

## **Heroes in Literature: African-American Models for Resistance of Oppression**

**SUBJECT:** Identifying heroes in literature

**GRADE LEVEL:** 7

**DOCUMENTS:** Tailpiece illustration by Hammat Billings for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

**STANDARDS:**

**CONTENT STANDARD:** Students will develop historical thinking skills, including chronological thinking and recognizing changes over time; contextualizing, comprehending, and analyzing historical literature; researching historical sources; understanding the concept of historical causation; understanding competing narratives and interpretations; and constructing narratives and interpretations.

**Performance Standard:** Students will develop narrative and short interpretive essays, as well as other appropriate presentations from investigations of source materials.

**CONTENT STANDARD:** Students will recognize the continuing importance of historical thinking and historical knowledge in their own lives and in the world in which they live.

**Performance Standard:** Students will describe how the study of individual development and identity contributes to the understanding of human behavior.

**Performance Standard:** Students will describe the relationships between historical subject matter (heroes of the past) and other subjects they study, current issues, and personal concerns.

### **ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:**

- A hero is an ordinary person who, when called upon, rises to the occasion: all people are capable of heroic acts.
- Heroes reflect the values of a culture
- Stories of heroes occur across culture and time

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

- What internal and external factors make a person become a hero?
- How do heroic acts affect society and culture?
- In what ways did Americans respond to slavery? Which of these responses were heroic? Why?
- In what ways are fictional heroes similar to historical heroes?

### **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL:**

- Definition of a hero
- Classification or declassification of a hero based on definition
- Analysis of a photo
- Use of SOAPStone strategy to analyze a primary source

- Definition of a protest novel
- Knowledge of the role of women in Ante-bellum America
- Knowledge of major influences of people and events in the life of Harriet Beecher Stowe
- Use of character maps to analyze fictional characters
- Knowledge of tactics to resist or attack the Fugitive Slave Law
- Use of Venn diagram to compare and contrast book summary and film version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- Writing of a persuasive essay
- Use of internet to research an historical African-American hero's response to oppression

### **ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE:**

Applying the *US News and World Report's* definition of a hero, students will write a persuasive essay selecting either Uncle Tom or George Harris, as the character that exemplifies the definition of a hero.

### **PREVIOUS LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**

- Focus Writing – What is a hero?
- Comparison of hero editorials to develop a personal hero definition
- Reading on why we need heroes from *US News and World Report*, August 27, 2001
- Explanation of essential questions and enduring understandings of Heroes Unit

Background knowledge of slavery, abolition, fugitive slave law, the use of primary and secondary source documents, and the use of graphic organizers for persuasive essays, compare and contrast, hero definition, character map and SOAPStone

**Curriculum created by Amy K. Schiller**

### **LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**

**Day 1 – The Oppression of Slavery**

Questions Addressed:

- How did slavery oppress Americans?
- How did Americans resist the oppression of slavery?
- What is a protest novel and what role did it play in the abolition of slavery?

Materials:

- Analyze and illustration worksheet
- Tailpiece illustration by Hammat Billing for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (original edition)
- Journal

Opening Activity:

1. Pass out tailpiece illustration to each student. Allow 2 minutes to view illustration.
2. In groups of 3, allow students to complete Analyze and Illustration Worksheet.
3. Each group shares results.

Procedure:

1. Students will focus write for 5 minutes in response to the following question: How was slavery in America an oppressive system? What did Americans do to resist and abolish this system?
2. Student will share responses.
3. Teacher will introduce the protest novel as a tool used in the fight against slavery.

Homework: In *Uncle Tom's Cabin Indictment of Slavery*, read pages 28-36 and answer the following questions:

1. Who was Harriet Beecher Stowe and what did she do to help end slavery in America?
2. List the important people, historical events, and personal events that influenced her to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Days **2&3** Introduction of George: Using characterization to analyze a hero

Questions Addressed:

- Chapter III "The Husband and Father," *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- Blank character map
- Hero Definition Graphic Organizer

Opening Activity:

Review Day 1 Homework

Procedure:

1. Teacher will remind class that American women in the 1850s had limited options; they could not vote, had limited economic independence, and few roles outside the home. Writing was one option women had to express themselves and influence others. Stowe wrote a social protest novel to generate an awareness of the evils of slavery and a call to action for abolition. The devastation of family will be a major theme in this novel. We are going to explore in depth 2 characters response to being sold and later explore the story as a whole.
  2. Class will review how authors reveal characters:
    - What the characters says and thinks
    - What the character does
    - How the other characters respond
    - What do other characters say to and about him
    - Author's direct comments
  3. Class will discuss relevant vocabulary and read Chapter III aloud popcorn style.
  4. As students read, they will complete a character map for George Harris and answer the following questions:
    - How did George react to being sold? Why?
- Homework: Complete the character map

## Day 5: Applying the definition of a hero to George Harris

### Questions Addressed:

1. To what extent does George Harris exhibit the traits of a hero?
2. How does George's response to his sale reflect or not reflect heroic traits?

