

Lesson Plan for Reaching for Truth Seminar

Nicholas Ristaino
Social Studies Department,
Hamilton-Wenham Regional HS, Hamilton, MA

1) Learning objectives and desired grade level: Grade 9 College Prep level World History course

- a. **Students will understand:** (Taken from the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District’s Social Studies “transfer goals, overarching understandings, and overarching essential questions”)
 - i. Decisions concerning the allocation and use of economic resources impact individuals and groups.
 - ii. Conclusions need to be based in evidence.
 - iii. All sources have embedded values and points of view and require critical evaluation.
 - iv. Knowledge of the past helps one understand the present and make decisions about the future.
- b. **Students will know:**
 - i. Slavery existed in New England
 - ii. New England also played an important role in the broader trans-Atlantic slave trade
 - iii. Enslaved people played an important role in the New England economy
 - iv. Historical sites and historical texts make choices when it comes to what stories they emphasize and what stories they do not.
- c. **Students will be skilled at:**
 - i. Analyzing charts, maps, and primary sources
 - ii. Envisioning the life of enslaved people (empathy is a developing skill amongst high school students, I focus here on getting them to envision lives different from their own in the hopes that one day they can *empathize* with people different from them)
 - iii. Utilizing appropriate historical sources to inform someone about an important issue in history.

2) Context (historical and where in the curriculum would this lesson be more appropriate)

- a. **Unit & curriculum context:**
 - i. Curriculum – our freshmen year world history curriculum spends each semester studying different civilizations over a period of time then ends the semester studying a time when those civilizations interacted or clashed. In the second semester, students study early modern Europe (the Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution, and the Age of Exploration), Pre-Columbian America, and Sub-Saharan Africa then end the second semester (and school year) by studying the conquest and colonization of the western

hemisphere and the creation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This lesson would be a part of that final unit.

- ii. Unit – In the unit on the conquest & colonization of the western hemisphere, this lesson would come after a series of lessons on the reasons for and realities of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This lesson would be one of the last of the school year for the freshmen and will help preview the content of their sophomore year history class (which addresses increasing rights for individuals across multiple societies and times).

- b. **Historical context of the lesson:** Historically, the freshmen year curriculum leaves off around the 1700s, which is where the sophomore year curriculum approximately starts. This lesson in particular comes after lessons on the establishment of the slave trade by the Spanish and its adaptation by other colonial powers and a series of lessons on the middle passage and the life of slaves on plantations. The students universally associate slavery with the American south, the only expansion of their understanding comes in this class and in their Spanish classes (Hamilton-Wenham only offers Spanish as a foreign language) where they learn that more enslaved people were sent to Latin America. This lesson is meant to have “shock factor” in broadening their horizons even more to understand that slavery was practiced where they live – something few to none of the kids has ever heard before. This helps to draw their freshman year to a close and to preview some of the themes of their sophomore year curriculum.

3) Duration (1 or 2 class periods). Timing might extend if a site visit is included (encouraged if available): Two class periods, then a site visit to the Salem Maritime Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

4) Resources used. Lesson plans should focus on a primary source, historical site/interpretive center/museum.

- a. Brewster, Nero et al. “Petition to the NH Government” Reaching for Truth: Exploring the Issue of Slavery in the Era of the American Revolution
<http://flatpackjack.net/truth/2017/07/30/1779-petition-freedom/> (Accessed 8/10/17)
- b. Emory University, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, “Map 9: Volume and direction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from all African to all American regions” (from David Eltis and David Richardson, Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, New Haven, 2010)
<http://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/intro-maps> (Accessed 8/10/17)
- c. Emory University, “Sum of Disembarcated slaves by Disembarkation ports” the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database
<http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/nrIj8GjU> (accessed 8/10/17)
- d. Essex National Heritage Area “Slavery and Abolition in Salem” Essex National Heritage Area

- <http://essexheritage.org/ts/event/slavery-and-abolition-salem> (Accessed 8/10/17)
- e. Historic New England “The Boardman House” Historic New England <https://www.historicnewengland.org/property/boardman-house/> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - f. Massachusetts Historical Society, “the Slave Trade”, African-Americans and the End of Slavery in Massachusetts <http://www.masshist.org/endofslavery/index.php?id=60> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - g. Massachusetts Historical Society, “The Lives of Individual African Americans before 1783” African-Americans and the End of Slavery in Massachusetts <http://www.masshist.org/endofslavery/index.php?id=58> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - h. The Montpelier Foundation “James Madison’s Montpelier” <https://www.montpelier.org/> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - i. National Park Service, “African-American History in Salem” National Park Service: Salem Maritime Museum <https://www.nps.gov/sama/learn/historyculture/ugrr.htm> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - j. The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of New Hampshire, “The Whipples” Moffatt-Ladd House and Garden <http://moffatladd.org/historypeople/thewhipples.html> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - k. Rediker, Marcus, The Slave Ship: A Human History, New York: Viking Penguin, 2007
 - l. Rundell, Laura, “African-American Heritage Sites in Salem: a Guide to Salem’s History” National Parks Service <https://www.nps.gov/sama/learn/historyculture/upload/SalemAfAmsitesm.pdf> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - m. Sammons, Mark & Cunningham, Valerie, Black Portsmouth: Three Centuries of African-American Heritage, Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2004, p. 46
 - n. Strawberry Banke Museum “Sherburne House” Strawberry Banke Museum <http://www.strawberrybanke.org/houses/sherburne.cfm> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - o. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc. “Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello” <http://home.monticello.org/> (Accessed 8/10/17)
 - p. Waitt, William, “Deed signed by William Waitt to James Dalton acknowledging the sale of Peter (a slave), 29 July 1747” African-Americans and the End of Slavery in Massachusetts http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?old=1&ft=End+of+Slavery&from=%2Fendofslavery%2Findex.php%3Fid%3D59&item_id=621 (Accessed 8/10/17)
- 5) **What readings will students be responsible for leading up to the lesson(s)**
- a. Excerpts from The Slave Ship: A Human History, chapter one
- 6) **What resources from the conference, Reaching for Truth, will be used?**

