

Exploring Our Heritage

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE



Learning Objectives

Students will learn about Harriet Beecher Stowe and the influence of her Cincinnati years on the writing of her famous novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Students will also learn about the role of other abolitionists in antebellum America, and the effects of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 on enslaved people.

Lesson Overview

Students will

- ❖ Watch video on Harriet Beecher Stowe
- ❖ Analyze a primary source: 19th century magazine illustration
- ❖ Create picture book dictionary entries on words related to race relations
- ❖ Research prominent abolitionists and create Abolitionist Trading Cards

Teacher Background

Harriet Beecher Stowe and her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are inextricably tied to the American Civil War. When meeting Stowe for the first time, Abraham Lincoln reportedly said, "So you're the little lady who started this Great War." Harriet's sentimental novel put a human face on slavery and attracted thousands of readers to the abolitionist cause. Reportedly written as a response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* struck a chord with the American public that no previous slave narrative or abolitionist newspaper had been able to do.

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), a teacher and writer, was born in Connecticut. Her father, Lyman Beecher, was a well-known Presbyterian minister and held strong beliefs about education, making sure that his daughters as well as his sons received an education. Lyman Beecher preached against the evils of slavery and alcohol. In 1832, Lyman Beecher was named president of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio. Harriet, now a young woman in her twenties, moved with her father and lived in Cincinnati for the next eighteen years. During this time, Harriet contributed to various periodicals and helped supplement her family's income through her earnings made as a writer.

While living in Cincinnati, Harriet witnessed firsthand the effects of slavery and met many well-known abolitionists as well as people involved in the Underground Railroad. While Harriet wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* after she left Cincinnati, the lasting impact of her Ohio experiences can be found throughout the book. Cincinnati, across the Ohio River from the slave state Kentucky, was a hotbed of activity in the abolitionist movement. Several

abolitionist newspapers were published in Cincinnati and numerous contemporary abolitionists attended Lane Theological Seminary notable for its anti-slavery activism. Calvin Stowe, Harriet's husband, was a professor at Lane Theological Seminary. Many believe that the Beechers also had strong connections to Ripley, Ohio, and the Rankin family of abolitionists who helped lead thousands of slaves to freedom. In fact, Harriet's character Eliza is modeled after a woman who made a winter escape across the Ohio River and was helped to freedom by the Rankins.

Uncle Tom's Cabin did not begin as a novel. It was first published as a serial in the anti-slavery newspaper *The National Era* in 1851. Its popularity inspired the publishers to ask Harriet to turn the series into a book. The book was published in 1852, selling 10,000 copies in the first week alone; 300,000 copies were sold within the first year of its publication. Indeed, it was a bestseller in its time. The book drew immediate criticism and controversy. Slaveholders violently protested the book, and even created their own counter responses, while abolitionists praised the work for exposing the cruelties of slavery.

Today, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* still elicits controversy but for different reasons than those during its 1852 publication. Modern critics claim the book portrays African-Americans stereotypically and that it is a weak example of literary greatness. Contemporary scholars are still grappling with the implications of the book. But, Harriet Beecher Stowe's legacy resides not simply in the pages of her novel, but in its ability to fan the fires of pro and anti-slavery passions dividing our nation on the brink of Civil War.

Ohio Academic Content Standards

GRADE

5

People in Societies

3. Describe the experiences of African-Americans under the institution of slavery.

GRADE

8

History

9. Explain the causes of the Civil War with emphasis on:
 - A. Slavery;
 - E. The abolitionist movement and the roles of Frederick Douglass and John Brown;
 - F. The addition of new states to the Union and their impact on the balance of power in the Senate, including the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850.

People in Societies

2. Describe and explain the social, economic and political effects of:
 - A. Stereotyping and prejudice;
 - B. Racism and discrimination.
4. Analyze the economic, geographic, religious and political factors that contributed to:
 - B. Resistance to slavery.

Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities

1. Show the relationship between participating in civic and political life and the attainment of individual and public goals, including:
 - B. The Underground Railroad and the abolitionist movement/ Abolition of slavery.
3. Evaluate the role of historical figured and political bodies in furthering and restricting the rights of individuals including:
 - D. Frederick Douglass and the abolitionist movement;

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MATERIALS

DVD player	Rulers, glue sticks, markers, colored pencils or crayons
Television	Computer lab with Internet access and printer
8th-grade American history textbook	Notebook paper (for student research notes with Abolitionist Trading Cards)
Dictionary (5 – 7)	Shoebox
Thesaurus (5 – 7)	
Plain 3x5 index cards (for Abolitionist Trading Cards)	

SUGGESTED WEB SITES AND RESOURCES

The following Web sites provide excellent information on prominent abolitionists.

Ohio History Central

<http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org>

This site provides information on Ohio history and is an excellent source for researching Ohio Abolitionists. Students can search key terms like “abolition,” “underground railroad,” or conduct searches on specific abolitionists.

Abolitionism in America

<http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/abolitionism/index.htm>

This Cornell University Web site provides in depth overview of abolition in the United States with online primary source collections pertaining to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The site also contains information and primary sources relating to the Emancipation Proclamation, 13th Amendment, as well as slave narratives.

Africans in America

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html>

This PBS resource contains a wealth of online information chronicling the African-American experience from the 15th century to present day. The Judgment Day Resource Bank includes an overview of abolition in America, biographies of abolitionists, as well as numerous primary sources.

TEACHER VOCABULARY

Abolition/Abolitionist	Fugitive Slave Act of 1850	Racism
Primary Source	Stereotype	Discrimination
Secondary Source	Prejudice	Controversy

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Instructional Procedure

Harriet Beecher Stowe Anticipatory Guide

1. Begin by asking students if they know who Harriet Beecher Stowe is. Based on the information in the **Teacher Background** discuss why her work *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was so important when it was written in 1852, and, why it is so controversial today.
2. Next, let students know they will be watching a short video about Harriet Beecher Stowe's experience living in Cincinnati, Ohio. Before watching the *Our Ohio* "Harriet Beecher Stowe" video segment, distribute the Harriet Beecher Stowe Anticipatory Guide Worksheet and have students read the Anticipatory Guide statements then, in the column titled "BEFORE" have students indicate if they believe the statement is True or False.
3. Watch the *Our Ohio* "Harriet Beecher Stowe" video segment. After watching the video segment, as a class or individually, review the Anticipatory Guide statements and complete the "AFTER" column.

Anthony Burns: Primary Source Analysis

4. Review the definition of primary sources with students and write examples on the board. Describe how we can learn things about the past by looking at primary source documents closely.
5. Explain that students will be examining a primary source document from the period of slavery in this country. Distribute the **Anthony Burns: Primary Source Analysis** worksheet. Have students complete the activity individually.
6. After students have completed the activity, review the primary source analysis worksheet as a class and provide answers to the questions.

Picture Book Dictionary Entries

1. Begin by introducing the class to the controversy surrounding *Uncle Tom's Cabin* describing how some critics of the book cite stereotypical portrayals of African Americans. Some argue that the book is a product of its time and context and that Harriet Beecher Stowe's legacy resides not in the actual text of her novel, but in its ability to highlight the social and political fervor dividing our nation on the brink of the Civil War.
2. Now, have students give examples of how racism, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination have been problems in this country historically and, are problems that still remain today. Then ask students to offer examples of how we have overcome some of these obstacles in the past and how we can overcome these problems in our daily lives.

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3. Next, distribute the **Picture Book Dictionary** worksheet and hold a classroom discussion exploring the Picture Book Dictionary terms and their relationship with slavery in America. If students have not yet watched the Our Ohio video segment “Harriet Beecher Stowe” play the video and watch as a class. Continue the classroom discussion with a chalk-talk activity.
4. Divide the board in half and place “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* Then” on one side of the board and “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* Now” on the other. Explain to students that during this activity there is no talking, except through written word and pictures on the board.
5. Have students come to the board and write down on each side words that explain how *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* might have been viewed “Then” and “Now” and why the perspectives have changed.
6. Discuss student responses from the chalk-talk. Give students a few more minutes to make any additions to their Picture Book Dictionary Entries since the discussion and collect Picture Book Dictionary Entries worksheets when finished.

Abolitionist Trading Cards

1. Explain to the students that they will be conducting their own research on prominent American abolitionists. Distribute **Abolitionist Trading Cards Template** instructions, **Rubric**, **Suggested Web Resources**, and hand out. Review the Abolitionist Trading Cards instructions and rubric with students.
2. Allow students to begin their research on five abolitionists of their choice. Research should take two to three class periods. Once research is complete, allow students to begin creating their Abolitionist Trading Cards. Provide two to three class periods to complete the cards.
3. After students have completed their cards and cards have been graded, instruct students to select one of their Abolitionist Trading Cards to be placed into a box and selected by another classmate. Pass around a shoebox for students to place their selected card in the box. Once every student has placed their card in the box, call students to the front to “blindly” select a card from the box. Students will swap their Abolitionist Trading Cards with other students to learn about an abolitionist they didn’t research.

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Answer Key

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Anticipatory Guide

BEFORE

Any answers in this column are not graded – they are a previewing activity.

AFTER

True

False, approximately 20 years

True

True

True

False, Fugitive Slave Act of 1850

True

True

False, many

False, had a great impact on the American public

Anthony Burns

1. Primary, answers will vary
2. Anthony Burns
3.
 - a. Arrest in Boston – two men with weapons are escorting Anthony Burns
 - b. The Escape on Shipboard – a young man in raggedy clothes sits with piles of bags
 - c. Departure from Boston – men with weapons escort Anthony Burns in handcuffs
 - d. The Sale – a young Anthony Burns is on a slave auction block
 - e. The Prison – Anthony Burns is behind prison bars.
 - f. The Address – Anthony Burns appears to be addressing the courtroom, possibly his lawyers in the background (Note: teachers might want to explain that by law Anthony Burns would not have been able to address the court.)

4. Anthony Burns was an escaped slave who was returned to slavery.
5. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850
6. Between 1850 and 1860
7. Answers will vary. Anthony Burns was an escaped slave from Virginia living in Boston in 1854. He was arrested as a fugitive slave, and his arrest led to upheaval in Boston. At the end of the trial Anthony Burns was forced to return to Virginia as a slave. Within a year of his trial and return, a Northern church raised enough money to purchase Burns' freedom, and he returned to Boston before the start of the Civil War.

Picture Book Dictionary Entries

Answers will vary for each entry. Check the simple definition against the real definition listed below. A few synonyms and antonyms have been provided for each word. When grading the picture, look for images that describe the definition instead of artistic quality.

Stereotype – to categorize individuals or groups according to an oversimplified, standardized image or idea.

Synonym – typecast, label

Antonym – differentiate

Prejudice – a preformed opinion, usually an unfavorable one, based on insufficient knowledge, irrational feelings or inaccurate stereotypes.

Synonym – bigotry, narrow-minded

Antonym – tolerance

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Racism – prejudice against people who belong to other races.

Synonym – discrimination, intolerance

Antonym – tolerant

Discrimination – unfair treatment of one person or groups, usually because of prejudice about race, ethnic group, age group, religion, or gender.

Synonym – bias, favoritism

Antonym – impartiality

Abolitionist Trading Cards

Use the rubric and instructions to identify lesson requirements and to guide grading.



\$150 REWARD

RANAWAY from the subscriber, on the night of the 2d instant, a negro man who calls himself *Henry May*, about 22 years old, 5 feet 6 or 8 inches high, ordinary color, rather chunky built, bush head, and has it divided mostly on one side, and keeps it very nicely combed. He has been raised in the house, and is a first-rate dining-room servant, and was in tavern in Louisville for 18 months. I expect he is now in Louisville trying to make his escape to a free state, (in all probability to Cincinnati, Ohio.) Perhaps he may try to get employment on a steamboat. He is a good cook, and is handy in any capacity as a house servant. Had on when he left, a dark cassinet coat, and dark striped cassinet pantaloons, new—he had other clothing. I will give \$50 reward if taken in Louisville; 100 dollars if taken one hundred miles from Louisville in this State, and 150 dollars if taken out of this State, and delivered to me, or secured in any jail so that I can get him again.

WILLIAM BURKE.
Bardstowen, Ky., September 3d, 1838.



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Harriet Beecher Stowe Anticipatory Guide

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Instructions: Before watching *Our Ohio* video segment “Harriet Beecher Stowe,” read the following statements. In the column titled “Before,” indicate whether you believe the statement is T (true) or F (false). Watch the *Our Ohio* video segment “Harriet Beecher Stowe.” After you have watched the segment in the column titled “After,” indicate if the statement is T (true) or F (false). If the statement is false, correct the statement so it is true.

BEFORE	STATEMENT	AFTER
	<i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> was inspired by actual events in Southern Ohio.	
	Harriet Beecher Stowe lived in Cincinnati her entire life.	
	Lyman Beecher, Harriet’s father, opposed slavery.	
	Harriet Beecher Stowe was a published author before <i>Uncle’s Tom Cabin</i> .	
	Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote to help bring in money to support her family.	
	<i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> was partially written as a response to the Missouri Compromise.	
	Historians believe there is a strong connection between the Beecher and Rankin families.	
	The Eliza character in <i>Uncle’s Tom Cabin</i> was inspired by runaway slave assisted by John Rankin.	
	Harriet Beecher Stowe had few abolitionist contacts while living in Cincinnati.	
	When published, <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> was largely ignored by the American public.	

