

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Engaging Students in Multimedia Projects

MISSION 2: "Flight to Freedom"

A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR:

These activities can be used at any time while you are using "Flight to Freedom" with your students, as there is unlimited flexibility in how you and your students develop multimedia projects related to the mission and their experiences playing it. The MISSION US "Flight to Freedom" multimedia projects are intended to inspire students to think about how the themes and issues faced by characters in the game relate to contemporary issues in students' own lives.

Multimedia projects have multiple benefits for students, providing them with the opportunity to use their imaginations and be creative in ways not always possible in traditional classroom instruction. By working together to produce a final product, students build teamwork and communication skills. There are several opportunities for cross-curricular extensions, particularly with ELA and visual arts classes. And, perhaps most importantly, students have the opportunity to explore and understand the historical concepts of the game in new and interesting ways.

When it comes to deciding what kind of multimedia project to do, the possibilities are endless. Your students can work individually, in groups, or as a class. As the teacher, you can choose an appropriate level of involvement. Students can play to their individual strengths, as there are many roles in any given project: acting, writing, camera and/or microphone operation, video/sound editing, web design, etc. Student projects might include short films or videos, podcasts, websites, recorded songs, etc. Projects should incorporate the use of audio, video and/or the Internet.

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"FLIGHT TO FREEDOM" MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS

Students: Read through all of the topics, and choose ONE on which to base your multimedia project. Projects can directly address one of the questions presented below, or you can use the topics as inspiration for new ideas. Be creative – you can write and perform original skits, present reenactments of historical or current situations, record podcasts, create websites – the sky is the limit, as long as your projects are audio, video, or Internet-based.

PLANTATION LIFE

In "Flight to Freedom," Lucy lives on the King plantation, a large farm dedicated to growing and harvesting hemp. Plantation life was full of complexities. Slaves living on the plantation had their own living quarters, families, social structure, and culture, all of which existed in the larger social structure and culture of the plantation owners. The family that owned and operated the plantation may have employed other white workers, like the overseer, to ensure that the slaves were working to the owners' expectations. A typical plantation like the Kings' would have covered a lot of area and included the smokehouse, a barn or other structure for keeping animals, the yard, fields where the crop was grown, a source of running water, and the "big house" where the master's family lived. A young female slave like Lucy was expected to successfully manage several aspects of plantation life, including her own family responsibilities, jobs for her master and the overseer, favors for her friend Esther in the big house, taking care of her brother, and looking out for herself.

Every community has its own unique blend of families, with their own cultures, living spaces, and beliefs; businesses, employers, and workers; buildings, roadways, restaurants, and shops; public spaces, parks, and schools. Many of these things are related to each other and are dependent on each other to function and operate smoothly. How do you fit into the structure of your community? What are your responsibilities to your community? Do you do volunteer or paid work in your community? If so, how do you balance that work with your housework, schoolwork, and social life? How do your actions affect the other members of your community?

SABOTAGE AND RESISTANCE

It was common for slaves on plantations to engage in work slow-downs, acts of non-cooperation, petty theft, sabotage, or other acts of non-violent resistance as a way to rebel against their masters and resist their enslavement. However, these actions, if discovered, were often met with negative consequences. Slaves who were caught would often be assigned more work, beaten severely, or sold to other plantations further south. As Lucy, a player can choose to engage in this behavior or not. Either way, that's certainly what Mr. Otis *thinks* you did by burning down the smokehouse, and the consequences lead to your escape from the King plantation.

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How do you challenge rules, policies, or practices that you find to be unfair or oppressive in your everyday life? Where do you run into said unfair or oppressive rules? Are you free to speak your mind and tell your authority figures that you disagree, or must you stay silent and get your point across in different ways? Imagine that your teacher has decided that your class is not performing to his expectations, and will now be giving a pop quiz every day in class. Your teacher says that your entire grade for the class will be determined by these pop quizzes, and that you are not allowed to ask for extra study help, nor are you allowed to complain about the quizzes – if so you will get two weeks of detention. Even though you try to study every night, you don't have enough time with your other schoolwork and housework, and you have been getting Ds and Fs on the quizzes. What can you do to express your dissatisfaction to your teacher? Are you willing to accept negative consequences if it improves your situation? Would you do something that seemed unethical if it convinced your teacher to change his mind?

In contemporary America, if we disagree with a policy or a law held by our government, we are free to respond in a variety of ways: contacting a representative, public dissent, assembly and demonstration. Do some of these actions work better than others? Why?

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

While many prominent abolitionists and government officials fought for an end to slavery, the slaves themselves arguably did the most for their cause, even though they had no political power. Why did the slaves fight to enact change, despite their apparent lack of influence? What effect did it have?

