

Relevant Unit Objectives

Module 1: African American Community and Culture

This lesson addresses the following Essential Questions:

- How did the existence of slavery shape African American communal life and cultural expression?
- How did acts of resistance shape African American cultural heritage and community?

Objectives of the Lesson

Aim

How does Freedom's Journal reflect and/or advance the formation of an African American community in antebellum America?

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify areas of concern to the African American community in the 1820s.
- explain how the establishment of the nation's first African American newspaper addressed these areas of concern.

Introduction

Connections between people:

- Generate a list of how people connect to other people (email, snail mail, parties, newspapers, etc.)
- Which of these ways would have been around in the 1820's?
- If you were to start a newspaper in your elementary school, what issues and interests would you want to see in the paper?

Instructional Procedures

Step One: Issues in Our School

Using Handout 1, the teacher leads students in a discussion of how newspapers can be effective tools of communication and can address problems in a community.

Step Two: Introducing Freedom's Journal

The teacher explains that a paper called Freedom's Journal filled this role in antebellum America. Background information about Freedom's Journal can be found in middle/ upper school lesson plans.

Step Three: Understanding the Issues Addressed in Freedom's Journal

Using Handout 2, students examine the Freedom's Journal introductory letter to complete the chart explaining issues facing the antebellum African American community.

Conclusion

Students will write a letter in the style of Freedom's Journal that responds to the following prompt:

Imagine that you are a reporter for a newspaper written for fourth graders in your school. Look at the chart of issues facing fourth graders. Based on that list, brainstorm a list of story ideas that you think fellow fourth graders will want to read about in the newspaper. Choose one and write a letter to the editor.

Materials

Handout 1: Problems in Our School

Handout 2: Problems Presented in Freedom's Journal

Handout 1: Problems in Our School

Situation	How Our Newspaper Can Help
Fourth graders in your school are accused of doing bad things but have no way to clear their name	
Fourth graders want to connect with other fourth graders to learn about new things but can't talk to each other in school	
Fourth graders want to connect with other fourth graders in other schools.	

Handout 2: Problems Presented in Freedom's Journal

What situation is being addressed	What <i>Freedom's Journal</i> said about it:
	"We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us."
	"It is surely time that we should awake from this lethargy of years, and make a concentrated effort for the education of our youth."
	"The civil rights of a people being of the greatest value, it shall ever be our duty to vindicate our brethren, when oppressed; and to lay the case before the publick."