

Geography/SES Lesson

Which Way is Best?



Lesson Overview:

Students use a variety of sources, including historical Underground Railroad route maps, present day road maps to determine the distances traveled by the slaves and decide, based on distance, what the best route would be.

Length of Lesson: Two 45-minute periods

Notes: This lesson is particularly suitable for grades 6-8

Instructional Objectives:

Students will:

- Use maps to locate and identify cities that could be found along routes that composed the Underground Railroad.
- Students will trace a variety of routes that composed the Underground Railroad, from cities in the Southern U.S.A. where slavery was present to free cities in Canada.
- Students will use scales to determine the distance of the escape routes.
- Conclude which routes would be best because of the minimum distance required to travel.

Supplies: Road maps of Eastern United States and Southern Quebec and Ontario, notebook paper, Pencils or pens, string, calculator.

- Online road maps can be found free of charge at <http://www.multimap.com>

Instructional Plan:

Warm Up

Place students into appropriate groups based on the number of maps that you have available. Ask students to open up their maps and explain how they would locate a city (Using the index they would receive a grid number that would identify where on the map the city was located.) Ask students to locate a variety of cities; try to keep the examples specific to the activity (Savannah, Charleston, Richmond, etc.)

Introductory Activity

Next ask the how one would calculate the distance between cities (explain that the marking on the map represented travel routes, roads, and that roads have to be use to get from one place to

the next.). Ideally a student should suggest using a piece of string to trace out the route, measuring the string and using the scale that the map gives to determine distance. Again, have the students practice this activity using activity specific cities (Charleston to Washington, Savannah to Philadelphia, etc.)

Students will then practice using the scale given on the map to convert the linear distance traveled to real life distances, with all answers being in kilometers. (Note 1.6km = 1 mile if only American resources are available)

Discussion

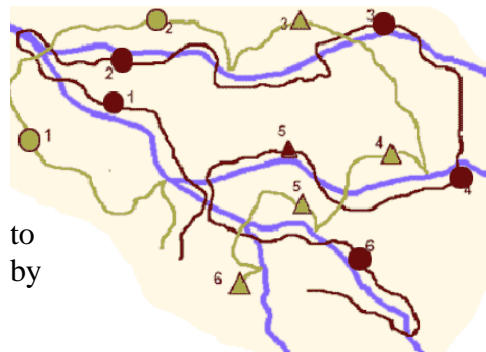
Lead students in a discussion of general questions to answer when determining an idea escape route:

- In which cities did the slaves have to escape from?
- Which city did the slaves want to reach to achieve freedom?
- Which major cities would have to be visited, passed through to receive rest, food and guidance?

Allow students to look at maps of possible Underground Railroad routes, beginning cities, cities traveled through and final destination cities. (See “sources” on pages 97)

Allow students ample time to discuss with their group members possible routes that the slaves could take.

Independent Activity



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by

Students will trace a variety of routes that composed the Underground Railroad, from cities in the Southern U.S.A. where slavery was present to free cities in Canada. Students are to select one starting city. From that city the students are to come up with at least three different routes to freedom. The criteria should include (this may be varied by individual teacher):

- Route must go through at least 4 major cities where the slaves can stop, rest and receive important information.
- The route must end in Canada.
- The route must follow present day roads that are present on the road map (students may not calculate distances ‘as the crow flies’).
- Students must show their detailed calculation of the distances from city to city and the total distance of each route.

Special Ed Accommodations

- Using scale to convert distances may prove to be too difficult, allow students to hand in answers in centimeters (not converted)
- If the student has difficulty following lines, visual or fine motor, allow student to use city to city ‘as the crow flies’ measurements.

Closure:

Have students organize their three routes on a large map (technology may be used here with a computer map displaying map) on Bristol board. The group will present their findings to the class. Each student will also be required to hand in the three routes, all the cities visited and the distances calculated.

Have students share their escape routes with the class and welcome question and challenges from their peers with regards to the routes chosen.

Assessment:

Use the Assessment Rubric (page 98) provided to evaluate routes and calculations. You may wish to have a separate rubric for the group-participation assessment.

Extensions:

Depending on the amount of previous knowledge of physical geography that the students have and if a topographic map or a vegetation map is available students may use this information to critique the routes that the students previously completed.

GIS extension may include the use of satellite maps that would determine many varying factors, elevation, landforms, rivers, etc. that may impede or aid the slaves in their travels. Use this information to critique the routes that the students previously completed.

