

How do people seek freedom?

What strategies did enslaved people in Confederate states use to seek freedom?

Subject: History and Social Sciences, Language Arts

Grade Level: Fourth Grade

Topic: Civil War events in Virginia; experiences of enslaved African Americans in Virginia during the Civil War

Guiding Questions: How do people seek freedom?
What strategies did enslaved people in Confederate states use to seek freedom?

VA SOL: VS.7b (History) - The student will demonstrate an understanding of the issues that divided our nation and led to the Civil War by
b) describing Virginia's role in the war, including identifying major battles that took place in Virginia.

Essential

Knowledge:

- The Confederates were using slaves to help them in the war effort. Three men (Shepard Mallory, Frank Baker, and James Townsend) refused and escaped to Fort Monroe, this led to the Contraband decision, which led to tens of thousands of enslaved people to seek refuge with the Union Army.

Materials: Primary source print shows fugitive slaves arriving at the gate to Fortress Monroe, Virginia (Appendix A), magnifying glasses, online article about the Fort Monroe and the "Contrabands of War" (Appendix B), problem and solution pyramid worksheet (Appendix C), article jigsaw worksheet (Appendix D), envelopes, note cards, [Seeking Freedom: The Untold Story of Fortress Monroe and the Ending of Slavery in America](#) picture book by Selene Castrovilla and E. B. Lewis, paper/pencils.

Before you begin:

Create resource packets that students will use throughout the lesson. Print copies of the primary source photo (Appendix A) and place inside a large manila envelope (9x12). Inside a second smaller envelope, include copies of the printed online article (Appendix B) cut into four sections, the article jigsaw worksheet (half sheet of Appendix C), four notecards, and a ½ sheet of blank paper.

Introduction

Ask students the guiding question for the lesson, "How do people seek freedom?" Allow time for students to respond before engaging in the pre-reading activity.

Pre-Reading Activity - Two Parts

Part 1 - Gallery Walk

Because the LOC primary source image is multi-faceted, it would be best to cut the image apart into 8 separate scenes and glue or tape them down to butcher paper to place around the room. Have students walk around and write down around the outside of each image only what they see or observe. Students should first read what has already been written before writing down their thoughts. Challenge them to use a magnifying glass to see if they can notice something that has not already been seen by another student.

Part 2 - (Pyramid Style using OPTIC)

Have each student look carefully at the picture and write a sentence giving an overview of the image. Share out the overviews as a group.

Form students into pairs and have them list all of the parts of the image that they feel are most important. Encourage students to include patterns, details, body language, and clothing. As students are listing the parts, they should include descriptions of each part listed. Allow students to share observations with the whole group when done.

Put students into groups of 3 or 4 and have the groups give the image a title. Allow each group to share the title that they created.

Combine the groups of 3 or 4 into groups of 6-8. Have students discuss how the parts interrelate. Then, challenge them to find how the title fits with the interrelationships that they created.

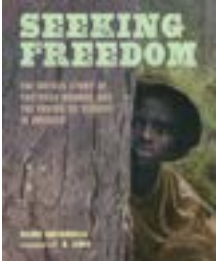
Finally, as a whole group work to draw conclusions about the image. What do they think that the image represents?

Move students back into groups of 4 and give each group the small envelope (prepared as suggested above). Then, ask students to take the four sections out of the envelope and distribute a section to each member of the group. Each student will read their section quietly to themselves, then summarize their section. Assign one student in each group to be the recorder and, in a sentence or phrase, record a summary of each section of the article on the group worksheet.

After completing this activity, let students know they will be reading a book. Show them the book, then ask students to share predictions about what they think the book will be about with the whole class.

Note: If the article provided seems too challenging for your students, consider modifying this assignment in some way. For example, you could retype the text in a more readable font, rewrite/summarize the content at an appropriate level for your students, number each section of the jigsaw-ed article and assign students to read a specific numbered section based on ability, or complete the activity as a whole class rather than in groups.

Read the Book



Now that students have been introduced to the topic, ask students the second guiding question, What strategies did enslaved people in Confederate states use to seek freedom? Ask students to look for the answer to this question as you read the book *Seeking Freedom* in its entirety.

Understanding through Quotes

After reading the book, ask students to share a quote they found particularly meaningful in *Seeking Freedom*. This activity will work best if you have a class set of books (at least one book per group of 4 students). (I would recommend borrowing books from school or public libraries for this activity.) Unfortunately, there is not a current read aloud of this story posted online for students to read.

Once they have identified a quote, they should record the quote on the note card provided in the envelope, then put their name on the note card. Students should place finished note cards in the center of the table turned over.

After all students have identified and recorded their quote, they will engage in discussion with/around the selected quotes. While in their groups, each student will randomly pick one card to begin discussion. For each notecard, students will engage in conversation using the following questions to guide them.

- Why did you pick this quote?
- How do you think this quote helps us understand the story?
- What reactions do you have to the quote? What connection can you make with this quote?

