

Dramatizing the Underground Railroad



Social Studies & Drama

Grade 8

Maryland Social Studies Standard - Grade 8

- 2.A.1.c. Explain the interaction of cultures in Antebellum America.
- 2.C.1.a. Examine examples of conflict and compromise among different ethnic, religious, and gender groups.
- 2.C.1.c. Describe various reform movements, such as abolition, women's rights, and education.

Maryland Drama Standard

- 1.2.b. Analyze and illustrate ways in which the script, properties, scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound are manipulated to communicate character, time, place, mood, and theme in theatrical productions.



CONNECTED OBJECTIVES

Students will perform freeze frame and tableaux to re-create various people and scenes of the Underground Railroad.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Web resources and images of the Underground Railroad
- Reading on Harriet Tubman
- Teaching Tableau instructions
- Exit-Ticket

KEY CONTENT VOCABULARY

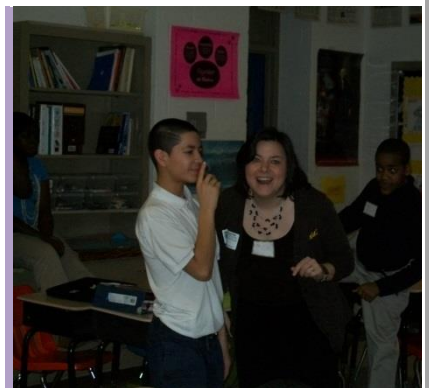
- Antebellum
- Slavery
- Underground Railroad

KEY ARTS VOCABULARY

- Kinosphere
- Stage Freeze
- Tableaux

ASSESSMENT

- Students will complete an exit ticket to describe the emotion, dangers, and rewards of trying to escape slavery on the Underground Railroad.



LESSON STEPS

Introduction

- Students will complete a Warm-Up about the conditions of slavery from the previous class.

Lesson Outline

- Present an image featuring a scene from the Underground Railroad. Ask students to respond to it using the Artful Thinking Routine, *Think-Puzzle-Explore*. This routine asks students to think about what they see and connect it to something they already know and think about what they don't know and want to explore.
- Lead instruction about the Underground Railroad including why it was called that, how it was used, and where it led to.
- Review /Discuss additional pictures of various individuals on the Underground Railroad
- Students participate in an online-simulation to investigate the events and issues about the Underground Railroad.
- Look at pictures of actual buildings in the Annapolis/Baltimore area that were used on the Underground Railroad.
- Divide students into small groups of 3-4 students.
 - Provide instruction on standing in your own kinosphere, tableau and *freeze frame*.
 - Each group will create and perform various freeze frame and tableaux poses to demonstrate the emotions, dangers, and rewards of the struggles of the Underground Railroad.
- Each group will observe the other groups and write down descriptive adjectives that they see in the various performances.
- Once each group performs, there will be a brief debriefing session.
- With the last 10-15 minutes the students will play an individual game of "freeze tableaux" where they will individual pretend to be a different person on the Underground Railroad. If they are caught moving or making any noise when they are directed to "freeze" then they are out. The last student standing "frozen" wins.

Exit-Ticket

- Complete an exit-ticket that asks the students to summarize in three to five sentences the emotions, dangers, and rewards of the Underground Railroad.

EXTENSIONS AND OPTIONS

- Students create tableau for stanzas of the poem by Eloise Greenfield: *Harriet Tubman*

RESOURCES AND SOURCES

Artful Thinking Routine @ <http://www.pzartfulthinking.org/routines.php>

Library of Congress image archive

GET SMART THROUGH THE ARTS

A U T H O R (S)

Preston Hartman, Wiley H. Bates Middle School, Annapolis MD and Ali Oliver Krueger, Interact Story Theatre

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The Underground Railroad in Pictures



RESURRECTION OF HENRY BOX BROWN.



TEACHING with TABLEAU

by Ali Oliver-Krueger
<http://www.interactstory.com/>

Tableau (plural Tableaux): a frozen moment in time that captures a key moment in a story.

What moments make good tableaux?

- Action Scenes
- Scenes that make great illustrations or snapshots.
- Moments that are emotionally charged--characters are reacting emotionally to something.
- Dream or nightmare scenes, daydreams, visions, scenes happening in a character's mind.
- Moments and events mentioned only briefly in text, where making tableau may help us gain more insight into what might have happened.
- Exaggerated, Funny, or Extreme Situations--actors have to make strong, exaggerated acting choices

What moments do NOT make good tableaux?

- Talking Head Scenes: scenes with dialogue but no action.
- Scenes where most characters are sitting (the C-Span Effect).
- Magic and Special Effects (the Harry Potter).
- Descriptive/informational text with little action.
- Love scenes.

Plan Your Casting

Full class: Everyone in the class becomes part of the scene.

Small groups: Break down the event into a sequence; each group portrays one tableau in the sequence.

Individual statues: each actor becomes a statue of the same character.

Prepare the Students for Acting

- Finding a point of concentration
- Becoming Actors
- Identifying Acting Tools and Skills:
 - Imagination/Mind
 - Voice
 - Body
 - Cooperation/Ensemble
 - Concentration

Set the Stage, Inspire Investigation

- Choose your source:
 - Image(s): paintings, statues, photos, artistic depictions of event.
 - Storytelling: the teacher briefly tells the students the story/the facts.
 - Written text: Students read an excerpt individually or as a group (historical account, literary text, etc.)
 - Combination (e.g., image + storytelling)
- Share and analyze your source with your students:
 - What is the setting of your tableau?
 - What is happening in your tableau?
 - What are the characters in your tableau?
 - What are these characters thinking or feeling?

Guidelines for Tableaux

- All actors are still—the tableau catches a frozen moment in time.
- Each Actor has a strong point of concentration.
- Each character and/or object shows an emotion or feeling that fits the moment we are portraying.
- The tableau reflects the information in the text accurately.
- The tableau uses different physical levels (low, middle, high).
- The tableau has a title.

Make sure you include everyone in your group! They can be objects, part of the setting or supporting characters. Objects have to reflect feeling of the moment, too!

Drama CUES to Use:

Actors, show me you are ready for drama--Hands and laps clear. All eyes focused on the speaker.

When I say go, but not before I say go--Students watch, listen and wait for further instructions.

Places--Students stand in their correct places prepared to begin the drama.

Action--Students begin acting. They move and/or speak as their characters.

Freeze--Students stop whatever they are doing, are silent, and stand still.

Curtain--Indicates the end of the scene or drama. Upon hearing this students are no longer in character.