Sources:

Web:

<http://education.ucdavis.edu/NEW/STC/lesson/socstud/railroad/images/map16.gif>

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/detailedroutes.htm>

Which Way is Best?

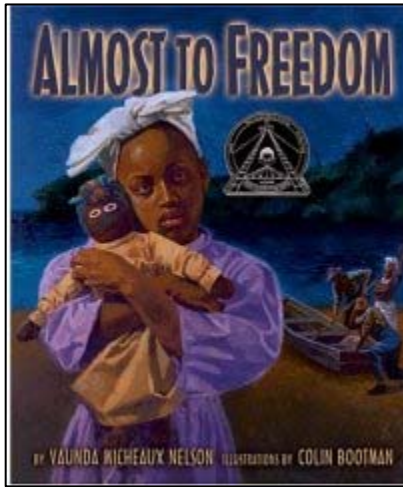
Assessment Rubric

Student Name: _____

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Number of Trade Routes	Included more than 3 trade routes	Included 3 trade routes	Included 2 trade routes	Included 1 trade route
Trade Routes	Began in the deep south, visited at least 4 cities and ended in Canada	Began in the deep south, visited 3 cities and ended in Canada	Began in the deep south, visited 2 cities and ended in Canada	May not have begun in the deep south, may have visited only 1 city and may not have ended in Canada
Map	Map was perfectly labeled and features clearly reflected purpose	Map was labeled and features reflected purpose	Most of map was labeled and most features reflected purpose	Some of map was labeled and some features reflected purpose
Calculations	Calculations were extremely precise and correct	Calculations were precise and correct	Most calculations were precise and most were correct	Some calculations were precise and some were correct
Rationale	Rationale was convincing and believable	Rationale was believable	Rationale was debatable	Rationale was poor
Presentation	Presentation was clear and thorough, body language was excellent	Presentation was clear, body language was good	Presentation was somewhat clear and body language was good	Presentation was not clear and body language was poor

Telling Stories Through Artifacts (English)

Lesson Overview:



Students will continue learning about the time of the Underground Railroad. Students will hear the short story *Almost to Freedom* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, which is a story told from a doll's perspective about the time of the Underground Railroad. Then students will examine various artifacts representing the time of the Underground Railroad. In small groups, students will discuss possible events that may be told from that artifact's perspective and create a tableau to share with the class. Finally, students will choose an artifact and write a story from that particular artifact's perspective.

Length of Lesson: Three - five 45-minute periods

Notes: This lesson is particularly suitable for grades 6-8.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will:

- Continue to discuss the time of the Underground Railroad.
- Use various reading strategies (such as predicting and inferring) while listening to a short story.
- Examine various artifacts representing the time of the Underground Railroad.
- Use various artifacts to create a tableau.
- Create various stories in groups.
- Develop communication skills in small groups.
- Write a story from an artifact's perspective.

Supplies:

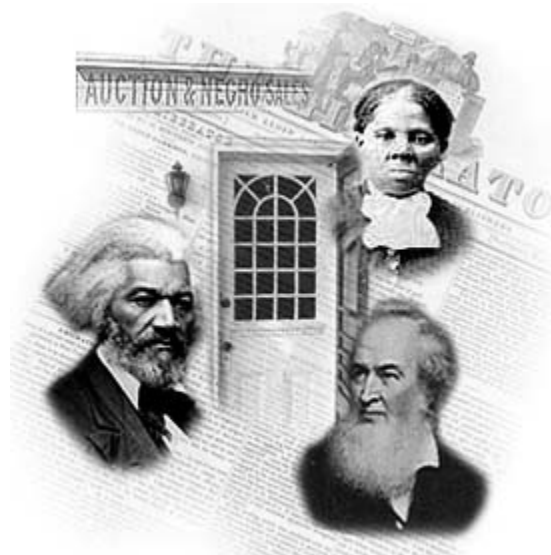
- *Almost to Freedom* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson
- Various artifacts (dolls, cotton, quilt, chains, lantern, bucket, apron, whip, ladder, stick and sac, hat, needle and thread, dress, diary, bandanna, etc...)
- Foreboding music
- Sound system
- Story outline (attached)
- Paper and pencils

Instructional Plan:

Warm up

Remind students about what they have been learning about the Underground Railroad. Tell them that they will hear a story about the time of the Underground Railroad, *Almost to Freedom* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson.

