



Lesson 9.3 “The Fight Against Slavery”

Unit 9: New Hampshire and the Civil War

Lesson Objectives

- Students will analyze primary sources showing how abolitionists tried to persuade people that slavery was wrong.
- Students will work cooperatively with their group to plan the front page of a newspaper with news about abolitionist activities in New Hampshire during the first half of the 19th century.
- Students will plan, research, and write articles and other features for the front-page using knowledge from the unit.

Lesson Competencies

- I can locate relevant key ideas using text features, including visual and graphic information, to make connections within or across sources and explain how various parts of information contribute to overall meaning. (ELA 3)
- I can initiate and sustain a focused discussion. (ELA 7)
- I can use grade-appropriate grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary to clarify a message appropriate to the purpose and audience when speaking. (ELA 7)
- I can integrate information, distinguish relevant-irrelevant information (e.g., fact/opinion), and (visually, orally, in writing) present what was learned. (ELA 8)

Essential Questions

How has New Hampshire come to be the way it is?
How has New Hampshire been shaped by many voices?
How has New Hampshire impacted the nation?

Focus Questions

How did people in New Hampshire and the nation fight against slavery?

Estimated Time

Three or four 40-minute class sessions

Materials & Equipment

“How do you change people’s minds?” mind map for projection
Class set of “Charting Abolitionist Activities” worksheet
“Abolitionist Activities Image Set” printed out for posting
Class set of “Front Page! Abolitionist Newspaper”
Class set of “Abolitionist Newspaper Rubric”
Group set of “Front Page Plan”
Class set of “Article Plan”
Materials for creating front pages, such as blank paper, construction paper, or small posterboard sheets



Educator Introduction & Rationale

How do we convince people to change their minds about an important topic or issue? Today, we are bombarded with information trying to get us to think one thing or another about a political candidate, a social issue, a current event, or a product that's being sold. Mass communication and social media are a daily feature of our lives, and what messages are conveyed through these means often shape what we believe about the world around us.

In the decades before the Civil War, the main social issue of the day was slavery. Among Americans there was a broad range of opinion regarding whether slavery should exist or not, its economic and political impact, and its moral implications. Many people believed slavery would eventually die out in America, even in the South, and that enslaved people would gradually be emancipated. But in the early 1830s, a small group of committed activists dedicated themselves to ending slavery in the United States as soon as possible. They believed slavery was too great of a crime—against humanity and against American values—to continue to exist. Known as abolitionists, they were determined that Americans must be convinced to emancipate enslaved people immediately and abolish slavery.

Abolitionists had an enormous task ahead of them to convince Americans that slavery needed to be eradicated no matter what the economic or political cost. They employed a number of different tactics to change people's minds, including public lectures, petitions, conventions, and newspaper articles. They encouraged former enslaved people to share their stories through books and speaking engagements in an effort to educate the public on the horrors of slavery. They also published their own newspapers, dedicated solely to making the case against slavery. Abolitionists were perpetually in need of funds to support these activities and therefore organized fairs and sewing circles to augment the money they raised through direct contributions. Throughout the North dozens of local communities organized their own antislavery groups to promote the cause and adopted whatever means they could come up with to keep the cause in the public eye. This effort to change public opinion was known as moral suasion.

Much like in other northern states, the number of abolitionists in New Hampshire was small—at most, a few thousand people—but these activists were deeply committed, well financed, and adept at getting their efforts publicized in the press. In short, the influence of this relatively small group extended far beyond their numbers.

This is the third lesson in Unit 9: Reforming New Hampshire. After brainstorming about different ways to change people's minds about important issues then and now, students will analyze some abolitionist material to see how abolitionists hoped to use moral suasion to convince Americans that slavery was wrong. Then, working in small groups, they will create the front page of a newspaper published by New Hampshire abolitionists.

The student content sections on abolitionism from this unit in the "Moose on the Loose" curriculum will be helpful. There are no separate reinforcement or extension activities in this lesson, as those goals can be met by revisiting important topics in the unit or extending the project with additional materials or sections of newspaper.

This lesson has been aligned to standards for grades 3–5, however, the topics and skills will be meaningful for middle school students. Note that some sources in the “Abolitionist Activities Image Set” are accessible for elementary grades and some require more advanced thinking; choose appropriately for your class. Please adapt all the material in this lesson, as necessary, to meet the needs of the students in your classroom. Please note, lesson vocabulary and definitions are at the end of the document. You may wish to preview these with your students.

Teaching tip: Note with students that it is important when speaking of people who have been enslaved to use the words “enslaved people” rather than the dehumanizing “slave.” Additionally, please note that some sources reference family separation and/or violence. The history of slavery and abolition needs to be acknowledged fully and the New Hampshire Historical Society believes in presenting all voices in history, but take care to choose which images may or may not be appropriate for use in your classroom based on your students. There are many images to choose from and not all need to be used to create a meaningful project.



Learning Activity

Activation **Persuading others.** Project for the class “How do you change people’s minds?” mind map. As a group, brainstorm with your students how they would go about trying to change people’s minds on an important issue today.

Direct Instruction **Moral suasion: then and now.** Post “Abolitionist Activities Image Set” throughout the classroom. Distribute to students the “Charting Abolitionist Activities” worksheet, and discuss together how students will fill out the chart. They should walk around the classroom, examining each source, and use the information in the source to fill out the chart. One on side, they list the kinds of activities abolitionists undertook to convince people that slavery was wrong, such as petitions or writing newspapers. On the other side of the worksheet, they to think about the kinds of arguments abolitionists made against slavery. Perhaps they see evidence of a legal argument to be made in Congress against slavery or a moral argument saying that slavery is wrong. Reference the answer key as necessary. If possible, students should note which sources used which argument or activity.