As a minor, you are without political power until you are old enough to vote. Does that affect your daily life? What if your city was trying to pass a law with which you disagreed – for example, a summer curfew law stating no minors are allowed out past 6:00 p.m. between Memorial Day and Labor Day. How would you feel? Simply voting against the law on Election Day isn't an option for you. Can you appeal to your parents or teachers to sway their vote? Stage a protest at city hall to change the mayor's mind?

Currently in the United States there are many people who have no political power – or even legal status – who are trying to enact legal change on their own behalf. These are the hundreds of thousands of children and young adults who have lived in America for most of their lives, but were brought to this country illegally. These young people have no right to vote, no way to obtain a driver's license or passport, and difficulty applying for college or financial aid. For several years, the U.S. government has been considering a piece of legislation called the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act that would allow conditional residency to these young people who entered the country as minors, graduated

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from high school, and completed at least two years of college or military service. Do you think this legislation (which has not yet been passed by the United States Congress) would have an effect on the demographics or population of this country? In light of many states adopting stricter immigration laws and deportation policies, should young people who might benefit from the DREAM Act reach out to local congressmen and senators to try and convince them to vote for this legislation? Many young adults across the country have staged demonstrations such as sit-ins, marches, and hunger strikes in support of the law. What are the potential consequences of publicly drawing attention to one's illegal or undocumented status? As a group without voting rights or a legal voice, how can they argue for change on their own behalf?

SLAVERY IN AMERICA

The practice of slavery was legal in the Union until 1865 when it was officially abolished and prohibited by the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Prior to this amendment, United States citizens were permitted to own other human beings as property, buy and sell slaves as part of an economic system, and operate farms, factories, plantations, and households using unpaid human labor. Most of the enslaved population held in America were Africans or African-Americans owned by whites; however, there were a small number of Native American and free black slaveowners, as well as white and Native American slaves.

Lucy runs away from her life as a slave but is faced with the obstacle of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, a law passed by the U.S. government declaring that all runaway slaves had to be returned to their owners, and citizens or government officials who did not comply could be fined or even thrown in jail. How did this law affect the practice of slavery at the time? How did Northerners react? Was this legislation a government endorsement of slavery?

In the 21st century, it is generally accepted in American society that the practice of slavery is wrong and a violation of human rights. Unfortunately this does not mean that it no longer exists. Over ten thousand enslaved people are trafficked into this country every year, and there are an estimated 27 million victims of "human trafficking" (modern day slavery) worldwide. People – often from foreign countries – are recruited or obtained through means of force, fraud, or coercion and used for purposes of involuntary servitude or forced labor including sweatshop, agriculture, mine, construction, service industry, restaurant, or housekeeping work. These slaves are treated poorly, forbidden from leaving their homes except to work, blackmailed, and lied to about repaying debts. In 2000, the United States Congress passed a law called the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), with the goal of preventing overseas trafficking, protecting victims, and prosecuting traffickers. How does our modern government's stance on slavery compare with that of the administration in the 1840s and 1850s? Prior to the Civil War, the economy of the South was heavily reliant on slavery. How does the

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TVPA affect the economies of the countries that traffic slaves into the U.S.? Although trafficking victims are allegedly protected by the TVPA, oftentimes their lack of documentation leads them to be mistreated by legal officials and prosecuted as illegal immigrants. How does this affect the human trafficking problem? What is the benefit of trading human beings for labor or profit?

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Lucy manages to escape enslavement on the King plantation as a runaway on the Underground Railroad. As you know, the Underground Railroad was not a system of subterranean train tracks; it was a network of secret routes, safe houses, and community buildings (such as churches) utilized by slaves to escape to both free states in the Union and Canada.

Abolitionists, sympathizers, and free blacks helped slaves make the journey. Many escaped slaves found safe haven in free black communities in border and northern states. The Underground Railroad served as a way for slaves to try and escape their oppressors and abusers, even though it was a blatant disregard for the law and the consequences, if caught, could be severe.

How are you fighting oppression in your everyday life? How does it affect the people around you? What are the consequences of your actions?

A different kind of "underground railroad" exists today in cities all across America, and unlike the network that existed in the 19th century, this secretive system assists mostly women and children of all races. This network is for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, who cannot pursue traditional legal recourse for a variety of reasons: they fear retribution from their abusers, they don't speak English, they are illegal or undocumented immigrants, or the law is just not strict or clear enough for their situation. As a result, networks that circumvent the traditional legal system have sprung up to help these women and children. Social workers and local community leaders are trained to help women leave dangerous situations and escape to safe houses or battered women's shelters while cutting off all ties with their oppressors or abusers. What are the consequences of such actions for the women and children being assisted by the secret network? What message does it send to our legal system to have this "underground" support system in place? What message does it send to abusers?