Before the story is read, create a picture walk through the book and ask students to predict what the story will be about. Ask students to keep their predictions in mind as the story is being read.



Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass
and Garret Smith – “The Conductors”

After the first page of the story is read, ask students: Who is telling the story? The story is being told from the doll’s perspective. Ask students to think of any other artifacts that the story could be told from (discuss after the story). During the story, stop as needed to discuss predictions, connections, or any other issues students may wish to discuss.

Introductory and Developmental Activities

Have various artifacts laid out such as dolls, cotton, quilt, chains, lantern, bucket, apron, whip, ladder, stick and sac, needle and thread, cap or hat, dress, diary, bandanna, etc

After the story and discussion is finished, draw students attention to the artifacts laid out. Play foreboding music (to create mood) as students quietly gather around and examine the artifacts. After a short while have students return to their seats (if students are not in groups, arrange small groups for the next activity).

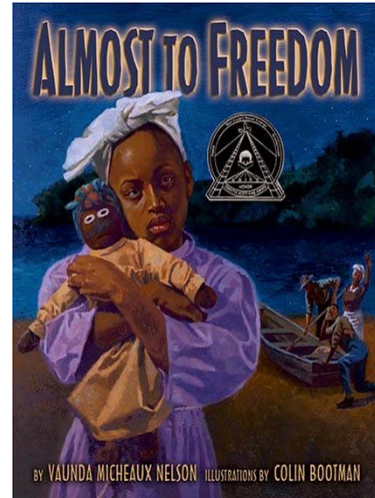
Have one group member return to the artifacts and choose one to bring back to the group. The group will discuss what the significance of the artifact is and how it is connected to the Underground Railroad. Then the group will create a tableau to show the significance of the artifact and present the tableau to the rest of the class. After the tableau is presented, the group will explain why they chose that particular scene to be presented in a tableau.

Guided Practice Activity

The teacher will pick up an artifact that has not been used in the tableau and model how a story can be told from the artifact’s perspective. Then each group will get a new artifact and discuss how a story may be told from that artifact’s perspective. Each group will briefly share what they have thought of. This discussion should generate several unique ideas for the following independent activity.

Independent Activity

Students will now reflect on all of the ideas presented in class and write their own story from an artifact's perspective. Students are to choose one artifact only and base their story from it's perspective. Provide students with a story map (page 103) to guide them. Remind students to include all elements of a story (review if necessary – characters, setting, plot, beginning, middle, end, problem, solution, etc.). Have the short story, *Almost to Freedom* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, available for students to reference if necessary. Allow time for students to work on their stories.



Closure

Once stories are complete have students present them to the rest of the class. Students may wish to have music playing in the background that matches their story.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed using a rubric for their stories (page 102).

Extensions:

Have students create a drama based on their stories (students may choose to video tape their dramatic creations). Students may present to other classes.

Sources:

Almost to Freedom by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson

National Underground Railroad Museum web site (used for artifact ideas)
<http://www.coax.net/people/lwf/urmuseum.htm>

The Kennett Underground Railroad Centre web site (used for artifact ideas)
<http://undergroundrr.kennett.net/news.html>