Story Pyramid



Now that students have had the opportunity to reflect on what they read, they will have a chance to identify the story structures within the story to help them make sense of it by creating a problem and solution pyramid on a sheet of paper included in the resource envelope.

Still in groups of four, ask each group to pick one student to act as the scribe. This should be a different person than the student who wrote during the pre-reading activity.

To create the story pyramid, each group will choose who in the story had the problem. Because there are multiple problems in the story, students may choose one that is not obvious. It is ok if groups choose the same problem. On the sheet of paper, students should record the name of the problem using one word on the first line, as shown in the included image.

On the following lines, students will use two words to describe the problem, three words to describe the attempted solution, and then four words to state the pros and cons of the solution. After the poems have been created, each group should share their poem with the class.

Closing Discussion

End the lesson by engaging in conversation about the guiding questions, How do people seek freedom? And what strategies did enslaved people use to gain freedom?

Optional Extension

- As a group or individually, on a sheet of paper, draft a short letter to the National Parks Service in response to the online article you read earlier.
- Using events from the timeline included in the back of *Seeking Freedom*, ask students to organize events related to the emancipation of enslaved people.

Lesson Created by Paula Spencer, 4th grade gifted teacher in Chesterfield County, VA.

Appendix A



Title

Stampede among the Negroes in Virginia - their arrival at Fortress Monroe / from sketches by our Special Artist in Fortress Monroe.

Summary

Print shows fugitive slaves arriving at the gate to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, seeking the protection of the Union army at the outbreak of the Civil War.

Created / Published

1861.

Notes

- Title from item.
- Caption: Fugitive slaves approaching the Federal sentinels rear of :Fortess Monroe and seeking the protection of General Butler. Fugitive slaves entering Fortress Monroe - passing the drawbridge at the main entrance guarded by the sentinels.

Image retrieved from: [Library of Congress](#)

Appendix B

Fort Monroe and the "Contrabands of War"

When a Virginia slave owner demanded the return of three slaves that had escaped to Fort Monroe, Butler refused, on the grounds that these persons were being used to wage war against the Union



Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler meets with escaped slaves at Fort Monroe

Library of Congress

No one wanted war; that much is certain.

Least of all Abraham Lincoln. But he would have the government's property secured and its excise taxes collected. And so the Civil War began with those limited goals in mind.

During his campaign for the presidency in 1860, Lincoln made this point repeatedly to a disbelieving South: he had no intension of disturbing the institution of slavery where it already existed, whatever his personal opinion on the morality of slavery. And when war came at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, he remained steadfast. Return to the Union on the old terms, he said, and all will be forgiven.

But weeks turned into months and the South remained defiant. In the field, abolitionist officers were chaffing under this moderate policy. In the west, General John C. Frémont, commander of the Union Army of the West, issued a proclamation on August 30, 1861 that effectively freed all slaves in the state of Missouri.

Lincoln was horrified. The loyal, slave-holding states of Missouri and Kentucky were not yet firmly under Federal control and Frémont's order might tip them into the Confederate camp. Lincoln ordered the general to rescind his proclamation and when Frémont refused, Lincoln publically revoked it and removed Frémont from command.

Lincoln reacted in like fashion when General David Hunter issued a similar proclamation in his Military Department of Georgia, South Carolina and Florida.

Meanwhile, in the east, General Benjamin Butler had devised a much more politically astute policy. When a Virginia slave owner demanded the return of three slaves that had escaped to Fort Monroe, Butler refused, on the grounds that these persons (or property, as the Confederacy considered them) were being used to wage war against the Union (the term "contraband of war" will soon be used to describe such escaped slaves, though Butler himself does not use the phrase per se). No mention was made of emancipation.

Congress registered its approval of Butler's policy when it passed the First Confiscation Act. This law stated that if slaves are, in fact, property and if this property is owned by any person in active rebellion against lawful Federal authority, then the U.S. military has every right to deny its use to any such person. Any slave that could be wrested from the Confederacy would therefore, in a technical sense, become the property of the United States government.

Within days of Butler's announcement, the flood gates opened. By the time General Frémont was sacked and General Hunter reprimanded, there were hundreds of runaway slaves sheltering under the guns of Fort Monroe. That the federal government would one day repatriate or even sell this confiscated property soon became unthinkable. But then what?

At this point, public opinion in the North regarding the institution of slavery began to shift. Would these runaway slaves and their descendants become forever the property of the federal government, or would they, at some point, be released to make their own way in the world? By the time Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, the people of the North are decided. The Civil War will be about more than collecting taxes and securing public property.

It will be about freedom.

Article retrieved from: [National Parks Service](#)

Appendix C

Problem & Solution Pyramid

Who had the problem? - 1 word

What is the problem? - 2
words

What solution is attempted? - 3 words

Pros and cons of the solution - 4 words

Appendix D

Section 1:

Section 2:

Section 3:

Section 4:

Section 1:

Section 2:

Section 3:

Section 4:
