

Runaway Ad – Using Primary Documents

General

Grade Level

Middle School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Other

Duration

45 minutes

Interdisciplinary Connections

This lesson can easily tie into lessons on colonial American slavery, Thomas Jefferson, or plantation occupations.

Objectives

Overview

This lesson is designed to introduce students to a runaway slave advertisement placed by Thomas Jefferson. The advertisement ran in the Virginia Gazette on September 14, 1769. The wording of this advertisement is typical of the time period and reflects not only ads run by Thomas Jefferson, but his contemporaries as well.

Prior Knowledge

None needed, but a basic background in American slavery will enhance the meaning of the lesson.

State Standards

Virginia: USI. 1a, USI.1b, USI.5c, GOVT.1a,

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

1. Students will learn to analyze a primary source document.
2. Students will learn about runaway slave advertisements
3. Students will learn about Thomas Jefferson's views on runaway slaves

Procedures

1. *5 minutes*

Pass out copies of the runaway slave ad or project it onto a large screen in the classroom.

2. *10 minutes*

Have students read through the advertisement on their own.

3. *20 minutes*

Read through ad as a group and help students to interpret the text and the meaning. Please note that in the typed text, an "s" often looks like an "f" without the horizontal cross line.

Things to keep in mind:

1. "his stature is rather low, inclining to corpulence" means that Sandy was rather short and fat.
2. He is left handed
3. He is a trained shoemaker and a horse jockey
4. He is an alcoholic who is insolent when drunk
5. He swears a lot in his conversation
6. He is sly or "knavish"
7. He ran off with a white horse which he will likely try to sell
8. He also ran off with his shoemaking tools and will likely try to earn a living as a shoemaker.
9. Why is the reward 40 shillings if he is caught in Albemarle County (the county where Monticello is located) and 4 pounds sterling if he is caught elsewhere in Virginia? (Ans: it is more expensive for someone to return Sandy to Thomas Jefferson from a farther distance away.)

4. *10 minutes*

Discuss the advertisement with students.

1. How does this qualify as a primary document?
2. What do we know about Sandy from this advertisement?
3. What does this advertisement tell us about Thomas Jefferson?

Thomas Jefferson
MONTICELLO