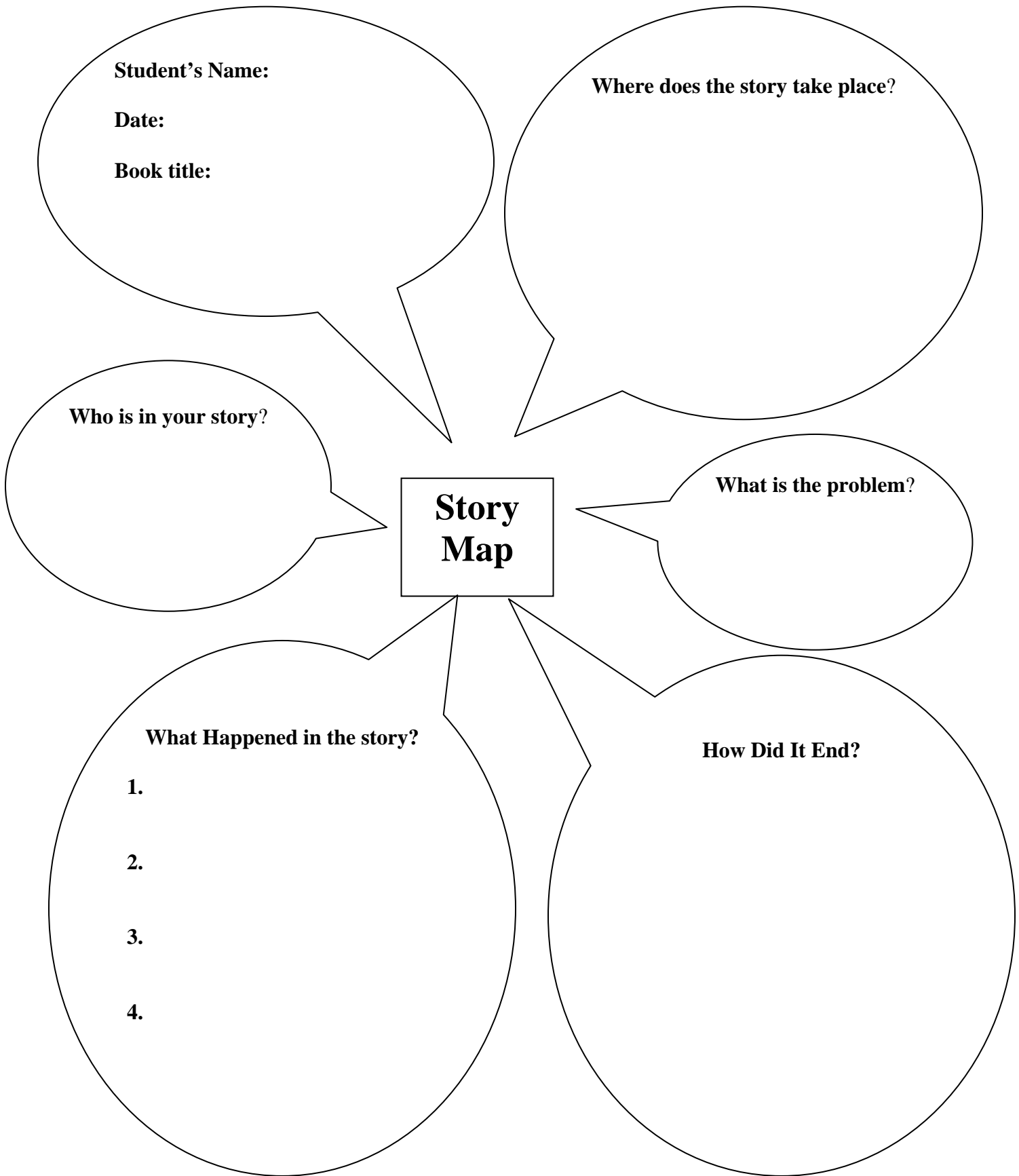
Story Writing Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

Title of Writing: _____

CATEGORY	4/EXCELLENT	3/GOOD	2/SATISFACTORY	1/NEEDS WORK
Ideas	My story makes complete sense. Writing is clear and easy to understand.	My writing is pretty understandable . One idea may be out of place.	My story is hard to follow and my story is somewhat confusing.	The reader will not be able to understand this writing. My ideas do not make sense.
Organization	My beginning creates interest, my middle is well-developed, and the end is satisfying.	My story has a clear and interesting beginning, middle, and end.	My story has a clear beginning, middle, and end but needs details to make it interesting.	My story does not have a clear beginning, middle, or end. My story is hard to follow.
Word Choice	My writing has a lot of powerful and exciting words to enhance the meaning.	My writing has some powerful and exciting words.	My writing has a few powerful and exciting words.	My writing has no powerful and exciting words. It is boring to read.
Fluency	I used complete sentences that are varied in style and length. My sentences flow together.	I used complete sentences that are varied in length. Some of the sentences flow together.	I used only short complete sentences. My story does not flow together in most places.	I used incomplete sentences. My story does not flow together at all.
Conventions	I edited my writing and it is free of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors.	I edited my writing and it still contains some errors.	I edited my writing and it contains a lot of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors.	I still have many spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors in my writing. It is hard to read and understand my writing.



Mapping Routes to the Underground Railroad



Lesson Overview:

Students will examine maps showing the slave areas, free areas, and escape routes used by slaves and then reproduce that map showing the unsafe areas, safe areas, and possible escape routes. Then students will use the scale to determine the actual length of the routes.

Length of Lesson: Two 45-minute periods

Notes: This lesson is particularly suitable for grades 5-8.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will:

- Activate prior knowledge to discuss the Underground Railroad.
- Use mapping skills to locate states that were slave states and free states.
- Make a map indicating slave states, Free states, escape routes, and a compass rose.
- Use scale to measure the length of the escape routes and compare with others.
- Develop communication skills in partners and groups.