Anthony Burns: Primary Source Analysis



See the original source at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>
and perform search for "Anthony Burns"

Anthony Burns: Primary Source Analysis

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Instructions: Look closely at the image provided to answer the following questions. Use a blank sheet of paper if you need more room to answer the questions.

1. Is this a primary or secondary source? How do you know?

2. Whose life is described in the images?

3. List the events described in the images. For each event, briefly describe what is happening in the image.

a. Arrest in Boston – two men with weapons are escorting Anthony Burns.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

4. Based upon this image and what you know, who was Anthony Burns?

5. What historic issue inspired this image?

6. When do you suppose these events took place?

7. What do you think happened to Anthony Burns?

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Picture Book Dictionary Entries

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Create four “picture-book” dictionary entries for the following words: stereotype, prejudice, racism and discrimination. For each entry you will create a simple definition in your own words, provide a synonym and antonym and a picture that describes what the word means. All illustrations must be appropriate. You will need your textbook, a dictionary, a thesaurus and your imagination to complete this assignment. No stick figures!

STEREOTYPE

Simple Definition:

Synonym:

Antonym:

Picture:

RACISM

Simple Definition:

Synonym:

Antonym:

Picture:

PREJUDICE

Simple Definition:

Synonym:

Antonym:

Picture:

DISCRIMINATION

Simple Definition:

Synonym:

Antonym:

Picture:

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Abolitionist Trading Cards

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

For this activity, you will conduct research on five abolitionists of your choice. When you are conducting research, think about the information you will include on your trading cards and gather the important information you will need.

After completing your research, you will create “Abolitionist Trading Cards” for each abolitionist.

Your cards must be informative and creative. Use these instructions and your rubric to help guide the creation of your cards. Use the Abolitionist Trading Card Template to create the cards.

Abolitionists

Frederick Douglass
William Lloyd Garrison
Sojourner Truth

John Rankin
Arthur Tappan and Lewis Tappan
Charles Osborn

Benjamin Lundy
Wendell Phillips
Sarah Grimké and Angelina Grimké
John Brown
Samuel J. May
Mary Ann Shadd Cary

Side 1

- An image of your abolitionist. You may either use a computer-generated image or draw an image of your abolitionist.
- The abolitionist’s name.

Side 2

Lifespan:
Years lived

Prominent Role:
Indicate the abolitionist’s role within the movement, such as speaker, conductor, writer, publisher, etc.

Career Highlights:
Indicate at least three major accomplishments.

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Abolitionist Trading Cards

ABOLITIONIST TRADING CARD

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Abolitionist Trading Card Rubric

Category	4	3	2	1
Card One	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are covered in-depth on side two. The card is attractive, creative and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are briefly covered on side two. The card is neat and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially covered on side two. The card is easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's name appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially and inaccurately covered on side two. The card is difficult to read.
Card Two	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are covered in-depth on side two. The card is attractive, creative and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are briefly covered on side two. The card is neat and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially covered on side two. The card is easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's name appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially and inaccurately covered on side two. The card is difficult to read.
Card Three	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are covered in-depth on side two. The card is attractive, creative and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are briefly covered on side two. The card is neat and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially covered on side two. The card is easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's name appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially and inaccurately covered on side two. The card is difficult to read.
Card Four	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are covered in-depth on side two. The card is attractive, creative and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are briefly covered on side two. The card is neat and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially covered on side two. The card is easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's name appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially and inaccurately covered on side two. The card is difficult to read.
Card Five	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are covered in-depth on side two. The card is attractive, creative and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image and name appear on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are briefly covered on side two. The card is neat and easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's image appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially covered on side two. The card is easy to read.	The correct abolitionist's name appears on side one. The abolitionist's lifespan, role in the movement and career highlights are partially and inaccurately covered on side two. The card is difficult to read.

Abolitionist Trading Card Suggested Web sites and Resources

The following Web sites provide excellent information on prominent abolitionists.

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<http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org>

This site provides information on Ohio history and is an excellent source for researching Ohio Abolitionists. Students can search key terms like “abolition,” “underground railroad,” or conduct searches on specific abolitionists.

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This PBS resource contains a wealth of online information chronicling the African-American experience from the 15th century to present day. The Judgment Day Resource Bank includes an overview of abolition in America, biographies of abolitionists, as well as numerous primary sources.