- a. Brewster, Nero et al. "Petition to the NH Government" Reaching for Truth: Exploring the Issue of Slavery in the Era of the American Revolution
<http://flatpackjack.net/truth/2017/07/30/1779-petition-freedom/> (Accessed 8/10/17)
- b. Emory University, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.
<http://www.slavevoyages.org/> (Accessed 8/10/17)
- c. Sammons, Mark & Cunningham, Valerie, Black Portsmouth: Three Centuries of African-American Heritage, Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2004, p. 46

7) Structure of the lesson

- a. **Activities & Key Questions**
 - i. Discuss excerpts from The Slave Ship: *what shocked you, what did you learn?*
 - ii. Activity: with a partner create a narrative for someone on the slave ship or at the docks, share you narrative with another pair in a small group discussion. Address
 1. *What your enslaved person is thinking, feeling, experiences*
 2. *Where this is happening*
 - iii. Discussion: *how did enslaved people get their names?* Students propose their ideas, inform them of how it happened
 - iv. Activity: How do places get their names?
 1. Research using Google maps and Google how three places near you got their name (e.g.: Ipswich, MA, Patton Park in Hamilton, Puritan Rd. in Wenham). Discuss *what does it mean to name a place something? Why do we do this? What are we supposed to think about when we are in these places?*
 2. Show them places in Portsmouth, NH: Sherburne Rd., Odiorne Point, Brewster St.; discuss *what can we assume about these families: Sherburne, Odiorne, Brewster? Why name streets after them?*
 3. NB: at this point, my students are looking for the "now look at this" or the "point", often by this point in the year they know some kind of revealing, thought-provoking lesson is coming
 - v. Activity: Read NH petition of freedom
<http://flatpackjack.net/truth/2017/07/30/1779-petition-freedom/> , answer
 1. *Who wrote this petition?*
 2. *What were they requesting?*
 3. *Where did they live?*
 4. *From where did they get their names?*
 5. NB: students will be shocked that there was slavery in NH, MA, and across New England, this may be a time of follow

- up questions or “teachable moments” before moving on to the next activity.
- vi. Activity: Slavery in NE, students in pairs or small groups research disembarked slaves in NE
 1. Map 9: Volume and direction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from all African to all American regions
<http://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/intro-maps>
Answer *how many slaves headed to Northern New England?*
 2. Table: Sum of Disemarked slaves by Disembarkation ports
<http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/nr1j8GjU> Answer *how many slaves were coming into places like Boston or New York?*
 3. Using this website you and your partner create your own table that explains New England’s role in the slave trade and explain it to the class
 - vii. Wrap up day one: *what did you learn today, what shocked you, what do you want to know more about?*
 - viii. Homework: Read “the Slave Trade” & “the Lives of Individual African Americans before 1783, addressing slavery in Massachusetts
<http://www.masshist.org/endofslavery/index.php?id=60>
<http://www.masshist.org/endofslavery/index.php?id=58> , answer
 1. *What role did slavery play in Massachusetts and what role did Massachusetts play in the slave trade?*
 2. *How did the legislature support slavery through laws and regulations?*
 - ix. Discuss responses as a class
 - x. Source Analysis: Deed signed by William Wiatt
http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?old=1&ft=End+of+Slavery&from=%2Fendofslavery%2Findex.php%3Fid%3D59&item_id=621
 1. Read with a partner: *How does William Wiatt refer to his enslaved person? Why would he think this way? What does this tell you about slavery in New England? Was it any different from slavery anywhere else?*
 2. Class discussion: *what has this taught you about slavery in your own area? What has shocked you, what has not?*
 - xi. Activity: Historical Homes and slavery
 1. Break students into groups, have them navigate to the following New England historical sites:
 - a. Salem Maritime Museum (Salem, MA)
<https://www.nps.gov/sama/learn/historyculture/ugrr.htm> &