Supplies:

- String
- Map of the Underground Railroad showing the routes, the slave states, and the free states (on overhead paper) (attached or may be taken from a resource listed below)
- Overhead projector
- Map of the United States (attached)
- Pencil crayons
- Rulers



Instructional Plan: *Warm up*

Begin the lesson by activating students' prior knowledge about the Underground Railroad. Have students discuss what they have been learning about the Underground Railroad and possible escape routes in small groups or pairs for a few minutes. Then bring all students to an open area of the room to participate in a string web activity.

In this activity, all students will stand (or sit) in a circle. The teacher will model the first step, where he/she will explain one idea about the Underground Railroad, then hold one end of the

string then toss the other end to another member of the circle. The person who catches the string will continue the process until all members have a turn.

After the web activity is finished, review important points mentioned and be sure to discuss slave states and Free states (if not already mentioned) and how escape was possible. Also, draw attention to the intertwined web. Point out how each student is connected to each other, but in an intricate way, just like how all the people involved with the Underground Railroad were connected with each other, also in an intricate manner.

Introductory and Developmental Activities

Tell students that they are going to map what was discussed in the web activity.

Put a map on the overhead of the United States of America showing the slave and Free State and the possible escape routes. (Page 107) The map can be found at one of the references listed below and printed in colour, or there is one attached (suggestion: colour the map with overhead markers to enable the students to visually see the distinction between the slave states and the Free states).

Map of routes of the Underground Railroad as well as slave and free states:
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/NR/travel/underground/routes.htm>

Map of routes of the Underground Railroad may also be located on pages 18 and 19 in:

Greenwood, Barbara. (1998). *The Last Safe House: A Story of the Underground Railroad*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press.

Review the map with students. Point out how the Underground Railroad ran from the South to the North. The slave states were located in the South and the free states were located in the North, as well as Canada, which is why all escape routes ran from the South to the North. Explain the legend to the students and ask questions to ensure their understanding.

Ask students to name a few slave states and a few Free states. Then review the escape routes shown on the legend and map. Remind students about all of the safe houses that must have been located along the routes. Point out that there were many physical features of earth that must have been obstacles for the people escaping.

Tell students they will map the slave states, the free states, one to three escape routes, and then use scale to determine the length of the escape routes.



Guided Practice Activity

Before students begin their maps, review the mapping skills required. Guide students through a review of the key components of a map (title, key/legend, compass rose, etc.).

There are two maps of the United States of America (Page 109-110). One map is blank and students would have to label the actual States, the other map has the States labelled. Younger grades could use the map with the States already labelled. Teacher decides. (You can find many maps at www.eduplace.com)

The teacher also must decide if the overhead of slave states and free states will be left up for the duration of the lesson, or if only the names of the slave states and free states will be provided and the students would have to locate the States.

Tell students they will have the opportunity to make up their own legend for their map and colour the slave states one colour and the Free states another colour. They will use pencil crayons to colour their maps. Students must also make a compass rose indicating North/South/East/West. Lastly, students must choose one to three escape routes (depending on the grade) and draw the routes on the map and identify the route in their legend.

Independent Activity

Have students follow the directions provided to create a map showing the slave states, the free states, escape route(s), title, and a compass rose.

Closure

The final activity will involve measuring the escape routes that each student drew on their map. The teacher will model how to measure the escape routes using the scale and a ruler. (A 12 minute video may also be viewed to refresh the concept of scale: Scale-The Magic Lantern Video Collection). This video is available from the DPCDSB AV department. If students have more than one escape route, they may measure all of them and point out the shortest route. Students may compare with partners or group members.

Assessment: Students will be assessed using a rubric (page 111) on the information they included in their maps.

