

## Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad



**"There was one of two things I had a right to, liberty, or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man should take me alive."**

**-Harriet Tubman**

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**Subject:** Language Arts (Guided Reading Lesson)

**Topic:** Biography/Retell

**Grade:** Third Grade/Level S

**Time:** Three, half hour sessions

**Text Summary:** Harriet Tubman was an African American woman who daringly escaped slavery and helped hundreds of other slaves escape to freedom. She became the most famous of all conductors of the Underground Railroad. This was a system of safe houses that slaves used to travel to freedom in the North. Her inspiring story of courage and determination continued into her later life as she worked for aid and education for freed slaves, as well as for women's right to vote.

### **Objectives:**

- The students will identify cause and effect.
- The students will identify subject and predicate.
- The students will recognize and use content vocabulary.

### **Materials**

- Book- *Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad*, Written by Terry Miller Shannon(One copy for each student.)
- Chalkboard/dry erase board.
- Cause and Effect, Subject and Predicate, Content Vocabulary Crossword worksheets.

## Vocabulary

- Content words: abolitionists, meager, mind, mocking, perilous, plantation, Underground Railroad.

## BEFORE READING

### Build Background

- Discuss slavery. Write the questions, *Who, What, When, Where, and Why* on the board. Ask the students if they know whom the slaves were and where they originally came from. Continue to discuss what the purpose of slaves was and when and where slavery occurred.

### Book Preview

- Explain to the students that one way to understand a book is to remember what they read so they can tell the story to someone else. (Retell)
- Show the students the front and back cover of the book. Tell the students that the title of the book is *Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad*. Ask the students for predictions about what they will read about.
- Say to the students: On the front cover, I see an old person in a chair. I think it is a woman because of the clothing that she is wearing. My guess is that this woman is Harriet Tubman because that is whom the book is about. Let's start reading the book so that we can find out. I'm going to try to remember what I am reading so that I can tell what happened.
- Have the students open up to the title page of the book. Ask the students if they have ever seen a memorial marker that is similar to this. Ask the students why they think that markers like this are used. Talk about the information that is written on the page. For example, title of the book, author and illustrator's name.

### Introduce the Vocabulary

- Remind students of the strategies that they can use when they come across a word that they don't know. For example, they can use letter sounds, sounding out the word, skip the word and go on, find little words in big words, they can use context clues, etc.
- Model how to use these word strategies. Point out the bold-faced words, such as the word *perilous* on page 13. Model how they can use the context to figure out the word's meaning by looking for a word or phrase in the sentence that might provide a clue. (context clues) Point out that the word is one of two adjectives that tell about the trips Harriet made to the South. Ask the students to read the second part of the sentence and look for a clue that provides more information about the trips that she made. Ask the students to tell in their own words what Harriet's trips were like. (dangerous) Have students substitute the word "dangerous" or "filled with danger" in the sentence to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Remind the students of the strategy to reread to make sense. They should check whether words make sense by rereading the sentences.

## DURING READING

## **Student Reading**

- Have the students stop and silently review what they have read at the end of each chapter so that they can retell what happens and why.
- Have the students read the first chapter titled, “Born a Slave.” Ask a student to retell what has happened so far in the story. Have other students fill in details for the volunteers’ retellings. The goal is to have the students give as complete a retelling as possible.
- As the students read, have them highlight any words that they cannot read or that they do not understand.

## **AFTER READING**

### **Reflect on the Reading Strategies Used**

- Ask students what words they highlighted in their books. Model to the students how they could read these words using their word strategies and context clues.
- Have the students retell chapters/the entire book. Have them include information that would answer the Who, What, Where, When, and Why questions.

### **Comprehension**

- Tell the students to turn to page six in their book. Ask: Why was Harriet whipped cruelly? (She didn’t mind her owner.) Explain to the students that one thing can cause another thing to happen. Use the following sentence to reinforce this idea: Harriet was whipped cruelly because she did not mind her owner. Underline “Harriet was whipped cruelly” and explain to the students that this tells the effect, or what happened to Harriet. Underline “because she did not mind her owner” and explain that this tells the cause, or why this happened to Harriet.
- Tell the students to turn to page seven in their book. Read the paragraph to the students. Ask the students to find the sentence that tells what happened as a result of Harriet trying to help an escaping slave. (The slave’s master threw a metal weight that hit her in the head.) Then ask the students to complete the following sentence: The slave’s master threw a weight that hit Harriet in the head because \_\_\_\_\_. (She was trying to help an escaping slave.) Explain to the students that the word “because” is a clue. It tells them that what follows explains why something happened. Point out the last sentence on page seven to the students. Ask the students to say what word gives a clue that lets them know that the rest of the sentence tells why something happened. (because) Then have them identify the cause (Harriet’s injury) and the effect (she had headaches and sleeping spells) in the sentence.
- The students will independently complete the “Cause and Effect” worksheet.

### **Grammar, Mechanics and Usage**

- Explain to the students that a sentence has two parts. One part is called the subject. It tells the noun (the person, place, or thing) that the sentence tells about. The other part is called the predicate. The predicate tells what the subject is, does, or was. It is the part of the sentence that contains the verb. Write the following sentence on the board: Harriet was born as a slave around 1820. Ask the students to identify the subject. Point out that in this sentence the subject is only one word,

- but in other sentences, the subject may be several words. Ask the students to tell what the subject is, does, or was. (was born) Explain that the entire phrase is the predicate.
- Reinforce this skill, by directing the students to page 13. Read the last sentence. Ask the students to identify the subject (the slaves) and predicate (rode from place to place).
  - The students will complete the “Subject and Predicate” worksheet independently.

### **Vocabulary**

- Explain to the students that many words in the book are used to tell about slavery. Provide opportunities for the students to talk about difficult words, such as “abolitionists” or “meager”. Provide opportunities for the students to say the new vocabulary words, talk about their meanings, and use the words in sentence.
- The students will complete the “Content Vocabulary” worksheet independently.

### **Writing Connection**

- Provide additional resources for students to research slavery and the Underground Railroad. Have students select a person who fought for the rights of slaves or helped slaves travel the Underground Railroad and write a short report about him or her. The students may share their reports with the class.

### **Social Studies Connection**

- Have the students research and make a map of the states that the slaves fled from and the free states that they traveled to. Have them mark the known stops for the slaves traveling the Underground Railroad.

### **Assessment**

- Monitor students to determine if they can identify cause and effect.
- Monitor students to determine if they can identify subject and predicate.
- Monitor students to determine if they can recognize and use content vocabulary.

### **Guided Reading Center Options**

1. Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad  
- [www2.lhric.org/pocantico/tubman/tubman.html](http://www2.lhric.org/pocantico/tubman/tubman.html)  
-This website includes timelines, poems, crossword puzzles, character profiles, vocabulary quilt, etc.
2. <http://www.suelebeau.com/slavery.htm>  
-This website contains various Underground Railroad Internet links. It also includes two web quests for independent student work on the computers.
3. Silent read using books from the classroom library pertaining to the Underground Railroad.

### **Resources**

[www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)

-This website provides various guided reading books and resources.  
[www2.lhric.org/pocantico/tubman/tubman.html](http://www2.lhric.org/pocantico/tubman/tubman.html)

<http://www.suelebeau.com/slavery.htm>

[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_curr/curr195.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr195.shtml)

-This website serves as an Underground Listserv for teacher lesson plans.

