

Overview

This lesson explores the role of the Underground Railroad and the dangers experienced by John Doy, an abolitionist who helped slaves escape. Students will read four primary sources about this topic and work in groups to analyze the content. Groups will report back to the class on their segment of the story about John Doy. Students will complete a timeline detailing the events of the story then answer the question “What effect did the capture, trial, and rescue of John Doy have on people in Kansas Territory?” This lesson can be completed in two days or can be adjusted to meet individual classroom needs.

Standards

Current standards can be found on kshs.org.

Objectives

Content:

- The student will retell the story of John Doy’s capture, trial, and rescue.
- The student will identify two dangers of working on the Underground Railroad.

Skills:

- The student will summarize information from primary source documents.
- The student will infer the effect of one man’s actions.

Essential Questions

- Do you think one person can make a difference?

Activities

This activity uses the following *Read Kansas!* cards:

- **Hardships on the Underground Railroad**
- **The Capture of John Doy**
- **The Trials of John Doy**
- **The Rescue of John Doy**

Day 1

1. Use a Word Splash to introduce the topic of this lesson.
 - a. Write these words on the board or on an overhead.
 - Abolitionist
 - Border ruffian
 - Bushwacker
 - Freestater
 - Fugitive Slave Law
 - Irrepressible conflict
 - Underground Railroad
 - b. Give students time to reflect on the words. Ask students to speculate on the lesson topic. Then ask students to generate statements or definitions for each word or phrase. Guide students into making connections with vocabulary critical to understanding the topic of the Underground Railroad and the conflict over slavery between Kansas and Missouri.
 - c. Leave words and definitions available for students to view throughout the lesson. Add words as needed.
2. Explain that students will be learning about the Underground Railroad by reading four primary source documents (two letters and two newspaper articles). Review the definition of a primary source and give examples. See For the Teacher for information about primary sources.
3. Distribute a copy of the **Hardships on the Underground Railroad** *Read Kansas!* card to every student. Have students read the front of the card then ask them to explain who John E. Stewart was and what his feelings were towards slavery.
4. Distribute a copy of the **Written Document Analysis** worksheet to every student. (This form is a modified version created by the National Archives and Records Administration.) You will model completing this worksheet using John E. Stewart's letter on the back of the *Read Kansas!* card. Select students to read each paragraph aloud. As a class, answer the questions on the worksheet. Record the answers on an overhead.
 - Type of document: *Letter*
 - Date of document: *December 20, 1859*
 - Author of document: *John E. Stewart*
 - Position or title of author: *Underground Railroad worker, abolitionist*
 - For what audience was the document written? *Thaddeus Hyatt, president of the National Kansas Committee*
 - a. List three things the author said that you think are important. (You may wish to list more for this exercise to model that there are many right answers.) After making the list, have the class decide on the top three things that are the most important points of the letter.
 - *He was gone from home for eight days rescuing slaves*
 - *The work is hard and he is very cold*

- *He has to find a safe place for two escaped slaves*
 - *He has rescued 14 slaves so far*
 - *He needs money to help pay for wagons, horses, and traveling expenses involved in rescuing slaves*
 - *He has already lost one good horse while helping slaves escape*
 - *He disguises himself as a trader to talk to slaves and to rescue them. He needs good horses to do this job.*
 - *He is not a rich man and his family has made many sacrifices*
 - *He needs help finding people to take the rescued slaves from him.*
- b. Why do you think this document was written?
- *To ask for money and help*
5. Discuss with your students whether they have ever made any sacrifices for another person or a cause. What was it? How did it make them feel?
6. Explain that the students will be reading about a man who worked on the Underground Railroad. His name was Dr. John Doy. The story of John Doy is told in three parts in the three *Read Kansas!* cards: the capture, the trial, and the rescue.
- a. Divide the class into three groups. Each group will have one part of his story.
 - b. Provide each group with one **Written Document Analysis** worksheet and multiple copies of their groups *Read Kansas!* card.
 - c. The students are to first read the front of their card to identify the author of the primary source located on the back of their card. Have them choose a recorder to write this information on the worksheet.
7. Instruct students to read the primary source document on the back of their *Read Kansas!* card. It is recommended that they read it aloud, with students taking turns to read two or three sentences. The teacher should circulate through the room to answer questions about difficult words or phrases.
- a. The groups need to complete the rest of their **Written Document Analysis** worksheet.
 - b. Students need to reach consensus on the three most important things in their document that best tell their part of the John Doy story.