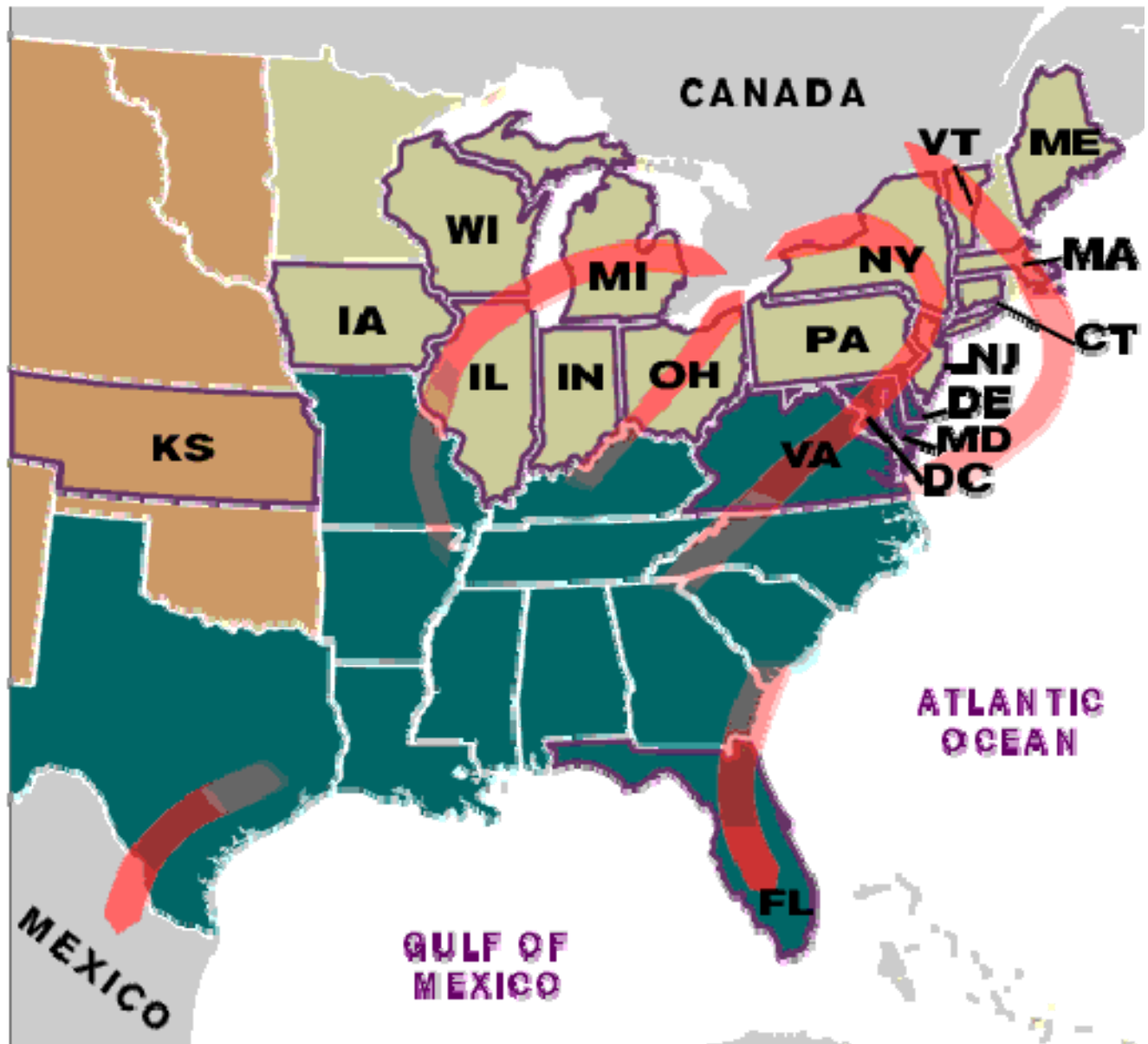
Extensions:

