

Welcome to the Teachers' Instructions area for this student activity. Here you'll find directions and suggestions for using this activity along with the materials you need to evaluate your students' work.

**Title:** Which Way to Freedom?

**Audience:** Middle

**Duration:** 45 Minutes

**Subject Area(s):**

Social Studies - Geography

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

### **Teacher Directions:**

In this activity, students will use the Mapping it Out interactive map on the Pathways to Freedom: Maryland and the Underground Railroad Website to learn about the escape routes that slaves took to freedom. Students will choose a route that slaves would have used to escape, and then create a detailed map that illustrates the route they chose and some of the difficulties the escaping slaves would have faced.

This activity can be completed using a variety of technology configurations. If a computer lab is available, students can access the activity, worksheets and Web pages through Thinkport.

Another option would be to display the activity and Web page on a classroom computer with a projection device. In this case, students will need a copy of each worksheet.

Note to teacher: Before beginning the activity, make sure your students know that the Mason-Dixon line was a border between the free and slave states. Emphasize the importance of the Mason-Dixon line to escaping slaves.

### Focus for Media Interaction

The focus for viewing the Mapping it Out Interactive Map is for students to collect information about the geographic features of Maryland and how they impacted the placement of the routes of the Underground Railroad in Maryland.

### Viewing Activity

Students may work in pairs for this activity. Tell students to open the Mapping it Out link on the Pathways to Freedom: Maryland and the Underground Railroad Website. This site may be found at <http://pathways.thinkport.org/about/ugrr.cfm>. Share this James W.C. Pennington quote from the Mapping It Out Web page with your students before they begin exploring the interactive: "I have no knowledge of distance or direction. I know that Pennsylvania is a free state, but I know not where its soil begins or where that of Maryland ends?" (Excerpt from The Fugitive Blacksmith) Emphasize how difficult it must have been for Maryland slaves, who weren't

familiar with the region, to find their way to freedom. Tell students to scroll down and click on the "Go to the Interactive" button. When they click on the link, it will open a new browser window. Once the window opens, they should click on the "Start" button. Explain to students that they will be using the interactive to investigate key geographic characteristics of the Chesapeake Bay. Tell the students that they are responsible for explaining how these physical characteristics impacted the escaping slaves' journey on the various Underground Railroad routes. Tell students to spend a few minutes in the "Geography" section of the interactive, moving the mouse over the map and clicking on the highlighted dots to learn about the geography of Maryland and the surrounding areas. After students are finished exploring the "Geography" section of the site, ask them to share what they have discovered about the geographic features and how they impacted escaping slave's journeys with the class. Appropriate responses might include the following:

- The abundance of creeks, streams and small rivers allowed slaves to walk in the water to hide their scent from dogs.
- Woods and swamps provided hiding places.
- Large rivers provided some slaves with an opportunity to escape by boat.
- The Susquehanna River was a direct route to Pennsylvania, which was a free state.
- The Appalachian Mountains may have provided slaves with an escape route to Pennsylvania.

Ask them to open up the Escape to Freedom Map (or pass out copies of the handout to the students). After students have explored the "Geography" section of the interactive, tell them to click on the "Routes to Freedom" link. Explain to students that they will imagine that they are a conductor on the Underground Railroad and they need to choose a route to help slaves escape to freedom. Explain to students that they will select either Harriet Tubman's, Frederick Douglass' or James Pennington's route. Make sure that all three of the routes have been chosen by at least one pair of students. They will use the Escape to Freedom Map handout to plot their route. The map should include the beginning point of the route they chose, the terrain covered on the route, stations (safe places to stop) along the route, potential danger spots and a final destination. Tell students that after they pick a route, they will draw the route on their map and include important geographic elements such as rivers, mountains, and flat land on the map. Explain to students that they may also add items such as woods, cornfields, safe houses, and caves to the map. Emphasis that we will never know the exact course that escaping slaves took to freedom, so that the map will not be an exact replica of what they encountered on the journey, but it will contain a sampling of what they may have experienced along the way.

