



Primary Source Lesson Plan-Moses Grandy's Life as a Slave

Name of Primary Source

- A Slave's Life by Moses Grandy

How primary source ties into text

- Qualifies: Moses Grandy, born in 1786, explains what it was like to grow up as a slave.
- Elaborates: Gives specifics about life as a child in slavery, being sold and becoming a field hand and finally, getting married and losing his wife to another slave owner.

Raises questions: This primary source can be used to identifying unfamiliar words that help students understand what slavery was like.

Corresponding Lesson

This lesson ties into chapter 8 in the America's Past Textbook. It would be good to use it during a guided or shared reading lesson sometime that week.

Colorado Standards

- Social Studies Standard 1 History: History develops moral understanding, defines identity, and creates and appreciation of how things change while building skills in judgment and decision making. History enhances the ability to read varied sources and develop the skills to analyze, interpret, and communicate. Grade level expectations: Analyze historical sources from multiple points of view to develop an understanding of historical context
- Reading and Writing 1: Read and understand a variety of materials
- Reading and Writing 3: Write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Big Idea

- Students will write unfamiliar words and phrases from Moses's account to help them understand what life as a slave was like. They will use clues to find their meaning as well. They will guess what the unfamiliar word means and eventually, use the dictionary to check their guesses.

Critical thinking

- What words do I need to know to fully understand what Moses Grandy life as a slave was like?

Mini-Lesson

Teaching

Begin by reading through the source as a shared reading. Have students draw a box around unfamiliar words or phrases that seem to describe Moses' life as a slave. The following are possible examples: "sold away," "price he set on us," "flogged her," "divided up," "put to field work," "hired out...by auction," "to keep ferry," "cruel living," "a severe man," etc. It is recommended to break the source up into three parts, and three separate lessons: Young life as a slave, life as a field hand, and married life. The object of this lesson(s) is to use learning new words or phrases as a springboard for understanding what a slave's life was like.

Active Engagement

Students will use graphic organizer, "Figuring It Out," to help them understand the meaning of new vocabulary words and phrases. They will write the word in the first column. The second column is for clues to meaning. The third column is to guess the meaning. The fourth column is the actual meaning from the dictionary or textbook (especially for phrases). In the final column, students can put a plus or minus sign to say if their guess was close or not.

A Slave's Life by Moses Grandy

[Moses Grandy, born in 1786, explained what it was like to grow up as a slave.]

My name is Moses Grandy. I was born in Camden county, North Carolina...

The master, Billy Grandy, whose slave I was born, was a hard-drinking man; he sold away many slaves. I remember four sisters and four brothers; my mother had more children, but they were dead or sold away before I can remember. I was the youngest. I remember well my mother often hid us all in the woods, to prevent master selling us. When we wanted water, she sought for it in any hole or puddle formed by falling trees or otherwise. It was often full of tadpoles and insects. She strained it, and gave it round to each of us in the hollow of her hand. For food, she gathered berries in the woods, got potatoes, raw corn, &c. After a time, the master would send word to her to come in, promising he would not sell us. But, at length, persons came who agreed to give the prices he set on us. His wife, with much to be done, prevailed on him not to sell me; but he sold my brother, who was a little boy. My mother, frantic with grief, resisted their taking her child away. She was beaten, and held down; she fainted; and, when she came to herself, her boy was gone. She made much outcry, for which the master tied her up to a peach-tree in the yard, and flogged her...

My young master and I used to play together; there was but two days' [sic] difference in our ages. My old master always said he would give me to him. When he died, all the colored people were divided amongst his children, and I fell to young master; his name was James Grandy. I was then about eight years old. When I became old enough to be taken away from my mother and put to field work, I was hired out for the year, by auction, at the court house, every January: this is the common practice with respect to slaves belonging to persons who are under age. This continued till my master and myself were twenty-one years old.

The first who hired me was Mr. Kemp, who used me pretty well; he gave me plenty to eat, and sufficient clothing.

The next was old Jemmy Coates, a severe man...

I was next with Mr. Enoch Sawyer, of Camden county. My business was to keep the ferry, and do other odd work. It was cruel living. We had not near enough of either victuals or clothes. I was half starved for half my time. I have often ground the husks of Indian corn over again in a hand-mill, for the chance of getting something to eat out of it which the former grinding had left. In severe frosts, I was compelled to go into the fields and woods to work, with my naked feet cracked and bleeding from extreme cold: to warm them I used to rouse an

ox or hog, and stand on the place where it had lain. I was at that place three years, and very long years they seemed to me...

It was some time after this that I married a slave belonging to Mr. Enoch Sawyer, who had been so hard a master to me. I left her at home, (that is, at his house,) one Tuesday morning, when we had been married about eight months. She was well, and seemed likely to be so. We were nicely getting together out little necessaries. On the [sic] Friday, as I was at work, as usual, with the boats, I heard a noise behind me, on the road which ran by the side of the canal. I turned to look, and saw a gang of slaves coming. When they came up to me, one of them cried out, 'Moses, my dear!' I wondered who among them should know me, and found it was my wife. She cried out to me, 'I am gone!' I was struck with consternation. Mr. Rogerson was with them, on his horse, armed with pistols. I said to him, 'For God's sake, have you bought my wife?' He said he had; when I asked him what she had done, he said she had done nothing, but that her master wanted money. He drew out a pistol, and said that, if I went near the wagon on which she was, he would shoot me. I asked for leave to shake hands with her, which he refused, but said I might stand at a distance and talk with her. My heart was so full that I could say very little. I asked leave to give her a dram. He told Mr. Burgess, the man who was with him, to get down and carry it to her. I gave her the little money I had in my pocket, and bade her farewell. I have never seen or heard of her from that day to this. I loved her as I loved my life.

Source: William Loren Katz, ed. *Five Slave Narratives: A Compendium*. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968.

Figuring It Out

Write the unfamiliar words from your reading in the first column, any clues you can find about their meaning in the second column, and your guess in the third column. Look up the word in the dictionary to check your guess and record the actual meaning in the fifth column. Give yourself a + if your guess was close and a - if it was not.

Title of passage: _____

Unfamiliar Word	Clues to Meaning	Guess Meaning	Actual Meaning	+/-