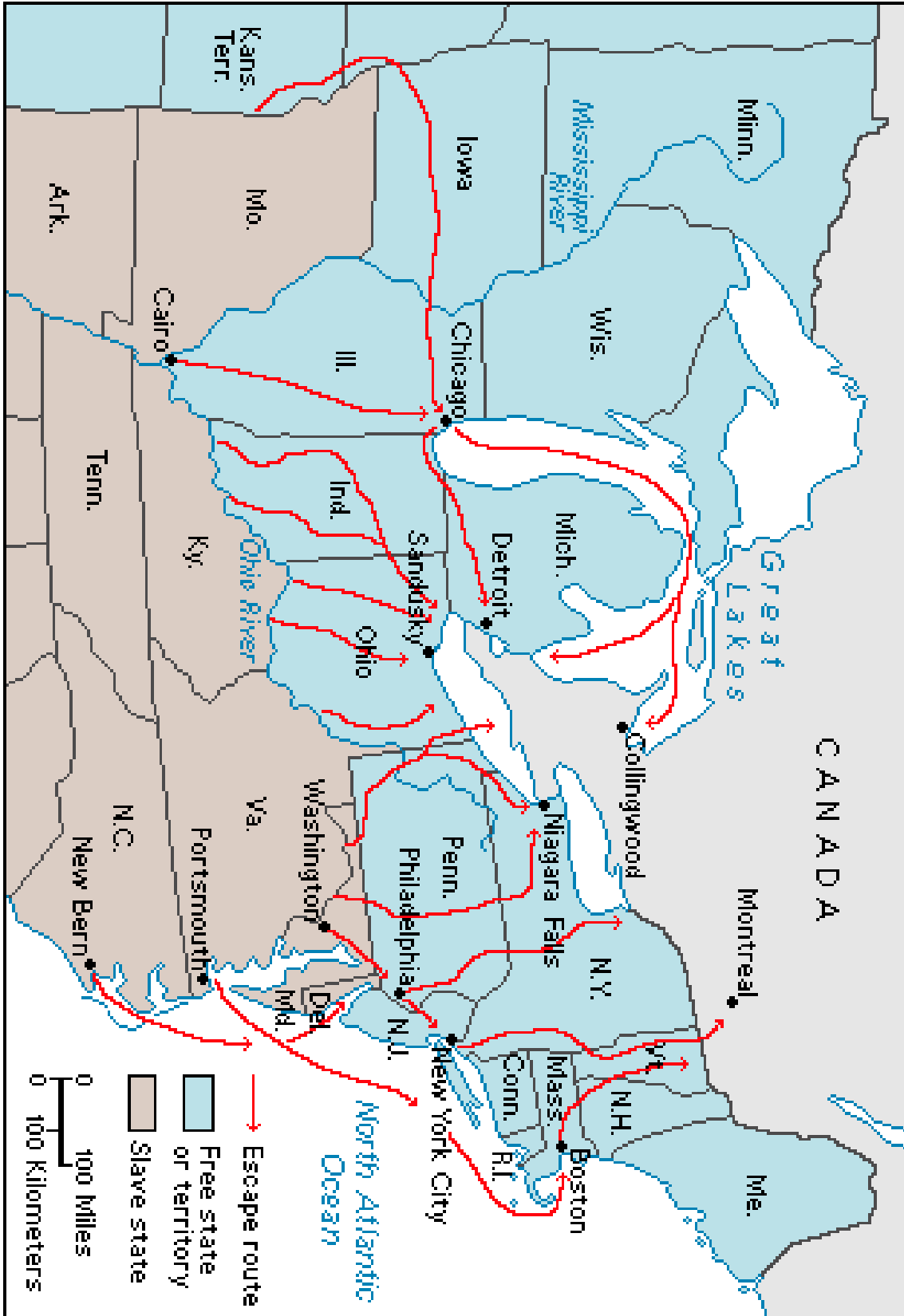
1. Visit a list of sites of 'Safe Houses' across the United States of America at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/NR/travel/underground/states.htm> Have students map the safe houses onto a map and connect possible Underground Railroad escape routes. Then have students work with a partner to compare the safe houses map to the map created above. Discuss findings in groups.
2. Have students examine the physical features of the land that was crossed for the Underground Railroad escape routes. Have students discuss possible set backs or other issues that may arise when passing through varying landforms during escape.

Possible websites: <http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/usphys.pdf> OR <http://www.landforms.biz/> Or use page 249 of the grade seven geography text: Draper, Graham, et al. (2000). *Physical Geography: Discovering Global Systems and Patterns*. Toronto, ON: Gage.

Sources:

- Web: Map of North America www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/n_america.html
- Underground Railroad Information www.valdosta.edu/~tross/lesson4.html

