A Trip on the Underground Railroad

Objectives: Students will use primary sources, internet sites, and written text to gain knowledge about Harriet Tubman's and The Underground Railroad.

Using information on the Library of Congress the students will create a poster featuring the important events in Harriet Tubman's life.

PA Standards

1.8.6 C - Organize and present the main ideas from research.
   - Take notes from sources using a structured format.
   - Present the topic using relevant information.
   - Credit sources using a structured format (e.g., author, title).

8.1.6 B - Explain and analyze historical sources.
   - Literal meaning of a historical passage
   - Data in historical and contemporary maps, graphs and tables
   - Author or historical source
   - Multiple historical perspectives
   - Visual evidence
   - Mathematical data from graphs and tables

8.1.6 D - Describe and explain historical research.
   - Historical events (time and place)
   - Facts, folklore and fiction
   - Historical questions
   - Primary sources
   - Secondary sources
   - Conclusions (e.g., simulations, group projects, skits and plays)

Time Required: 3-5 days, 45 minutes each day

Materials: Library of Congress primary sources, computer with internet access, paper, markers, pencils

Vocabulary Words: slave, Underground Railroad, runaway, safe house, station, conductor, slave states, free states, plantation, slave auction, and bounty hunter.

Introduction: If I told you we were taking a field trip on the Underground Railroad what would you think of? I am sure you would think we were traveling by train underground. Well, that is not true. The Underground Railroad was a group of houses and other buildings used to help slaves escape slavery and gain freedom in the Northern states.
Procedure and Activities:

1. Class discussion: I will begin by asking students if they know about Harriet Tubman or the Underground Railroad. Asking who, what, when, and where questions.

2. After a brief discussion, the students will learn about how she was a hero with a big heart. I will show them pictures of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.

3. I will break the students up into groups to conduct their own research about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. They will go on the Library of Congress website and explore the American Library section. From there, they will go on to other locations to learn about Harriet Tubman’s life pertaining to The Underground Railroad.

4. They will create a poster about her life. The partners will share their presentation with the class.

5. Harriet Tubman made 19 trips to the south and escorted 300 slaves to freedom. We are going to talk about how the slaves escaped by showing pictures of different houses used to escort the slaves to freedom. I will take the class to the websites that had houses and other information about the Underground Railroad in Ohio, Michigan, and New Jersey.

Assessment and Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on the products they created and their participation with their group. They will also be evaluated individually by writing a paper answering these four questions.

   Why do you think slaves risked their lives to run away?
   Why do you think others risked their lives to help slaves run away?
   If you were a slave, what would freedom mean to you?
   If you could meet Harriet Tubman what would you ask her?
Primary Source Citations

Harriet Tubman


The Underground Railroad


