

Welcome to Thinkport's Student Activity Center! Your teacher has directed you to this student activity to help you learn more about the topic you are studying.

**Title:** Signs to Freedom

**Audience:** Middle

**Duration:** 45 Minutes

**Subject Area(s):**

Language Arts

**Grade Level(s):** 6,7,8

**Student Directions:**

Slaves who wanted to escape North to freedom used a system of secrets, signs and symbols to communicate. Find out how slaves decoded these signs and symbols to escape from slavery.

**Directions:** As you explore the Secrets: Signs and Symbols interactive, you will discover how song lyrics, words with double meanings and even quilts helped slaves escape on the Underground Railroad. You will be responsible for gathering information on how secrets, signs and symbols were used to assist slaves in their escape to freedom. Open the site and click on the "Following the Drinking Gourd," "The Language of Quilts," and the "Language of the Railroad" buttons that are located across the top of the screen. Collect information from these three sections of the interactive to answer the questions in the Secrets: Signs & Symbols worksheet.

**The Secrets: Signs & Symbols** The Secrets: Signs & Symbols interactive provides you with an opportunity to decode the hidden meanings in slave songs, and to unravel the double meanings of seemingly innocent railroad terms. As you investigate this site, you will discover how these songs and terms helped lead slaves to freedom.

<http://pathways.thinkport.org/secrets/>

How did words like drinking gourd, conductor and passengers help lead slaves to freedom?

Secrets: Signs & Symbols Worksheet ([View](#))

Secrets: Signs & Symbols Worksheet Teacher Key ([View](#))

**Directions:** After you have completed the worksheet, you will write a dialog in which two people are planning an escape on the Underground Railroad. The dialog should incorporate the

double meaning words that were used to help slaves escape on the Underground Railroad and make sure to include all of the vocabulary words from the Secrets: Signs and Symbols organizer.

Words of the Underground Railroad Worksheet [\(View\)](#)

**Directions:** Use the Words of the Underground Railroad Rubric to check your work.

Words of the Underground Railroad Rubric [\(View\)](#)

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Activity Signature

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