Generating Comic Books Teach about Quilts as Maps

Dr. Kay Weller – UNI

Grade Level (Req.): 9th-12th grade	Content Area (Req.): Human Geography, American History, English	Unit (Opt.):
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): • • •		
Time Frame (Req.): 2 weeks	Goal (Req.): To understand how people in history portrayed a message.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will generate a comic book about how escaping slaves used quilts as maps on the Underground Railroad.	

Materials Needed (Req.):	New Vocabulary (Opt.):
• Books: "Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt" by Deborah Hopkinson (ISBN #: 0-679-82311-5) and "Hidden in Plain View" by Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard, Ph.D. (ISBN #: 0-385-49137-9) • Chilcoat, George W., Teaching about the Civil Rights Movement by Using Student-Generated Comic Books. "The Social Studies" May/June 1993 pg. 113-118. • CD or tape of "Sounds of Blackness" available from music stores-suggested songs from this CD are "Sun Up to Sundown" and "African Medley" • "Historical and Cultural Atlas of African Americans" (ISBN #: 0-02-897029-2); "My Folks Don't Want Me to Talk About Slavery" (ISBN #: 0-89587-039-8) • "Before Freedom When I Can Just Remember" (ISBN #: 0-89587-069-X); "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" (ISBN #: 0-19-506670-7) • "Federal Writers Project" available at Rod Library University of Northern Iowa • Samples of comic books to be used for layout purposes	• • • • •

Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): How did slaves use quilts to develop mental maps that aided in their escape from slavery? Have the CD playing as students enter and copies of the words on handouts on their desks. After all have entered the room be sure you replay the song or songs a couple of times. Explain students that African Americans songs are quite different from songs written or sung by European Americans. Africans brought the rhythm of the drums with them because drums were used as a way to send messages between kingdoms. These tonal patterns created a language based on a rhythm that can still be heard in Africa today and American jazz. You may wish to have students pick out the rhythm and relate it to songs they know about.

Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.):
1. Introduce students to the idea of how escaping slaves used quilts as maps on the Underground Railroad. It is important to point out that it was common practice on the Underground Railroad to use common objects as symbols for those traveling this dangerous route and that quilts served as maps. The painted black coachman was used as a hitching post or yard art if lit escapees knew it was a safe haven and if not they should go elsewhere. Slaves working as seamstresses had access to information that helped them develop mental maps of their plantation and the surrounding area that they made into quilts. Quilts were hung to convey escape messages. Slaves fooled their owners because it was common to air their quilts. Quilts were hung out in a specific order so slaves wishing to escape could memorize where to go and how to get there. Knots conveyed the message of how far it was between places based on knots used to tie the quilts. The quilts used as maps are primarily gone because they were used constantly and washed in lye soap.
2. Quilt patterns and messages conveyed (use attached information).
3. Students will generate the comic book about the Underground Railroad, slaves, and quilts as maps. Instruction for making a comic book: A) Set due date, methods for research and data collection, and review guidelines for drawing it. B) To make certain that students are carrying out the work have students add a bibliography page at the end of the comic book. C) Emphasize that the quality of drawing is not the major criteria for the grade but that the purpose is for the student to understand and apply historical information. However, students should not be allowed to draw stick figures but rather to flesh out people, animals, and objects.
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Formative Evaluation (Req.): Productivity during class time	Assessment (Req.): Comic book

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand the use of geographic tools to locate and analyze information about people, places, and environments.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development of society and the movement of populations.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):   •   •   •   •   •
NGS Standards Used (Req.):   • How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective   • How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context   • The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface   •   •   •   •   •   •   •

Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):	School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):
• Location • Place • Human-Environmental Interaction • Movement • Region	• • •

21st Century Universal Constructs (Opt.): Creativity, Productivity and Accountability
Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):   •   •   •   •   •
Other Essential Information (Opt.):
Other Resources (Opt.):   •   •   •   •

Quilt patterns and messages conveyed:

You can see a larger image of the squares by clicking on them.

1. Monkey wrench-tools you would need, knife, food, memory, etc.

2. Wagon wheel-take only as much as you can take in a small wagon or in a sack.

3. Bear's paw-follow the bear or deer tracks so that you would find water and to cross the mountains.

4. Crossroads-Cincinnati was the place to get on the other side of the Ohio River to safety. From there you could continue north to Canada.

