

Title of Lesson: Mastering the Document-Based Essay Question

Unit of Study: Antebellum United States, especially sectional differences in the period 1820-1860

Connection to the Massachusetts Frameworks:

This lesson is designed for Advanced Placement U.S. History students who will be taking the AP exam in May. Students will use the primary source documents to (1) gain an understanding of the North's involvement in the slave trade and slavery and (2) practice writing a response to a document-based essay question. Students will have already completed their study of slavery in the South.

Although the topic of slavery in the North is not specifically mentioned in the Frameworks or in the AP course outline, it is, nevertheless, a topic that deserves attention. It can be argued that the lesson relates to the following aspects of the Frameworks and would serve to enhance the content topics by placing them in a broader context:

Concepts and Skills:

- Interpret and construct charts and graphs that show quantitative information. (H,C,G,E)
- Show connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments. (H,G,C,E)
- Interpret the past within its historical context rather than in terms of present day norms and values. (H,E,C)
- Connections to English Language Arts through Writing Skills:
 - o Write well-organized essays that have a clear focus, logical development, effective use of detail, and variety in sentence structure.
 - o Write well-organized {essays} that prove a thesis statement using logical organization, effective supporting evidence, and variety in sentence structure.

Content:

- USI27. Explain the emergence of the textile industry in New England and industrial growth generally throughout antebellum America. (H,E)
- USI28. Describe the rapid growth of slavery in the South after 1800 and analyze slave life and resistance on plantations and farms across the South. (H)
- USI30. Describe the formation of the abolitionist movement, the roles of various abolitionists, and the response of southerners and northerners to abolitionism. (H)

Materials:

Handouts for background reading:

- Takaki, Ronald. *A Different Mirror*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1993. pp. 110-131.
- White, Shane, "Slavery in the North," *OAH Magazine of History* (April, 2003), pp. 17-21.

Packet with essay question, primary source documents and AP grading rubric

Strategies:

- Students will have a homework assignment to do the background reading of a chapter from Takaki's book *A Different Mirror* and of White's article "Slavery in the North."
- The teacher will introduce the essay question and will lead students in "dissecting" it: Students will need to identify the various parts of the question and to understand key terms in the directions, such as "to what extent," "evaluate," "contrast and compare," etc.
- Because this assignment will be given during the first semester of the school year when students are still becoming familiar with document analysis, they will work in groups to interpret the primary source documents.
- After one or two class periods of document analysis, students will (for homework) develop a thesis statement and a graphic organizer (T chart, chart, Venn diagram, etc.) by which they will organize the information for their essay.
- The teacher will go over the grading rubric with students.
- Students will write their essays in an extended class period, similar to the 50 minutes they will have in the AP exam.

Objectives: In addition to developing the Skills and Concepts from the History Frameworks, students will

- gain practice in identifying the speaker – purpose – audience – message (SPAM) of various primary source documents.
- write a thesis statement in response to the assigned open-response/essay question and will develop their own graphic organizer for organizing the information necessary to defend their thesis.
- write an essay that meets the criteria established in the AP rubric in response to the question.