### Materials:

- Character map
- Chapter III, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- Hero definition Graphic organizer

### Opening Activity:

Students will meet in groups of 3 to compare and share character maps. Students will add additional details based on group discussions:

### Procedure:

1. Students will review the five traits of a hero:
  - Goes beyond the call of duty
  - Acts wisely under pressure
  - Risks life, fortune, or reputation
  - Champions a good cause
  - Serves as a calling to our higher selves
2. In groups, students will discuss what they know about George to date and how he fits any of the traits of a hero using direct quotes and citing page numbers from the text to complete their Hero Definition Graphic Organizers.

Homework: Citing examples from Chapter III, to what extent can George be considered a hero? Do you agree or disagree with his actions? Why?

## Days 6&7 Uncle Tom – Another Hero

### Questions Addressed:

- How is the character of Uncle Tom revealed?
- How does her respond to being sold?
- Do you agree or disagree with his response? Why?

### Materials:

- Blank Character Map
- Chapter V, “Showing the Feeling of Property Changing Owners” and Chapter 10, “The Property is Carried Off” from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

Opening: Students will share responses to previous night’s homework.

### Procedure:

1. Teacher will introduce Tom’s tale as the second hero storyline presented in the novel.
2. Class will review how authors reveal characters:
  - What the characters says and thinks
  - What the character does
  - How the other characters respond
  - What do other characters say to and about him
  - Author’s direct comments
3. Class will discuss relevant vocabulary and read Chapters V and X aloud popcorn style.
4. As students read, they will complete a character map for Uncle Tom and answer the following questions:
  - How did Uncle Tom react to being sold? Why?

Homework: Complete character map and question

## Day 8 Applying the Definition of a Hero to Uncle Tom

### Questions Addressed:

- What has the author revealed about Uncle Tom?
- At this point in the novel, how does Uncle Tom meet the traits of a hero?
- Of George Harris or Uncle Tom who do you consider the better hero? Why?

### Materials:

- Completed character maps
- Chapters III, V and X of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- Hero Graphic Organizer

Opening Activity: Students will meet in groups of 3 to compare and share character maps. Students will add additional details based on group discussion.

### Procedure:

1. Students will review the five traits of a hero:
  - Goes beyond the call of duty
  - Acts wisely under pressure
  - Risks life, fortune, or reputation
  - Champions a good cause
  - Serves as a calling to our higher selves
2. In groups, students will discuss what they know about Tom to date and how he fits any of the traits of a hero using direct quotes and citing page numbers from the text to complete their hero.

Homework: Respond to the prompts:

- How does Uncle Tom fit the traits of a hero?
- Of Uncle Tom or George Harris, which do you feel is the greater hero? Why?

## Day 9 Analyzing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a Primary Source

Questions Addressed: How can historians utilize *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a primary source?

Materials:

- Chapters II, V, and X of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- SOAPStone worksheet

Opening activity: Class will brainstorm how *Uncle Tom's Cabin* can be viewed as a primary source document.

Procedure:

1. Class will review the steps of SOAPStone.
2. In pairs, students will complete the SOAPStone for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
3. In class, teacher and students will correct and complete the SOAPStone.

Homework: Go online to <http://www.bookrags.com/notes/UTC/> and read the summaries for Chapters 1-18, as you note incidents that apply to hero definition, add notes to Hero Definition Graphic Organizers. Students may request additional graphic organizers if needed.

Days **10, 11, & 12** The Whole Picture: Will the remainder of the story change your mind?

Questions Addressed:

- To what extent can Uncle Tom and George be considered heroes? Why?
- Which of the two characters is the better hero? Why?
- By hearing the entire story did your opinion change? Why or why not?

Materials:

- Internet access to <http://www.bookrags.com/notes/UTC/>
- Video: *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Introduction and Feature*. Prod: Showtime: J.A. Nelson  
Dir: Stan Lathan
- VCR
- Hero Definition Graphic Organizers

Opening Activity: Students share responses to Day 8 homework.

Procedure: Students will watch video and add examples to their hero definition graphic organizers.

Homework: Finish reading novel summaries at <http://www.bookrags.com/notes/UTC/>. Add examples of heroic behaviors & traits to hero definition graphic organizers.