Day 2

1. Students will lead this lesson by reporting back to the class what they know about John Doy.
 - a. Distribute the **John Doy Storyline Graphic Organizer**, one per student.
 - b. Beginning with the group that read **The Capture of John Doy** *Read Kansas!* card, have a student share with the class the information on his/her group **Written Document Analysis** worksheet.
 - c. On the **John Doy Storyline Graphic Organizer**, record their part of the John Doy story on an overhead. Students should record this information on their copy of the graphic organizer.
 - d. Repeat this activity with the two other *Read Kansas!* cards.
 - e. Use the timeline to discuss the amount of time Dr. Doy spent in captivity. How would he have spent his time? How do you think he felt? Did the time in captivity change his feelings about working on the Underground Railroad?
2. As a final assessment, students should answer the question on the **John Doy Storyline** graphic organizer, "What effect did the capture, trial, and rescue of John Doy have on people in Kansas Territory?" Provide two effects, explain your answer and identify your source(s).
3. After students have completed their worksheet, lead a discussion on this question to show how one person can make a difference.

Assessment

1. Evaluate students' ability to contribute to the group work with the **Written Document Analysis Worksheet** and **John Doy Storyline** graphic organizer.
2. Evaluate students' ability to name two effects of John Doy's capture, trial, and rescue and explain his/her answer.

For the Teacher

If you are using the textbook *The Kansas Journey*, you can use this lesson in conjunction with pages 80-85.

Notes about using primary sources:

- Historians use primary sources to determine what happened in the past.
- A primary source is a document or an artifact that was created at the time of an event or by a person who was present at the event. This makes it a first-hand account. Photographs, newspapers, broadsides, census records, letters, and diaries are all primary sources.
- Once a historian pieces together the events of the past through primary sources, he or she interprets those materials to tell the story of the past. This is called a secondary source. It is an expository or narrative text written by a person not present at the event or time about which he or she is writing; examples include an encyclopedia or textbook. A biography is a secondary source; an autobiography is a primary source.
- When primary sources are edited they may contain bracketed words ([]). This may be done when the original word is misspelled. The word(s) in brackets indicates a word that was inserted by the editor.
- When primary sources are edited for length they will contain ellipses (...). This means there are words or sentences have been deleted.
- When a primary source is transcribed there may be words that cannot be deciphered and they will be marked in a specific way (xxx).
- If a primary source is difficult to read and understand, try reading it out loud. This generally helps with comprehension.

Definitions:

- **abolitionist:** a person who supported the immediate end of slavery
- **border ruffians:** people who came from Missouri into Kansas Territory to influence the outcome of the slavery issue in Kansas and to retrieve escaped slaves
- **bushwackers:** people who came into Kansas Territory to raid antislavery settlements to discourage people from settling there
- **freestater:** a settler who believed Kansas should not allow slavery
- **irrepressible conflict:** a code name for the abolitionist cause to make Kansas a free state
- **primary source:** something made or written by someone who was there at the time; an original record; an example is a letter, diary entry, photograph, newspaper article of the time, artifact used at the event or time

- **purpose:** the reason a primary source was created
- **secondary source:** expository or narrative text written by a person not present at the event or time about which he or she is writing; examples include an encyclopedia or textbook
- **Underground Railroad:** a series of routes and safe houses where abolitionists worked to move escaping slaves to freedom. Note that the term “Underground Railroad” is rarely used in primary sources of the time. One reason for this is that the Underground Railroad was a secret network and for individuals to divulge details of the existence of one route could endanger the entire route.

