
INTRODUCTION

In Pursuit of Freedom outlines the development of the abolition movement in Brooklyn, a city on the rise, from the end of the American Revolution to the early days of Reconstruction. Three of Brooklyn's leading cultural and educational institutions—Brooklyn Historical Society, Weeksville Heritage Center, and Irondale Ensemble Project—have come together to re-examine this major chapter in U.S. history.

Brooklyn has a distinct story to tell. From 1783 to 1865, Brooklyn was transformed from one of six towns in Kings County and an agricultural slaveholding capital to the third largest city in the United States. It remained a separate city from Manhattan until New York City's consolidation in 1898. Brooklyn's rapid growth was the backdrop for the struggle led by the city's anti-slavery activists and abolitionists, men and women, black and white, who wanted social justice and political equality. They did so at a time when racism, violence, and inequality towards African Americans were widespread in Brooklyn and beyond. Through courage and conscience, the residents of neighborhoods we know today as Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Fort Greene, DUMBO, Vinegar Hill, Weeksville, and Williamsburg insisted that slavery be brought to an immediate end and demanded legal and political equality for African Americans. Brooklyn's abolitionists and anti-slavery activists were ordinary people who came from all walks of life—educators, homeowners, businessmen and women, church leaders, journalists, and writers. They created vital local, regional, and national networks of communication and solidarity that advanced their anti-slavery ideals. In that sense, they actively shaped the city's and the nation's history as well.

This teacher's manual provides you with a variety of creative and engaging strategies to help students think about the history of abolitionism and anti-slavery activism in 19th century Brooklyn. It is designed as a flexible resource, adaptable for students in grades 4-12. Filled with primary sources, this manual traces the gradual unfolding of Brooklyn's role in the anti-slavery movement through census records, contemporary anti-slavery and local newspapers, maps, illustrations, city directories, pamphlets, account books, letters, and print propaganda.

Visit <http://pursuitoffreedom.org/for-educators> to find additional teaching resources for understanding Brooklyn's leading role in the abolitionist movement.

***In Pursuit of Freedom* Teacher's Manual**

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Student worksheets related to these lessons are available for download on the *In Pursuit of Freedom* website: <http://pursuitoffreedom.org/for-educators>

IN PURSUIT OF FREEDOM SECTION SUMMARIES

Section I: First Wave of Anti-Slavery Activism (1783-1834)

Explores Kings County, a “slaveholding capital” in the aftermath of the American Revolution. New York State’s 1799 gradual emancipation law signaled the slow death of slavery. Against this backdrop, a small but significant free black community lived in the village of Brooklyn—located within a town of the same name. Here they chartered a path of self-reliance and self-determination as emancipation approached in 1827.

Section II: Abolitionism in Black and White (1831-1840)

Focuses on a group of abolitionists, both black and white, who came together across various northern cities including Brooklyn with mutual purpose: to advocate for the end of slavery in the United States. They emerged as a radical minority in the 1830s, and despite threats of violence, initiated a highly visible campaign.

Section III: Land, Politics, and Anti-Slavery Protest (1834-1846)

Explores the integral connection between Brooklyn’s phenomenal urban growth during the 1830s and 1840s and the struggle for African-American political equality through voting rights and property ownership (land and citizenship).

Section IV: The Economics of Freedom (1840-1855)

Explores Brooklyn’s centrality to the business of slavery as well as the ingenuity of entrepreneurial black Brooklynites who used the city’s capitalist economy to ensure their survival in an environment of racism and discrimination.

Section V: The Crisis Decade (1850-1859)

Examines how in the wake of the Fugitive Slave Act (1850), African Americans—free and fugitive—faced the increased threat of being kidnapped. As a result, abolitionists fought back, outraged by the threat the law posed to civil liberties.

Section VI: “The Half Has Never Been Told”: Brooklyn’s Civil War (1861-1865)

Examines the country’s most tumultuous years as the debate over slavery exploded into a raging national crisis. The conflict, however, was not limited to the battlefields alone. Brooklyn’s Tobacco Factory Riots acted as a precursor to the racial violence that marked New York City’s Draft Riots. As the Civil War ended, Brooklyn’s abolitionists and anti-slavery activists rebuilt their communities and the nation.

ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

Common Core Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies for Reading	Lesson																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.	
Standard 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.		
Standard 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.				
Standard 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.							
Standard 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.												
Standard 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
Standard 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.							
Standard 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.				

ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

Common Core Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies for Writing	Lesson																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.									.	.			.							
Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.																.				
Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	
Standard 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	
Standard 6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
Standard 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	.																			
Standard 8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.	.		.																	
Standard 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

Common Core Literacy Standards in English Language Arts for Speaking and Listening	Lesson																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Standard 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Standard 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	
Standard 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.				
Standard 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	
Standard 5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	

ALIGNMENT TO STANDARDS

National Standards for Theatre Education	Lesson																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Standard 1: Script writing by the creation of improvisations and scripted scenes based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history.		
Standard 2: Acting by developing basic acting skills to portray character who interact in improvised and scripted scenes.		
Standard 3: Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes.			.					.			.									
Standard 5: Researching by using cultural and historical information to support improvised and scripted scenes		
Standard 7: Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions.			.																	
Standard 8: Understanding context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the community and in other cultures.			.																	