5. Log cabin meant there was a small log cabin by the cemetery where it was safe to go for the runaway.

6. Shoofly was the message that someone would be there to help the runaway.

7. Bow tie pattern meant that once the shoofly meets you there they would give you new clothes. Slaves generally had so few clothes that they were more ragged than those living in Cincinnati and they needed to blend in better because they could be turned over to the authorities.
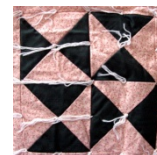
8. Flying geese-runaways should not leave before the geese are going south so that it is warmer where they are headed and not so likely to get caught in bad weather.

9. Drunkard's path pattern was a warning to travel in a zig zag pattern because it is more difficult for you to be caught.

10. Evening star pattern was a message to travel at night and to follow the North Star.
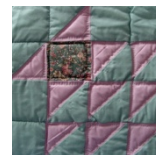Source: *Hidden in Plain View*

11. Tumbling Blocks meant packing up and moving on.

12. Basket design meant it was a safe house.

13. Sailboat

14. Nine Patch

· Students will generate the comic book about the Underground Railroad, slaves, and quilts as maps.

Instruction for making a comic book:
A. Set due date, methods for research and data collection, and review guidelines for drawing it.
B. To make certain that students are carrying out the work have students add a bibliography page at the end of the comic book.
C. Emphasize that the quality of drawing is not the major criteria for the grade but that the purpose is for the student to understand and apply historical information. However, students should not be allowed to draw stick figures but rather to flesh out people, animals, and objects.

Student guide to drawing a comic book:
Plot development:
· Tell a story. Break down the information from research into a series of sequential events.
· Introduce the setting, the characters (base these on information from some of the books) and establish the situation. Describe events surrounding the characters. Emphasize the chronological sequence of events and build suspense if it is important to the story. Once the climax is reached students should write a resolution or ending.

· Script the complete plot (this will be part of the evaluation) so that you can divide it into the required number of scenes or panels. Example; Scene/Panel 1; Narrative describing the scene, written dialogue of each character in the panel; Scene is a description of the visual scene that will be drawn. List each scene in sequence so that it can be checked for inconsistencies and errors of action and sequence before doing the drawings.

· Layout: Comic books are made up of united called panels, which convey visual information about one scene of the story. For this project begin with a splash page. It is a one-page panel introducing the story, establishes a frame of reference, and establishes the setting. Other pages will have from two to eight panels. Each panel related to the one before and after it. It is recommended that students in this project draw one splash page and a minimum of 24 smaller panels. There will also be a cover page. This is very important because it should make the reader want to read the comic magazine. It should have a full-page illustration highlighting the basic story line with the title at the top of the page. It cannot be an enlarged drawing of one of the panels inside. It should have no caption or dialogue but present the title somewhere at the bottom.

· Drawing: Draw each panel as realistically as possible. Draw scenes with historical accuracy, draw them in color, and keep them simple. Panels should frame only the essentials of a scene.

· Narration: Use either narrative block or the balloon to convey essential information. Square off the block at the top or bottom for information about time, dates, names, and description of what is taking place in the panel. The balloon provides dialogue. Avoid overcrowding the balloon with dialogue. Balloons for characters on the right of the panel are higher than those on the left. This indicates that the person on the right is speaking first. See example. Source: Chilcoat, George W.

Extending the Lesson

Objectives:
1. The student will complete a map that simulates how difficult it is to escape without getting caught on the Underground Railroad.
2. The student will participate in an Underground Railroad escape simulation.
3. The student will write a 1 page reflection paper about their experience as a runaway.
4. The student will write a fictional diary of a runaway slave.

Mapping procedures:
1. Generate a sketch map of your school and playground/campus.
2. Decide on two points (A & B) that will be the point of departure and point of destination in an escape that simulates the route fugitives traveled on the Underground Railroad.
3. Have students draw how they would get to point A to point B in the school without going straight so that they would not get caught trying to escape.
4. Share their route map with the rest of the class.

Simulation Procedures:
1. Prearrange for certain classrooms to be "safe houses."
2. Make certain there is a symbol on the outside of each "safe house" for identification.
3. Symbols to use may include any of the following: gourds hung beside the door, light on in the

window, basket turned upside down beside the door, quilt hung in windowsill.

4. Send students out to reach a point of destination by using "safe houses" as a place of refuge along the way.

5. Have some teachers/adults act as people searching for runaways.

6. Reward students who complete the task with something fun.

7. Students should write a 1 page reflection paper about their experience.

Diary Procedures:

1. Have the student complete a diary of a runaway over a period of a month or more.

2. Let Cincinnati be the destination of the runaway.

3. Have students research routes followed by runaways on the Underground Railroad.

4. Make the entries geographic be telling what they saw and where they saw it.

5. Illustrate the diary with maps and other things that were significant.