### Day 13 – Selecting the Best Hero: Preparing to Debate

Questions Addressed:

- To what extent can Uncle Tom and George be considered heroes? Why?
- Which of the two characters is the better hero? Why?
- By hearing the entire story did your opinion change? Why or why not?

Materials: All graphic organizers and notes and Persuasive Essay Guidelines

Opening Activity: Students are asked if they changed their mind or continued to have a favorite hero by show of hand. Students will then be asked to comment on why they did or did not change their mind.

Procedure:

1. Students will be asked to do a quick focus write to the questions addressed.
2. After completing their focus writes, asked to sit on either the Uncle Tom or George side of the room. Students will have 10 minutes to brainstorm all the reasons and supporting details to support their choice of hero.
3. At the end of the brainstorming session students will have 15 minutes to prepare a formal argument and will select a speaker to represent the group.

Homework:

Students will review guidelines for a persuasive essay.

### Day 14 – Selecting the Best Hero: The Great Debate

Questions Addressed:

- To what extent can Uncle Tom and George be considered heroes? Why?
- Which of the two characters is the better hero? Why?
- By hearing the entire story did your opinion change? Why or why not?

Materials:

- All graphic organizers and notes
- Persuasive Essay Guidelines
- Note paper and pens
- Persuasive Essay Graphic Organizer
- Rubric for Best Hero Persuasive Essay

Procedure:

1. Teacher will tell all students to take notes on the major arguments of each side. These notes will give students ideas to draw on for planning their essays as well as give them questions or ideas for rebuttal.
2. Each side has 5 minutes to present their arguments.
3. Students will then have 5 minutes to look over notes and list questions and/or comments for rebuttal.
4. Each side will have 5 minutes to rebut.
5. Teacher will explain graphic organizer and rubric.

Homework:

Complete graphic organizer for essay

Day **15** – Share and compare graphic organizers. Complete rough draft of essay.

Day **16** – Peer edit and revise drafts

Day **17** – Share essays.

Suggested Follow-up Research: Select an African American Hero (from the attached list) who responded to oppression. What are some of the significant people and events in your person's life? What made your subject a hero? List your subject's major accomplishments. Of Uncle Tom or George Harris, whom does your subject most closely resemble? Why?

## AFRICAN AMERICAN HEROES

Martin Luther King Jr.  
 Clarence Thomas  
 W.E.B. Dubois  
 Josiah Henson  
 Frederick Douglass  
 Dred Scott  
 David Walker  
 Jesse Owen  
 Rubin "Hurricane" Carter  
 Gordon Parks

Malcolm X  
 Thurgood Marshall  
 Maya Angelou  
 Harriet Tubman  
 Nat Turner  
 Olaudah Equiano  
 Anthony Burns  
 Ida B. Wells  
 Fannie Lou Hamer  
 Langston Hughes

Booker T. Washington  
 Bobby Seale  
 Madison Washington  
 Sojourner Truth  
 Harriet Jacobs  
 Cinque  
 Marcus Garvey  
 Melba Beals  
 Jacob Lawrence  
 Rosa Parks

### AMERICAN ABOLITIONIST SOCIETY'S NOMINATION ESSAY PROFILES IN COURAGE HERO AWARD

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, George Harris and Uncle Tom exhibited heroic traits. As a member of the American Abolitionist Society, use of *U.S. News and World Report's* definition of a hero to write an effective persuasive essay nominating the character which best exemplifies the traits of a hero. Provide at least three reasons with specific details from the story to support your position.

Grading criteria	Possible Points	Points earned
Evidence of work process (original characterization chart, notes, and graphic organizer)	10	
Creative introduction with a complete thesis statement	15	
Begin each of the body paragraphs (at least 3) with a transition word and topic sentence (reason you intend to support).	15	

Each body paragraph contains at least 3 specific details from the story as support.	45	
Absence of first and second person pronouns	5	
Conclusion begins with a transition word, contains the thesis, and summarizes the reasons.	10	
Total points	100	

**COMMENTS:**

Resources

<http://ww.bookrags.com/notes/UTC/>

[http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu:1852/utc/stowe/gallery/@ebt-link?query\(%3Cfig...07/17/2003](http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu:1852/utc/stowe/gallery/@ebt-link?query(%3Cfig...07/17/2003)

Stowe, Harriet Beecher, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, ed. By Elizabeth Ammons. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994.

Tackach, James. *Uncle Tom's Cabin Indictment of Slavery*. San Diego, California: Lucent Books Inc., 2000

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### ANALYZE AN ILLUSTRATION

1. Use this chart to list people, objects, and activities used in this illustration.

People

Objects

Activities

2. Make 3 inferences from this illustration.

3. List at least 3 lingering questions this illustration leaves with you.

Curriculum created by Amy K. Schiller