

Background Information on the Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad was a vast network of people who assisted enslaved people in their escape from the South. It consisted of many individuals, both white and black, who were familiar with only the local efforts but not the entire operation. There are some estimates that as many as 100,000 enslaved people escaped from slavery. Enslaved people that ran for freedom were called fugitives. Many were trying to reach the "promised land" of Canada. Some tried to reach land held by the Spanish.

The Underground Railroad was neither a railroad nor underground. There is no definitive point where the term comes from. One version has Tice Davids escaping from slavery by swimming across the Ohio River. As he neared the Ohio side, his head dipped under the water and his master remarked the Tice must have gone on an underground railroad. The system even used terms related to the railroads. The homes and businesses where fugitives would rest and eat were called "stations" which were run by "stationmasters". Individuals who contributed money or goods were "stockholders," and the "conductor" was the person who was responsible for moving fugitives from one station to the next.

Many fugitives would travel by foot, at night and generally travel between 10 and 20 miles to the next station where they would rest and eat. They hid in barns and other out of the way places where they would wait for a message from the next station to move on. If a fugitive managed to get donated money they would travel by train or boat. Money was needed not only to pay a fare but to improve their appearance so they would not look suspicious in old, tattered clothes.

One of the most notable conductors on the Underground Railroad was Harriet Tubman. She made 19 trips into the South and brought north as many as 300 enslaved people. It is rumored that she never lost a single passenger. Tubman, herself, had escaped from her master in 1849 and traveled by foot watching the North Star and made it to Pennsylvania. Her efforts to help other enslaved people began with the rescue of her sister the following year and her brother shortly thereafter. This led to her making her 19 trips leading others.

Tubman came up with clever techniques that helped make her successful. These would include using the master's horse and buggy for the first leg of the journey. Tubman understood that notices about runaways could not be placed in papers until Monday mornings, so she would leave on a Saturday to get a two-day head start. If she met people who might want to catch the runaways, she would immediately turn around and head south in an attempt to fool them. Tubman even carried a gun that she used to threaten the fugitives if they became too tired or decided to turn back, telling them, "You'll be free or die." By 1856, the reward for Tubman was \$40,000, an astronomical amount at the time. Tubman died in 1913.

Underground Railroad Terms

Name _____

What is a railroad?

What is underground?

Predict what you think an underground railroad would be.

Code Words

passenger – a fugitive from slavery traveling on the underground railroad

conductor- a guide who led the fugitives to freedom

stations- houses that were safe to find shelter and food

route- a path of stations that the fugitives followed to freedom

package- a fugitive from slavery

Identifying Map Elements

Name _____

Use your Underground Railroad map to find the following parts to a map. Write your answers in the boxes provided on the paper.

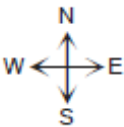
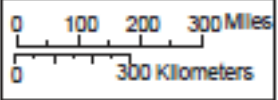
DATE Find the map's date and write it in the box.	
ORIENTATION Draw the compass rose in the box.	
SCALE Draw the scale of the map in the box.	
TITLE Write the name of the map in the box.	
AUTHOR Who created this map?	
LEGEND What does the legend tell you?	

Identifying Map Elements

Name _____

Answer Key

Use your Underground Railroad map to find the following parts to a map. Write your answers in the boxes provided on the paper.

DATE Find the map's date and write it in the box.	2 possible answers Title has circa 1860 Legend shows 2012
ORIENTATION Draw the compass rose in the box.	
SCALE Draw the scale in the box.	
TITLE Write the name of the map in the box.	The Underground Railroad (circa 1860)
AUTHOR Who created this map?	Becky Eden
LEGEND What does the legend tell you?	What the symbols mean

Harriet Tubman Character Worksheet

Name _____

Someone with good character is said to display the qualities of **honesty, courage, cooperation, respect, responsibility, and/or trustworthiness**. As you read the story, look for examples of when Harriet Tubman displayed good character.

Character Trait	Example from the Story

Writing Assignment

Write a story about a person who shows one or more of these character traits: **honesty, courage, cooperation, respect, responsibility, or trustworthiness**.