

Halfway to Freedom

Lesson 1: Artifact Analysis

Focus Questions

What did 1850s Chicago look like? Who were John and Mary Jones? How did slavery impact the history of Chicago? What can artifacts teach us about the past?

Core Understandings

Students will understand that while Illinois was a free state, the institution of slavery still had an impact on 1850s Chicago. They will understand how the city has evolved and changed over time.

Knowledge

Students will know that Mary and John Jones were prominent abolitionists in Chicago and among the most important African American citizens in the city's history. They will know how Chicago looked in the 1850s. They will know that the institution of slavery had repercussions for the city of Chicago and the free state of Illinois.

Skills

Students will use their collective and independent research skills to uncover information about life in Chicago in the 1850s. They will express their findings in writing and will listen and speak effectively during class discussion.

Common Core ELA Standards

CCSSR1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSSR7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

ISBE Social Science Standards

Goal 15: Understand economic systems, with an emphasis on the US.

Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the US, and other nations.

Goal 17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on society, with an emphasis on the US.

Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the US.

In This Lesson

By exploring the interactive history map for *Halfway to Freedom*, students will gain an introduction to 1850s Chicago and the primary sources that inspired the story. The elements of setting and obstacles/problems are addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Kris Ballard.



Activity

Begin the lesson by leading students through a basic overview of the interactive history map for *Halfway to Freedom*. Demonstrate the then-and-now function to explore story locations, the zooming tools to examine artifacts up close, and the look-closer questions for directed inquiry.

Next distribute Artifact Analysis worksheets from the Classroom Activities section of the *Great Chicago Stories* website. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/classroom/artifact.php> Three different worksheets are posted online: one for artifacts, one for documents, and one for photographs. Instruct students to choose one primary source they find particularly compelling from each of the three map-interactive tabs and fill out the appropriate analysis worksheet.

Near the end of the class period, gather students for a discussion about what they saw and learned. You might consider asking some of the following questions:

- 1) What did you find surprising about 1850s Chicago?
- 2) Describe the people you saw. What do you think their lives were like?

Lesson 1 Home Connection

Distribute copies of the *Halfway to Freedom* narrative and the Guided-Reading worksheet, designed to promote close reading. Have students read the story and complete the worksheet before the beginning of the next lesson. As an alternative, you can ask students to answer the reading-comprehension and critical-thinking questions, designed to check for understanding, from the *Great Chicago Stories* website. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/halfway/reading.php>

Materials & Resources

- **Computer access for students in the classroom**
- **Printouts of the *Artifact Analysis* worksheets from the *Great Chicago Stories* website:**
<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/classroom/artifact.php>
- **Printouts of the *Guided-Reading* worksheet**
- **Printouts of the *Halfway to Freedom* narrative:**
http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/Halfway_to_Freedom_by_Melody_Herr.pdf

Instructional Notes

This lesson is best conducted in your school's computer lab, where students can explore the interactive history map individually or in small groups. If this is not possible, the lesson can be conducted using a single computer with projection capability or by distributing printouts of the *Halfway to Freedom* artifact image set. http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts_halfway_to_freedom.pdf

Extension Activities

Have students read the entry for John and Mary Jones in *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago*. <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/2458.html>

“Meet John and Mary Jones,” one of the Chicago History Museum’s History Lab lessons, offers a number of valuable learning activities about this influential couple. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/education/resources/history-lab/african-american-life-in-the-nineteenth-century>

Worksheet: Guided-Reading Questions

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. After hearing the name of the story and viewing the primary sources, what do you think the story will be about? What time period will it take place in?
2. Where is Hannah hiding?
3. What is the signal she hears? What is her reply to the signal?
4. How old is Hannah?
5. What time of year does the story take place?
6. Where does the guide lead Hannah?
7. Who greets Hannah at the safe-house?
8. Where is Hannah headed? Why there?
9. What did Hannah think the Underground Railroad was like when she was a child?
10. Where was Hannah from?
11. How many slaves were on that farm?
12. What did Hannah do on the farm?
13. Why does the master decide to sell Hannah?
14. Why does Hannah decide to run away?

Worksheet: Guided-Reading Questions

Name: _____

Date: _____

15. What was the Underground Railroad?
16. Why did Hannah assume Mary Jones was a maid?
17. What could happen to those who helped runaway slaves?
18. What is Mary Jones's daughter's name?
19. What does John Jones, Mary's husband, do to earn a living?
20. Why does the world Lavinia describes seem so unbelievable to Hannah?
21. Who is Shepherd? Why was he so-named?
22. Who were the three black men that formed "a sort of defensive spy network"?
How did they do this?
23. Describe the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.
24. How did Chicago's City Council react to the law?
25. Why does Mary warn Shepherd to be careful?
26. What are abolitionists doing to try to end slavery?
27. Why do John and Mary Jones have certificates of freedom?
What could have happened to them if they did not?

Worksheet: Guided-Reading Questions

Name: _____

Date: _____

28. What does Shepherd say is only the first step? Why?
29. How did the Illinois Black Laws limit the rights of free African Americans?
30. Why does Shepherd say "We're only half free!"?
31. How many days does Hannah stay with the Jones family?
32. What does Hannah learn during her evenings with the family?
33. Where does Hannah hide?
34. Why does she have to hide?
35. What happens to Shepherd? Why?
36. What gave Hannah the perfect opportunity to slip out of Chicago?
37. How does Hannah escape?
38. Who joins Hannah on the train?
39. What do you imagine will happen next in the story?