When students have completed assessing the image set, discuss as a class students’ thoughts about both questions, referencing the various sources around the classroom. Compare their answers to the mind map they brainstormed during activation. What are the similarities and differences in the ways people tried to change others’ minds then and now? Do students think some methods or arguments would be more effective than others in persuading people to their point of view? Why?

Guided Practice **Planning a front page.** Explain to students that newspapers were the primary means of mass communication in the first half of the 19th century, and newspapers often promoted various social causes. One of the most important abolitionist newspapers, the *Herald of Freedom*, was published in Concord, New Hampshire.

Students will create an abolitionist newspaper that highlights the different kinds of activities that abolitionists did and the ways in which they tried to change people’s minds about slavery. Groups will show in their projects the arguments against slavery they find to be the most effective.

To each student, give “Front Page! Abolitionist News Project” with “Abolitionist News Project Rubric” photocopied on the back. Review as appropriate for your classroom. Best practice is to help students envision what an “Above Standard” project might look like, using the rubric and instructions. Determine and be explicit about due dates; posting them in an appropriate place in the classroom works well.

Once students understand what they will do in the project, divide the class into groups of three and hand out the group worksheet "Front Page Plan." Give groups time to design their front page and check in with each group when completed to ensure work distribution and appropriate historical coverage. Remind students that the project is intended to showcase their unit knowledge, so they should be using their unit materials while they work.

Independent Practice

Writing and constructing the front page. Once groups are ready, give each student the relevant number of "Article Plan" pages and approve them when finished. Move students on to constructing the final draft of their front pages as appropriate.

Give students work time in the classroom to work on their newspaper. Decide for your class if they will be able to work at home on the project and when the final product will be compiled.

Reflection

Fighting against slavery. When projects have completed, post your class front pages either on a bulletin board or in a hallway. Have the groups view each other's work. Discuss together which arguments your class found to be the most effective in fighting slavery.

Reinforcement & Extension

Provided through differentiation of project.



Supporting Materials

New Hampshire Historical Society Resources

1. *Herald of Freedom* Masthead, 1835
2. A Good Example, *Herald of Freedom*, 1835
3. Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society, *Herald of Freedom*, 1835
4. Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Fundraising Notice, 1837
5. Dover Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle, circa 1840–1866
6. A Humble Appeal, circa 1850
7. Anti-Slavery Convention Broadside, circa 1855
8. Frederick Douglass Lecture, *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics*, 1862

Other Resources

- *The Slave's Friend*, 1837, [New York Public Library Digital Collections](#)
- "Tearing Up Free Papers" and "Separating Parents from Children," *The American Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1838*, The Public Domain Review
- Anti-Slavery Petition from Somersworth, 1838, Courtesy of the New Hampshire State Archives
- Am I Not a Woman and a Sister? *Authentic Anecdotes of American Slavery*, 2nd edition, by Lydia Maria Child (Newburyport, Mass.: Charles Whipple, 1838), Courtesy of African American Pamphlet Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress
- *North Star* Prospectus, circa 1847, [New York Public Library Digital Collections](#)
- *North Star*, September 8, 1848, Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture



Standards

“Moose on the Loose” Content:

- ✓ Students will understand that the United States became divided over several issues in the decades before the Civil War, including slavery, which resulted in rising tensions throughout the nation. They will understand that New Hampshire played a part in these relationships. (3-5.T4.2)

“Moose on the Loose” Skills:

- ✓ Gathering, Interpreting, and Using Evidence (3-5.S1.1, 3-5.S1.2)
- ✓ Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions (3-5.S2.1, 3-5.S2.2)
- ✓ Effective Historical Thinking (3-5.S3.1, 3-5.S3.2)

New Hampshire Social Studies Frameworks:

- ✓ US / NH History: World Views and Value systems and their Intellectual and Artistic Expressions (SS:HI:4:3.1, SS:HI:4:3.2)
- ✓ US / NH History: Social/Cultural (SS:HI:4:5.2, SS:HI:4:5.3, SS:HI:4:5.4)

NCSS Themes:

- ✓ Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- ✓ Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

C3 Frameworks:

- ✓ Civic and Political Institutions (D2.Civ.6.3-5)
- ✓ Participation and Deliberation (D2.Civ.10.3-5)
- ✓ Processes, Rules, and Laws (D2.Civ.12.3-5)
- ✓ Change, Continuity, and Context (D2.His.3.3-5)
- ✓ Perspectives (D2.His.4.3-5, D2.His.5.3-5)
- ✓ Historical Sources and Evidence (D2.His.10.3-5, D2.His.13.3-5)
- ✓ Gathering and Evaluating Sources (D3.1.3-5, D3.3.3-5)
- ✓ Communicating Conclusions (D4.2.3-5)

Common Core ELA:

- ✓ Key Ideas and Details in Informational Text (RI.4.3)
- ✓ Craft and Structure in Informational Text (RI.4.4, RI.4.6)
- ✓ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in Informational Text (RI.4.9)
- ✓ Text Types and Purposes in Writing (W.4.2)
- ✓ Production and Distribution of Writing (W.4.4, W.4.5)
- ✓ Research to Build and Present Knowledge (W.4.8, W.4.9, W.4.9b)
- ✓ Conventions of Standard English in Language (L.4.1, L.4.2)
- ✓ Knowledge of Language (L.4.3a, L.4.3b, L.4.3c)
- ✓ Vocabulary Acquisition and Use (L.4.6)



Lesson Vocabulary

- abolition** (noun) The action of getting rid of something, specifically ending slavery during the 19th century
- abolitionist** (noun) A person who works to get rid of something, especially slavery during the 19th century
- enslaved** (verb) The act of labeling a human being as property and forcing them to work for nothing
- slavery** (noun) When human beings are treated as property and made to work for nothing