### Postviewing Activity

After students have completed their maps, select students to share their maps with the class. Make certain that all three Underground Railroad routes are shared with the class. Make sure that students know where each Underground Railroad route began and ended, and why each particular route was chosen.

### Extension Activity

Imagine that you are a fugitive slave who has escaped on the route you mapped out in the activity. Write an account of your trip on the Underground Railroad.

**Student Directions:**

Have you ever wondered how fugitive Maryland slaves found their way to freedom? Today you will explore the routes of the Underground Railroad to find out how people escaped to freedom.

**3.0 CONTENT STANDARD: GEOGRAPHY – Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.**

Grade 4

A. Using Geographic Tools

1. Use geographic tools to locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics of those places
  - a Interpret a variety of maps using map elements
    - a. Describe geographic characteristics of Maryland/United States using resources, such as photographs, maps, charts, graphs and atlases
    - b. Use photographs, maps, charts, graphs and atlases to describe geographic characteristics of Maryland and the United States
    - c. Identify and locate natural and physical features of Maryland such as Appalachian Mountains, Piedmont Plateau and Atlantic Coastal Plain
    - d. Identify and locate natural/physical features of Maryland

Grade 8

A. Using Geographic Tools

1. Use geographic tools to analyze geographic issues and problems
  - a. Locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics using thematic maps, such as settlement patterns, migration, population density, transportation and communication networks prior to 1877

**The Students will:**

be able to identify various routes of the Underground Railroad in Maryland and explain why these routes were chosen.

**Directions:** You are responsible for researching key geographic characteristics of Maryland and for explaining how these physical characteristics will impact escaping slaves' journeys on the Underground Railroad routes. Open the site and scroll down to and click on the "Go to the Interactive" button. This will open a new browser window. Once the window opens, click on the "Start" button. Click on the "Geography" section of the interactive and move the mouse over the map clicking on the highlighted dots to learn about the geography of Maryland and the surrounding areas.

**Mapping It Out**

Maryland's Underground Railroad hid many fugitive slaves as they made their way to freedom. This site provides you with an opportunity to explore the routes that led these people to freedom.

<http://pathways.thinkport.org/about/ugrr.cfm>

What key physical geographic characteristics of Maryland impacted slaves' journeys on the Underground Railroad?

**Directions:** Next, click on the "Routes to Freedom" link. You are responsible for identifying important geographic characteristics of the three escape routes of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass and James Pennington.

**Mapping It Out**

Maryland's Underground Railroad hid many fugitive slaves as they made their way to freedom. This site provides you with an opportunity to explore the routes that led these people to freedom.

<http://pathways.thinkport.org/about/ugrr.cfm>

What Underground Railroad routes did Maryland's fugitive slaves take to lead them to freedom?

**Directions:** Now you will pretend that you are a conductor on the Underground Railroad and you will lead fugitive slaves out of Maryland along one of the routes. Open the Escape to Freedom Map and Directions for Escape to Freedom Map handouts. Select one of the routes on the interactive as the path on which you will lead the slaves to freedom. Draw the route you have selected on the map. Include the following items on the map: beginning and ending points, stations (safe houses), and terrain, such as rivers, mountains, flatlands, open fields, cornfields, woods, swamps, and caves. You may use the map on the interactive to see some of the terrain the trail covered, such as mountains, rivers and flat lands. Other items, such as safe houses, caves, cornfields and woods will be added as you see fit. Use what you learned about the geography of Maryland to choose and explain which route you think is best.

Escape to Freedom Map ([View](#))

Directions for Escape to Freedom Map ([View](#))

**Directions:** Use the Escape to Freedom Rubric to assess your work. Note: We will never know the exact course that escaping slaves took to freedom, so your map will not be an exact replica of what they encountered on the journey, but it will contain a sampling of what they may have experienced along the way.

Escape to Freedom Map Rubric ([View](#))

Grade 4

C. Movement of People, Goods and Ideas

1. Explain how transportation and communication networks link places through the movement of people, goods and ideas
- c. Identify the reasons for the movement of peoples to, from and within Maryland and the United States

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Activity Signature

**Author:** Laurel Blaine