakers.

Susan B. Anthony’s speech explained the moral and constitutional reasons that women should have the right to vote. In 1873, Anthony gave a speech and said that it was all people who created the United States, “not we, the while male citizens...who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people—women as well as men.” According to the headnote, her speeches were reprinted by popular newspapers. This speech explains why women should have the right to vote, it was heard by many people, and it is reliable because it was written by someone who was alive and a member of the suffrage movement. Therefore, Anthony’s speech is a reliable source that influenced the passage of the 19th amendment.

According to the headnote of the picture of Alice Paul taken in 1913, she and the National American Woman Suffrage Association were responsible for organizing the first large march to protest for suffrage. The protest was held in Washington, D.C. and 8,000 people participated. This source corroborates the information in Anthony’s speech and makes me think both sources are reliable. In conclusion, the sources show that women led the effort to secure the right to vote by making speeches and organizing marches and protests. Therefore, because women are responsible for the 19th amendment, their efforts should be highlighted on the new memorial.

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Planning Graphic Organizer

Guidelines: Your interpretation is a one-sided argument. It should have a *Claim*, *Evidence* to support the claim, and *Reasoning* about *how* the evidence supports the claim. Before you begin writing, think about the sources and central question. Take **brief notes** in the planning graphic organizer below.

Claim

Share your answer to the question, "How did enslaved African Americans escape?"

Evidence #1

What details, quotations, and information from the sources and headnotes support your claim?

Reasoning #1

Explain why your evidence is reliable and how your evidence supports your claim.

How did enslaved African Americans escape?

USEFUL LANGUAGE for writing your interpretation:

Making a claim:

Enslaved African Americans escaped slavery by...

The plaque should emphasize that enslaved African Americans escaped by...

The _____ source is helpful to understand how African Americans escaped because it shows they...

I think enslaved African Americans were able to escape because...

Providing evidence:

The headnote for the article on Henry “Box” Brown says that, “...”

For example, in an 1862 article about Robert Smalls, Harper’s Weekly reported that, “...”

According to the headnote describing the picture of the Underground Railroad station, “...”

Reasoning:

The source will help visitors understand that...

The headnote shows that...

The evidence is reliable because...

This means that...

How did enslaved African Americans escape?

REFLECTION GUIDE

GOALS		DONE? (✓)	I AM GOOD AT...	I AM WORKING ON...	THINGS YOU MIGHT BE GOOD AT OR NEED TO WORK ON...
CLAIM	I wrote a claim that states an argument or interpretation.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The claim states an argument. - The claim focuses on how enslaved African Americans escaped - The claim makes sense given the evidence.
EVIDENCE	I included information from the source(s) as evidence to support my claim (e.g., from the headnote or attribution).				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The evidence relates to my claim. - The evidence is persuasive. - The evidence is specific. - The evidence is accurate.
	I included a quotation from a text as evidence to support my claim.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I include quotation marks around the quotation. - I say where the quotation comes from (author/date). - The quotation helps someone understand my claim.
REASONING	I shared my reasoning to explain how or why my evidence supports the claim or to explain how reliable the source(s) are.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I say what the evidence tells us. - I explain why the evidence is reliable or unreliable. - I explain how the evidence supports my claim.