- <https://www.nps.gov/sama/learn/historyculture/upload/SalemAfAmsitesm.pdf> (scroll to page 3)
- b. The Boardman House (Saugus, MA)
<https://www.historicnewengland.org/property/boardman-house/> (scroll down and click on “1686 – 1911” to read a brief mention of an enslaved person transferred from one owner to another in the house)
 - c. The Sherburne House (Portsmouth, NH)
<http://www.strawberybanke.org/houses/sherburne.cfm>
 - d. The Moffat-Ladd House (Portsmouth, NH)
<http://moffatladd.org/historypeople/thewhipples.html>
 - e. Essex National Heritage Area (event page for an event in September on Slavery in Salem at the Salem Maritime Museum)
<http://essexheritage.org/ts/event/slavery-and-abolition-salem>
2. Students analyze: *does this site mention slavery? How prominent is it when describing life at or the inhabitants of these homes?*
 3. Students answer: *what this reveals about slavery in New England*
 4. [Optional Activity if there’s time] Now navigate to the sites for Jefferson’s home Monticello <http://home.monticello.org/> and James Madison’s home Montpelier <https://www.montpelier.org/>
 - a. Explore the resources these sites dedicate to slavery: *why do you think these sites have so much information on slavery?*
 - b. Compare and Contrast the sites’ respective placing of information on slavery (the Presidential homes have extensive sections on slavery): *why do you think these historical sites treated slavery the way they did on their websites? Should the New England sites do the same? What issues could this present to historians at these sites (in terms of available source information)?*
- xii. Discussion: *How do you tell an honest account of slavery in New England?*
1. Show quote from Black Portsmouth, page 46, on the cruelty of slavery in New England
 2. Hold a class-wide discussion on ways to tell an honest account of slavery in New England
 3. Introduce final unit project (see below)

- xiii. Site Visit (one day): Salem Maritime Museum, Salem, MA
 - 1. Students tour the museum in small groups, answering the following questions:
 - a. What was Salem's role in the colonial economy? Give four facts that back your answer.
 - b. What was Salem's role in the slave trade and slavery? Provide facts to back your claims.
 - c. What were three things you learned about Salem from your experience?
 - 2. As students tour, they must *ask* these questions of the staff:
 - a. How did the museum make the decision to include the information you did regarding slavery in and around Salem?
 - b. How much emphasis does an historical site need to place on the history of marginalized groups like enslaved people, women, the poor?
 - 3. Students must *reflect* on their experience and prepare for their project
 - a. How surprised were you to learn about Salem's role in the colonial economy, in the slave trade, and in slavery?
 - b. What did you think about how the museum approached the history of marginalized people? Do historical sites (and historians) have a responsibility to focus more on these groups?
 - c. If you could change one *important* aspect of the museum, what would it be? (Do **not** say "the food", I mean regarding how it is set up, what it focuses on, the impression they try to give you)
- xiv. Next lesson (final of the school year): The World Circa 1650 – a different kind of "Globalization"
- b. **Outcome of lesson:** As a result of this lesson, I want my students to
 - i. Develop an understanding of slavery in New England
 - ii. Begin to re-examine how they approach historical sites and websites, thinking about what does in and is left out of the narrative and why
 - iii. Develop a skill set to educate others about what they've learned through the final unit project
- c. **Assessment**
 - i. Questions on the final exam (there is no unit test for this last unit) on material from this lesson
 - ii. Small group research based project in the following format, choose one of the three to present to the class:
 - 1. Create a children's book to send to an elementary school teacher explaining the slave trade (including New

England's role in it). Incorporate information learned from the visit at the Salem Maritime Museum

2. Create a 5 – 10 minute “talking heads” historical video about a historical site in NE tied to slavery. Incorporate information learned from the visit at the Salem Maritime Museum *as well as* information from *another site* of your choosing.
3. Teach a 5-10 minute mini-lesson to your peers about the life of an enslaved person in New England (either someone enslaved in New England or someone like Ona Judge who escaped to New England). Incorporate information learned from the visit at the Salem Maritime Museum, preferably information about a person enslaved in or around Salem.

8) Specific learning adjustments for students with learning differences: this depends on the students I have and their progress over the course of their freshmen year. Looking at the IEPs and 504s of the students currently enrolled in my freshmen classes (it could change before the start of the school year), the following would be some sound adjustments to make during the course of the lesson:

- a. Pre-teach vocabulary used in the Petition for Freedom document (e.g. consent, tyranny, avarice)
- b. Provide graphic organizers for students to break down the Petition of Freedom document
- c. Have students repeat directions for activities back to me and check in on students as they begin their activities to ensure they understand what they need to do
- d. Pair struggling students with students not struggling with the activities or documents
- e. Redirect students with ADHD when they seem off task
- f. With the classroom teaching assistant monitor certain students' progress and offer aid (e.g. re-stating the text or questions in more accessible language) to students showing signs of frustration
- g. With the classroom teaching assistant monitor student emotional well being and prompt students showing signs of emotional distress to speak with the school adjustment counselor (who is down the hall) and return to the lesson when they are feeling better
- h. Adjust the length of the final unit project to sufficiently challenge students and stretch their capabilities without setting them up for failure