

Brazos Valley African American Museum



**Curriculum Learning Trunk
Lesson Plans for Grade 3**

**Underground Railroad
Grade 3**

Underground Railroad: Elementary School 3rd Grade Lesson Plan

BVAAM

Curriculum Learning Trunk - Lesson Plan

- OBJECTIVE:** By using the provided books, the interactive mapping activity, and construction paper, third grade students are expected to summarize three learned aspects and design an individualized freedom map quilt, with 100% effort and within 20 minutes.
- TEKS:**
- SS 3.18:** The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:
- 3.18A:** Express ideas orally based on knowledge and experience.
 - 3.18B:** Create written and visual materials such as stories, poems, pictures, maps, and graphic organizers to express ideas.
- ELAS 3.29:** Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with great complexity. Students are expected to:
- 3.29A:** Listen attentively to speakers, ask relevant questions, make pertinent comments.
- BACKGROUND:** The Underground Railroad is the name for the secret route fugitive slaves took to escape to freedom. This covert passage, courageous people, and safe houses helped slaves escape during the years 1804 to 1865. Over 75,000 runaways slaves made their way from southern plantations to states in the north (Canada). Slaves who traveled on the Railroad learned secret codes and terminology. Recently, researchers are investigating the credibility of the Underground Railroad Quilt Code existence. Slaves were forbidden to write notes to each other (being that they knew how to read or write) so they would communicate via textile production (Quilt). Messages within the stitch work, designs, fabrics, and colors allowed slaves to communicate undetectably. The quilts were hung outside on railings; they told slaves how to plan and carry out their trek from the south to the north (Quilt). The following websites give further description and explanation of the Underground Railroad and the Quilt Code history:
- <http://www.quilthistory.com/ugrrquilts.htm> (Quilt)
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underground_Railroad (Canada)
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladys-Marie_Fry
- TIME ESTIMATION:** 40-60 minutes
- MATERIALS NEEDED:** Items included in trunk: Make Your Own Freedom Map Activity, “*The Secret to Freedom*,” or “*The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom*,” other additional activities
- *Additional Items needed to create freedom map: Pencil, coloring utensils, & construction paper

ENGAGE:

Before introducing the book/activity, have students respond to the following questions to introduce the reading topic. Then, have students discuss their prior knowledge of the Underground Railroad by giving them topic suggestions. Tell students to keep in mind their response as they read along with the instructor.

<u>Raise your hand if..</u>	<u>Discussion Topics</u>
You sleep with a blanket, quilt, or comforter?	- List ways people communicate?
- You can or know someone that can sew?	- What is a code? When do people use codes?
You are brave?	- What does the word “freedom” mean to you?
You have heard of the Underground Railroad?	-What would it feel like to not have freedom?

EXPLORE:

Step 1: *Focus:* Answer questions asked by teacher

Step 2: *Engage:* Gather the class during the reading

Step 3: *Discuss:* Turn to a partner; reflect on how you feel and thoughts about the reading

Step 4: *Practice:* Take turns utilizing the Freedom Map Activity in small groups.

Groups waiting for the activity will brainstorm hardships faced by slaves

Step 5: *Assess:* Return to desk, get out coloring utensils/construction paper and design a “freedom map quilt,” with a description attached

EXPLAIN:

You will then read aloud either, “*The Secret to Freedom*” or “*The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom.*” After reading the text, have the students turn to two peers and talk about one main takeaway they have learned. Consider to ask the following questions as reference to topic ideas:

1. What were some of the consequences of being caught running away?
2. Why do you think many slaves were brave enough to try to escape?
3. What would you do if you were in the shoes of the slaves during this time?

Refer to the following websites to see examples of prominent quilt patterns used to communicate with slaves:

<http://images.pcmac.org/SiSFiles/Schools/SC/Hampton/WadeHamptonHigh/Uploads/Presentations/quiltcode.pdf>
http://www.sarahsmithelementary.com/faculty/sublett/cms_files/event_attach/1310/Underground%20Railroad%20Quilt.pdf

ELABORATE:

After reading the story, students will break into groups of 3-4 and complete the Make Your Own Freedom Map Activity (5 to 7 minutes). After completing activity, they will give the activity to the next group. The students waiting will participate in conversing about topics discussed during the reading (ex: hardships faced, examples of symbols used, etc).

EVALUATE:

After each group has completed the Freedom Map Activity & discussed with their groups about interesting facts/ realizations, students will create a poster of an individualized Freedom Map Quilt .Their map should include an escape route with figures that relate to what they have learned. There should be a key to indicate what each piece symbolizes. Afterwards, students will write about three aspects they have learned and explain details of their map.

EXTENSION:

There are additional reading materials in the bin such as, “*The Mystery on the Underground Railroad*” and “*What Was the Underground Railroad?*” There is also a Underground Railroad Board Game located inside of the bin. They can also check out these websites and videos during free time:

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/50644.htm>

http://www.ducksters.com/history/civil_war/underground_railroad.php

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

ACCOMMODATIONS:

During initial stages of English development, ELLs are expected to meet standards in a second language that many monolingual English speakers find difficult in their native language. For ELL students, the teacher can pair and ELL student with a fluent speaking peer throughout the lesson. Allow ELL students to listen to the recording as they follow along in the book. For students with learning disabilities, accommodation can be made to best suite for their understanding. Students can have the option of using assistive technology for assessment (ipad, computer, digital device).

Underground Railroad Quilt Guide

Key quilt patterns in the Underground Railroad code are described below. There are also pictures of patterns on the back cover of “*The Secret to Freedom*.” The following descriptions of quilt patterns are from: www.leeandlow.com/books/the-secret-to-freedom/teachers_guide

- **Monkey wrench:** pattern alerted slaves to gather the tools and supplies they would need when they escaped
- **Wagon wheel:** pattern told slaves to pack their belongings and provisions to help them survive their journey
- **Tumbling blocks:** pattern announced that it was time to escape
- **Bear’s paw:** pattern instructed runaways to follow the bear tracks through the mountains, staying away from roads
- **Crossroads pattern:** directed escaping slaves to travel to Cleveland (major crossroad to Canada)
- **Log cabin:** pattern indicated stations where runaways were hidden along the way.
- **Shoofly:** pattern referred to the conductors who guided slaves north on the Underground Railroad.
- **Bow tie:** pattern told slaves to dress in better clothing and disguises so they would not stand out.
- **Flying geese:** pattern instructed runaways to follow the migrating geese north in spring.
- **Drunkard’s path:** pattern told escaping slaves to move in a crooked or zigzag path, avoiding major roads.
- **Star pattern:** advised runaways to use the stars and constellations as a map to locating the North Star