

William Lewandowski

Lesson Plan: Life Upon the Slave Ships

Length: One 50-minute class period

Grade: 10th grade

Standard(s) addressed:

- **9.4.6.6:** Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.
- **9.5.7.7:** Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

Materials:

- *Copper Sun* by Sharon M. Draper
- History Channel Video, "Life Aboard a Slave Ship" (5 Minutes)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmQvofAiZGA>
- *Children in the Slave Trade* article with excerpt of Olaudah Equiano's Narrative, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, and a copy for each student
 - <https://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/teaching-modules/141?section=primarysources&source=143>
- Amari / Olaudah Venn Diagram Worksheet

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast similarities and differences between Amari's story upon the slave ship and Olaudah Equiano's telling of his experience.

- Discuss details, facts, and information about life on the slave ships and Transatlantic slave trade.

Assessment:

Exemplary

Objective 1: Student describes five distinct similarities or differences found between Amari's experience and Olaudah Equiano's experience on the slave ship by referencing the narratives. Each example is clearly different from one another.

Objective 2: Student engages with other students and discusses their thoughts and feelings as well as recall what they have learned about the slave ships.

Proficient

Objective 1: Student describes three to five similarities or differences found between Amari's experience and Olaudah Equiano's experience on the slave ship by referencing the narratives. A couple of the examples may overlap one another.

Objective 2: Student engages with other students and discusses what they have learned about the slave ships but does not necessarily provide their own thoughts or feelings.

Developing

Objective 1: Student describes two or three similarities or differences found between Amari's experience and Olaudah Equiano's experience on the slave ship by referencing very little from the narratives or seemed to be inferred rather than from the narratives. The examples are very similar to one another.

Objective 2: Student somewhat engages with other students and may periodically chime in about how their thoughts or a fact about what they have learned about slave ships.

Inadequate

Objective 1: Student describes only a couple similarities or differences found between Amari's experience and Olaudah Equiano's experience on the slave ship referencing very little to nothing from the narratives and seems to be off the top of their head rather than from the narratives. The examples are very similar to one another.

Objective 2: Students does not contribute to the conversation or engage with others. Discussion is absent or completely off-topic.

Procedure:

Prior to starting the lesson, students should have read through Part One of *Copper Sun* (through page 72).

1. Start out the class by asking students what they felt about Amari's journey on the slave ship. Give them a minute to write down / formulate their ideas and have a small discussion about these chapters of the book. (5-10 minutes)
2. Lead into teaching more about the slave ships. Encourage students to jot some notes down throughout the video. Show the History Channel video, "Life Aboard a Slave Ship." This video gives a very succinct but informative explanation of what the enslaved endured on their transportation to the Americas. (5 minutes)
3. After the video, in small groups, have the students discuss things that they learned from the video and their thoughts and feelings on the subject or the information. (10 minutes).
4. Next, read aloud the excerpt of Olaudah Equiano's narrative and have students follow along. This excerpt focuses on Equiano's time on a slave ship as a child of eleven years old. Make sure every student has a copy of the narrative either by passing out printed

copies or sending them the link. Give students a hint to keep an eye out for differences or similarities between his narrative and Amari's. (10 minutes)

5. Once you have read Equiano's narrative, students can choose to work alone or work with one additional person on filling out a Venn Diagram on the differences between Amari's story of being on the slave ship and Equiano's narrative. Students *each* need to fill out the Venn Diagram but can collaborate with one another to have more understanding and different perspectives. Students can find either three similarities, three differences, or a combination of both. Once they have completed the Venn Diagram, they can turn them in. (15-20 minutes)

Lack of Time:

If there is a lack of time, you could find similarities and differences as a class, though you run the risk of not all the students participating. Another idea could be to extend the lesson into two days by adding more narratives, like those from the National Humanities Center

(<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/freedom/text6/capturenarratives.pdf>), or you could add a time lapse of the Transatlantic slave trade and see how many boats and people were transported from Africa to the Americas

(<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database#timelapse>).

Differentiation:

Gifted Learner: To differentiate learning for a gifted and talented student, you may extend the lesson beyond Equiano's narrative. There are more resources they could use alongside Amari and Equiano's narratives. The following link from the National Humanities Center provides narratives of former slaves:

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/freedom/text6/capturenarratives.pdf>. These

narratives describe life as an enslaved person, stories from their parents and grandparents, as well as some more famous narratives, including another excerpt of Equiano's. This student could also compare these narratives to the two provided to the class. This will encourage deeper diving into the topic. They could also be encouraged to find more information about a particular aspect of being on the slave ships, either for the enslaved or for the white people.

ELL/Cultural Consideration: The History Channel video does have Spanish captions but unfortunately does not have Spanish audio available. For this lesson, the group discussion is the most important piece. Reflecting with the student on their learning and how their doing with the material is crucial, especially for a lesson this important on slavery. The teacher or a para could do this discussion with them too, so they can make sure they are understanding the material. As well, working in a group for the Venn Diagram will help this student because they can work together to generate ideas and put them onto paper.

Technological Differentiation: If student needs technological accommodations, the Venn Diagram is editable with the Word Document version. As well, notes could be taken with a PLD.

Citation:

This lesson was inspired by Teaching Tolerance's "Summary Objective 2," pages 8-9, *Teaching Hard History: A framework for teaching*, Teaching Tolerance, 2018. As well as Milner, Milner, and Mitchell's "Synergistic Texts" and "Venn Diagramming," pages 135-136 and 151-152, *Bridging English*, ed. 6, 2017.

Attachments:

- Amari / Olaudah Venn Diagram