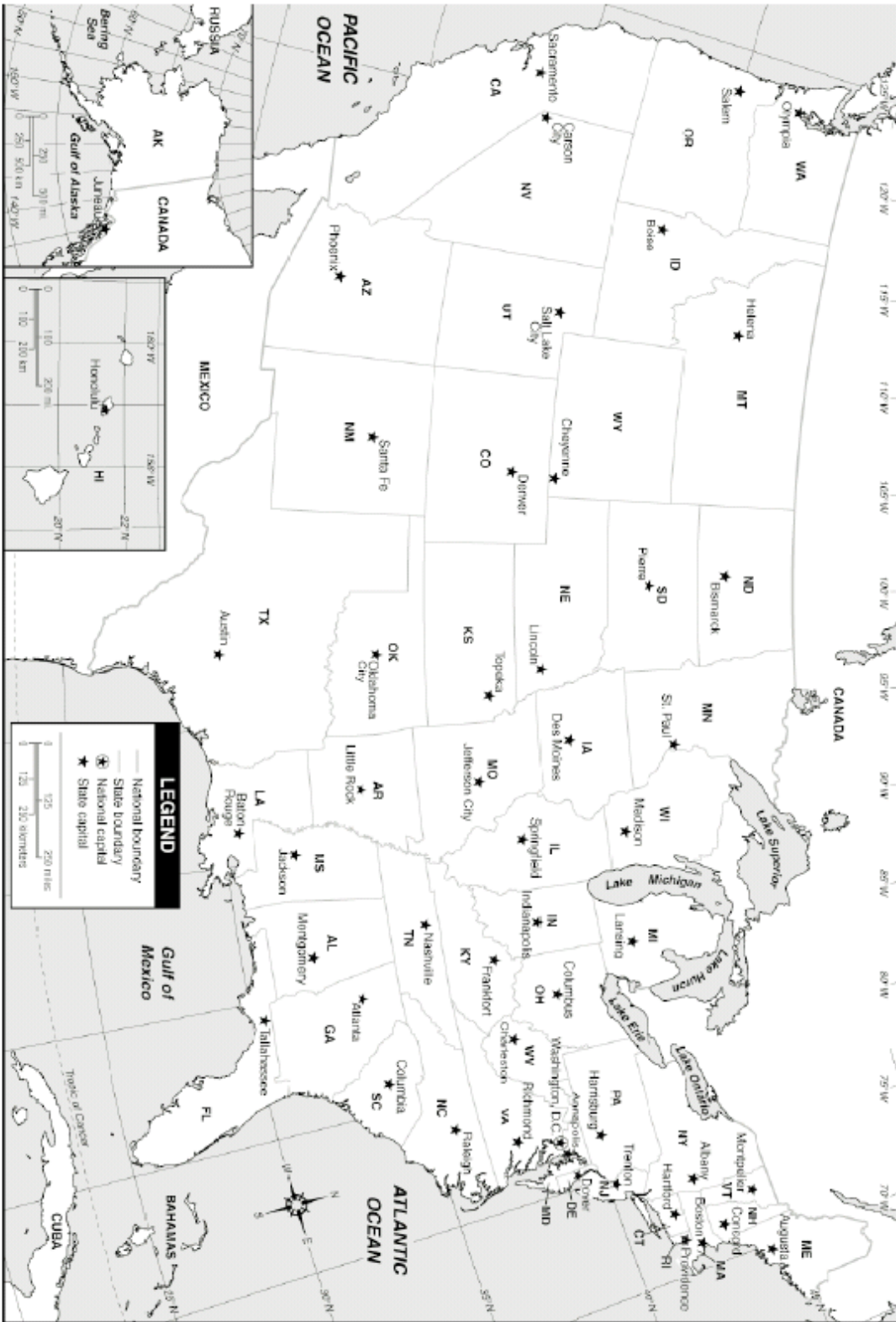




United States



United States: Capitals



Underground Railroad Geography Lesson Rubric #1

Student Name: _____

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Legend	Clearly and correctly identified slave states and free states	Correctly identified slave states and free states	Most slave states and free states correctly identified	Some slave states and free states correct, while others are not
Escape Route	Clearly and correctly identified escape route and clearly identified it on legend	Correctly identified escape route and identified it on legend	Correctly identified escape route, but did not include it on legend	Did not correctly identify escape route
Compass Rose	All four cardinal directions labeled, plus the directions in between	All four cardinal directions labeled	Two or three directions labeled	Only one direction labeled

Underground Railroad Geography Lesson Rubric #2

Name: _____ Teacher: _____

Date: _____

CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	POINTS
Compass Rose	No attempt	Only one or two directions correctly identified	Three directions correctly identified	All directions correctly identified	
Legend	No attempt	Some slave states and free states correct, while others are not	Most slave states and free states correctly identified	Correctly identified slave states and free states	
Escape Route	No attempt	Did not correctly identify escape route	Correctly identified escape route but did not include it on legend	Correctly identified escape route and identified it on legend	
Levi Coffin's Safe House	No attempt	Identified with minimal accuracy where Coffin's house was located	Identified with some accuracy where Coffin's house was located	Correctly identified where Coffin's house was located	
				TOTAL POINTS EARNED	
				TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	12