Background information on the Story of John Doy

Dr. John Doy was born in 1834 in Cambridge, England, and came to the United States in 1846. From his home in Rochester, New York, Doy and his family joined a group of abolitionists who came to Kansas Territory and settled near Lawrence. Dr. Doy was a homeopathic physician who homesteaded with his wife and nine children. His zeal for the abolitionist movement had him fighting with John Brown and working to move escaping slaves on the Underground Railroad. It was during one of these runs that Missouri ruffians captured John Doy and his son Charles. They were taken across the state line to Missouri where John Doy was charged, found guilty, and sentenced (in two trials) to prison for stealing slaves. Doy’s story shows the emotion behind the abolitionist movement on both sides of the issue.

Following his rescue and return to Kansas, Doy published a book telling his experiences. This book, *The Narrative of John Doy of Lawrence, Kansas: A Plain, Unvarnished Tale*, was printed by the author in 1860. Doy then traveled in the eastern states promoting his book and the abolitionist cause. Later, Doy, his wife, and his younger children moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, where he continued to practice homeopathic medicine. In 1869 John Doy was charged with medical malpractice. The jury unanimously found him guilty and sentenced him to prison. Vowing to never again serve time in prison Doy consumed some morphine that was smuggled to him, committing suicide. John Doy died in June 1869, 10 years following his dramatic rescue by a band of Kansas abolitionists.

Written Document Analysis Worksheet Answer Key

The Capture of John Doy

1. Type of document: *letter*
2. Date of document: *January 30, 1859*
3. Author of document: *Mary Brown*
4. Position or title of author: *Resident of Lawrence*
5. For what audience was the document written? *She was writing to her brother, Willie, who was in school back East.*
6. List three things the author said that you think are important.
 - a. *Dr. Doy, his son, and Mr. Cough were helping 14 slaves escape. [Mary was wrong about the number of slaves.] They were going to Canada.*
 - b. *They were 10 miles from Lawrence when Missourians captured them.*
 - c. *The slaves were hiding in a covered wagon. They were taken to Weston, Missouri.*
 - d. *Mr. Clough was let go.*
 - e. *Dr. Doy and his son were taken prisoners and were to be punished. They might be hanged.*
 - f. *There must have been a spy in the group of 10 men who arranged the trip since the Missourians knew where to find Dr. Doy.*
 - g. *Mr. Nute and Mr. Bolles know who the traitor is but won’t tell anyone for fear that the traitor will be harmed.*
 - h. *There are many spies in Lawrence, Kansas. Her neighbor, Mr. Wade, is one of them.*

7. Why do you think this document was written? *To share exciting news with her brother. It is very probably that her brother would have shared this information with like-minded people in his school.*

The Trials of John Doy

1. Type of document: *Newspaper article*
2. Date of document: *July 1, 1859*
3. Author of document: *Edward H. Grant*
4. Position or title of author: *Editor of St. Joseph Free Democrat newspaper*
5. For what audience was the document written? *Readers and subscribers to the Free Democrat and the New York Times.*
6. List three things the author said that you think are important.
 - a. *Dr. John Doy's second trial was on June 24, 1859.*
 - b. *He was found guilty and sentenced to five years in the penitentiary.*
 - c. *Edward Grant is outraged at the outcome of the trial.*
 - d. *During the second trial the jury was asked to find Doy guilty based on evidence that was not there. He was charged with helping a slave, Dick, escape. The evidence showed that Dick had a pass from his master.*
 - e. *The jury inferred he was guilty because of the circumstances of his capture. Doy also confessed.*
 - f. *Dr. Doy believed he was doing the right thing according to his religion and the laws of the country.*
 - g. *Dr. Doy said he would do it again given the chance.*
7. Why do you think this document was written? *To share with the readers the errors in the trial and conviction of Dr. Doy. As a result the author believes more people will become involved in the Underground Railroad.*

