

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Historical Page Count: 20 Word Count: 1,472

Book Summary

Running for Freedom follows the path of young Daniel and his father as they escape from slavery. Through the Underground Railroad, they are eventually led across the Ohio River and onto free soil. Both are driven by the desire to find Daniel's mother, who was sold to another family when Daniel was very young. Illustrations, photos, and maps support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of making connections to prior knowledge
- Analyze changes in the setting
- Identify simple and compound subjects
- Recognize and use homonyms in sentences

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Running for Freedom* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- [Setting, simple and compound subjects, homonyms worksheets](#)
- [Discussion cards](#)



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](#).

- Content words:
 Story critical: **activist** (n.), **flee** (v.), **gully** (n.), **network** (n.), **plantation** (n.), **shackles** (n.)
 Enrichment: **fugitive** (n.), **hounds** (n.), **inn** (n.), **muttered** (v.), **scent** (n.), **throbbing** (v.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students what they already know about slavery and the Underground Railroad. Discuss the danger involved for those who participated. Ask students if they know the names of any famous antislavery activists.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students a copy of the book and have them preview the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers and offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Make connections to prior knowledge**

- Model making a connection to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: The picture and title of the story remind me of a TV show I saw about the history of the Underground Railroad. I thought it was a very interesting program. Because I already know some interesting things about this topic, I'm looking forward to learning more about it. I can turn to the table of contents to find out even more about the information in the book.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of what the book is about. Each chapter title provides an idea of what they will read in the book. After reviewing the table of contents, model using it as a way to make connections to prior knowledge. For example, say: *The second to last chapter, titled "The River," makes me think about what I already know about slaves crossing the Ohio River to freedom. Ask students if they know anything about free states and slave states.*
- Together, read through the headings of the other chapters and ask whether they provide students with a better idea of what the book is about.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at photos, illustrations, captions, and maps.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Vocabulary


- As students preview the book, point out any vocabulary that you think may be difficult for them.
- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for base, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Direct students to page 15. Point out the word *shackles*. Model how to use context clues to figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Explain that the sentences before it tell that a white man was going to make it look like they were his slaves. The sentence with the unfamiliar word in it says that Mr. Avery put them in *shackles*. The sentences after the word tell that Daniel started to cry because he hated those chains. Tell students that these clues make you think that the word *shackles* means *a metal cuff for the ankles and wrists of a prisoner*. Have students follow along as you reread the sentence on the page to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Remind students that they should check whether words make sense by rereading the sentence.

Set the Purpose

- Have students think about what they know about slavery and the Underground Railroad as they read the book to identify the important events in the story.

During Reading

Student Reading

-  **Guide the reading:** Have students read to page 9. Tell them to underline the words and phrases in the book that tell about important events that occurred in Daniel's life. If they finish before everyone else, they should go back and reread.
- When they have finished reading, have students tell the events they underlined. Talk about how these events led Daniel's father to want to attempt an escape from slavery, no matter how dangerous it might be.
- Model making connections using prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: I remember learning about slaves working long hours in the cotton fields. When I read about Daniel feeling his fingers throb with pain, it made me think about what hard work it must have been. Ask students if any of them have seen or read anything about the hard work slaves were made to do and, if so, what they remember about it. Ask students how they imagine it would feel to be Daniel.

- Have students read the rest of the story. Remind them to think about what they already know about slavery and the Underground Railroad as they read.



Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Discuss how making connections with things in the text that they know something about keeps them actively involved in the reading process and helps them understand and remember what they have read.

Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Analyze setting**

- **Discussion:** Talk with students about the setting of the story. Remind them that the setting is the time and place where a story occurs (before the sun rose, outside, in the cotton fields). Ask students to tell how they know these facts (the author's words and the illustrator's pictures tell us or give us clues).
- **Introduce and model:** Review or explain that in many stories, the setting changes throughout. As readers make their way through the book, the place where the characters are may change, and the time of day, season, or year may change as well. Ask students to think about the changes in setting for this story.
- Have students turn to the table of contents. Ask which chapter titles tell the reader that there will be a setting change involved (chapters 3 through 5). Have students turn to page 8. Read through this page together, having students identify the words that depict setting (*across a field, into an old sagging barn, all day*). Explain how these words in the text show where and when the story takes place. Ask them if it would be possible for the author to tell this story without changing the setting (no). Discuss the fact that because they are running away, the setting changes.



