



TeachersFirst READING TREKS

Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad

Teacher Guide

Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading
Trek Map

Ages: 10–14

Grades: 4–8

Reading Level: 7th Grade

Lexile Measure: 1000L

Guided Reading Level: Z

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): 70

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, and social studies (including individual development, identity, history, and geography).

Synopsis of Book

Author Ann Petry renders the life of Harriet Tubman as if the reader is right there beside her—seeing, hearing, and even smelling her environment. Readers follow Harriet as she’s hired out to other masters in coastal Maryland, learns of siblings being “sold South,” nervously knocks on the doors of station masters on the Underground Railroad, and so much more. Witness Harriet Tubman’s sheer determination, conviction, and resourcefulness through the dangerous journeys she undertakes, aided by her faith, inspired by her beliefs, and guided by the wisdom of her father’s teachings.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Common Core State Standards for 6–12

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 6: POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

Next Generation Science Standards

- Earth's Place in the Universe
- Space Systems

Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Diversity
- Justice

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class on an interactive whiteboard using the Reading Trek map and highlighting its various layers.
2. Discuss the demographics of the classroom and school, “The elephant in the room,” and how stereotypes and cultural racism impact individual and group academic performance and social and emotional development. Discuss what changes in cultural mindsets have occurred over the past 200 years. Create an interactive Venn diagram using Class Tools ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
3. Explore the often-ignored lives of Black women through the lesson plan [Speaking Up and Speaking Out: Exploring the Lives of Black Women During the 19th Century](#) from History Labs ([TeacherFirst review](#)).
4. Abolitionists used the spoken and written word to inspire others to assess their perspectives on freedom and rights. After learning more about their strategies by visiting “I Will be Heard!”: Abolitionism in America ([TeachersFirst review](#)), have students write a speech or article and create an accompanying political cartoon using ToonyTool ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
5. Create a timeline of Harriet Tubman’s life using History in Motion ([TeachersFirst review](#)). You can also create an alternate timeline of one of the rescues using the story’s details and the historical maps from this application.
6. The Library of Congress offers a curated, searchable collection of free-to-use images, including maps and photos. Using state maps of [Maryland](#), [Delaware](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [New York](#) created in the mid-1800s, locate potential routes and stations that would have been helpful for Harriet Tubman and those she rescued. You can also view a [railroad map of the eastern United States](#) created in 1856 then, considering obstacles and terrain and available roadways, estimate the time needed to travel between selected locations.

Extension Activities:

1. Explore the civil disobedience—both active and passive refusal to obey particular laws or orders (including the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850)—of abolitionist groups during the late 1700s and much of the 1800s using the lesson plan [Slavery and Civil Disobedience: Christiana Riot of 1851](#) from History Labs ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
2. Read and/or listen to the American Slave Narratives ([TeachersFirst review](#)) anthology for a more comprehensive understanding of life as an enslaved person in the years before the American Civil War. Create illustrations to accompany a selected narrative.
3. People have used the stars as navigation tools for millennia. Using the [Interactive Sky Chart](#) tool on Sky & Telescope ([TeachersFirst review](#)), students can observe and track stars and constellations over several days. You can also enter zip codes for Cambridge, MD (21613); Wilmington, DE (19803); Philadelphia, PA (19147); and Syracuse, NY (13203); then enter a month and year of one of Harriet Tubman’s journeys to help others

- escape slavery. Discuss and journal about observations and patterns.
- African American artists' work went largely unrecognized during America's seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. During that time, free Blacks who were able relocated to Europe to study and create. Students can use one or more of the resources listed in the "Other Resources" section of this guide to create a written or verbal response to an artist and/or a particular piece.
 - Learn more about abolition activists [Harriet Tubman](#) and [John Brown](#) through PBS video clips for older students. The teaching tips and support materials provide engaging questions to help students analyze varied perspectives that impact one's personal reality.
 - Younger students can watch the [Harriet Tubman video](#) on BrainPop Jr. and complete the accompanying concept map. Older students can create a character map about Harriet Tubman using Circllyapp ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
 - Design and create a freedom quilt using symbols and information from the [Underground Railroad Quilt Guide](#) (which includes printables), [Flat Rock Archives](#), [Smithsonian Folklife Magazine](#), and [Quilt Codes](#). Make quilts out of paper glued to a large background or by using markers to color pieces of cloth. Have student groups present their quilts and explain the path or information provided.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Engage & Inspire with Reading Treks](#)

Other Resources:

- [Ann Petry](#)
- [Ann Petry Biography](#)
- [Ann Petry and Harlem's History](#)
- [Harriet Tubman: Soldier of Freedom](#)
- [Torchlighters: The Harriet Tubman Story](#)
- [Escape to Freedom](#)
- [Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero](#)
- [Timeline of the Life of Harriet Tubman](#)
- [Harriet Tubman: Life, Liberty, and Legacy](#)
- [Harriet Tubman and the Great Combahee River Raid](#)
- [10 Groundbreaking African American Artists That Shaped History](#)
- [National Gallery of Art African American Art](#)
- [19th-Century African American Artists](#)
- [The Harriet Tubman Home](#)
- [Harriet Tubman National Historical Park](#)