The Rescue of John Doy

1. Type of document: *Newspaper article*
2. Date of document: *August 1, 1859*
3. Author of document: *Edward H. Grant*
4. Position or title of author: *Editor of St. Joseph Free Democrat newspaper*
5. For what audience was the document written? *Readers and subscribers to the Free Democrat and the New York Times.*
6. List three things the author said that you think are important.
 - a. *Dr. John Doy was rescued from his jail cell in St. Joseph, Missouri.*
 - b. *Dr. Doy was in jail accused of stealing slaves.*
 - c. *His rescue party was six men, all from Kansas.*
 - d. *The night was dark and rainy.*
 - e. *They tricked the jailor into opening Doy's cell claiming they had a horse thief that needed to be locked up until Monday morning.*
 - f. *When the jailor opened the door to Doy's cell, they captured the jailor. If he resisted it would cost him his life. All other prisoners were told to stay in the jail.*
 - g. *The rescue party took off for Kansas. They were not captured.*
 - h. *The editor of the newspaper is being threatened for being antislavery.*
7. Why do you think this document was written? *To report on the rescue of abolitionist Dr. John Doy by six men from Lawrence.*

John Doy Story Line Answer Key

January 24: Dr. John Doy had been captured as he was helping slaves escape on the Underground Railroad. The party was surprised and captured when they were about 10 miles from Lawrence. Missourians captured them. They released one man and took the others to Weston, Missouri. The people of Lawrence think they will hang Doy. There were only 10 men who knew about the plan so one of them must have told the Missourians. Mr. Nute and Mr. Bolles know who the traitor was. Mary thinks it is interesting that the Missourians knew every change immediately when it was decided. Mary thinks one of her neighbors is one of the spies.

June 24: Dr. John Doy has received a second trial, was found guilty, and sentenced to five years in the penitentiary. The writer is outraged! During the second trial the jury was asked to find Doy guilty based on evidence that was not there. Doy was charged with enticing a slave from Missouri to escape.

August 1: Dr. Doy was forcibly rescued from the jail at St. Joseph. He had been recently tried for stealing slaves. A party of six men who came from Kansas rescued him. The night was dark and rainy. One man in the group awoke the jailer to ask about keeping a horse thief until Monday morning. Once inside the jail the group overpowered the guard. All other prisoners were told to stay in the jail. The rescuers returned with Doy to Kansas. A rescue party was sent out to find them, but success is not expected.

What effect do you think the rescue of John Doy had on the people in Kansas Territory? Provide two effects, explain your answer, and identify your source(s).

- 1. They realized it was dangerous to help slaves escape. From Mary Brown's letter some people knew there were spies in Kansas Territory working with the Missouri ruffians. From Edward Grant's newspaper article they knew that they could be put in prison and have to stand trial. Some Missouri ruffians wanted to hang people who helped escaping slaves.*
- 2. They would help slaves because they knew they could be rescued. Despite the risks, from reading Edward Grant's article they knew that there were like-minded, brave men who would rescue you if you got caught.*
- 3. They knew that the Missouri justice system was supporting the Fugitive Slave Law. The article by Edward Grant told of the two trials of Dr. Doy. People rescuing slaves could not expect a fair trial in Missouri.*

The materials in this packet may be reproduced for classroom use only. Reproduction of these materials for any other use is prohibited without written permission of the Kansas Historical Society.

Resources for this lesson are from:

- Kansas Historical Society collections
- New York Times archives

Name _____

Written Document Analysis Worksheet

Title of *Read Kansas!* card _____

1. Type of document

2. Date of document

3. Author of document

4. Position or title of author

5. For what audience was the document written?

6. List three things the author said that you think are important.

a.

b.

c.

7. Why do you think this document was written?

Name _____

John Doy Storyline

Record the event next to the date of this timeline. Record information about the event to tell the story of what happened to John Doy.

January 1859

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

What effect did the capture, trial and rescue of John Doy have on other people in Kansas Territory? Provide two effects, explain your answer, and identify your source(s).

1.

2.