Check for understanding: Have students turn to page 11 and circle the words in the text that depict the next setting (*dark road, from the north, across the swamp, under the pale moonlight*). Discuss how the setting that surrounds the boy is different from when the story began (morning turned to night, he's no longer in his bed, but rather in a swamp). Point out the illustrations and how they support the text.

- **Independent practice:** Have students practice identifying the changes in the setting by completing the **setting worksheet**. Discuss answers aloud when students have finished.
- **Extend the discussion:** Talk with students about what they think of Daniel's father's choice to escape from slavery. Ask how they thought Daniel and his father felt as they were hiding under the floorboards in the barn or standing in the swamp as the gunshots were fired.


Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Simple and compound subjects**

- Direct students to the second paragraph on page 16. Have a volunteer read the first sentence aloud. Ask students who or what the sentence is about (*Mr. Avery*). Explain that this is called the subject of the sentence. The *subject* tells *who* or *what* a sentence is about. Write the following sentence on the board: *The white people ignored us*. Ask students what they think the subject is. Explain that the word *white* is an adjective that tells what the subject, *people*, look like. The verb *ignored* tells what the people did.

- Tell students that some sentences have more than one subject. Write the following sentence on the board: *Daddy and I rushed into the swampy, cold water.* Ask students to tell the subjects of the sentence (*Daddy and I*). Then ask them to tell what the subjects did (*rushed into the water*). Explain that they can check their answers by using each subject separately in the sentence. Demonstrate by reading the sentence as follows: *Daddy rushed into the swampy, cold water...* and *I rushed into the swampy, cold water...* Tell students that you know both of these are subjects because they make sense with the verb.
- **Check for understanding:** Reinforce by directing students to page 17 and asking them to find the sentence that has a compound subject (*Hefty fines and jail time were the punishment...*). Ask a volunteer to check the answer by using each subject separately in the sentence. Ask students to give an example of a sentence from page 17 with one subject.
- **Independent practice:** For additional practice, have students complete the [simple-and-compound-subjects worksheet](#). Discuss students' answers when they have finished.

Word Work: **Homonyms**

- Write the word *cent* on the board and read the following sentence from page 6: *She would count every cent and tell Momma to spank me good if she thought even one penny was missing.* Ask students to tell the meaning of the word. Write the word *sent* on the board and pronounce it. Ask students if the two words mean the same thing. Explain that these words are called *homonyms*. They are words that sound the same but have different spellings and different meanings.
- Have students turn to page 9. Read the paragraph aloud as students follow along. Ask students to find the word that sounds like another word they know (*here*). Write the word on the board. Have students tell its meaning. Ask students what other word sounds like *here* but is spelled differently (*hear*). Have students tell its meaning. Write it on the board and have students compare the spellings.
-  **Check for understanding:** Read the following sentence from page 6 aloud: *Mrs. Winters used to send me to the local inn, where I did cleaning.* Ask students to identify the words that are homonyms (*inn* and *where*). Have students write the words on the inside front cover of their book, with the correct homonyms written beside them (*in* and *wear*). Instruct students to work with a partner to use each one in a complete sentence. Share the sentences aloud as a group when pairs are finished.
- **Independent practice:** Give students the [homonyms worksheet](#). Discuss students' answers when they are finished.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends.

Extend the Reading

Writing Connection

Provide print and Internet resources for students to research other influential people involved with the Underground Railroad. Have students choose one person and write a report that includes answers to *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. Have students share their reports with the group. Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on informational report writing.

Social Studies Connection

Have students make a map of the United States, color-coding the free states and the slave states. Have them label important places, such as the Ohio River, Levi Coffin's house, and any other important landmarks they know about.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- use the reading strategy of making connections to prior knowledge to better understand the text
- analyze the changes in setting
- identify simple and compound subjects
- tell what a homonym is and use examples appropriately in sentences

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**