

Nat Turner's Revolt and Its Effects

GRADE LEVEL **Middle School**

TIME ESTIMATE **6- day experience (five 45-minute periods and one 3-hour site tour)**

OVERVIEW

The students have spent the year learning about Virginia. The units that have been taught thus far are: Virginia geography (involving map skills), Virginia's Native Inhabitants, Jamestown, The American Revolution, and The New Nation (how Virginians – Washington, Madison, Mason, and Jefferson – contributed to our country). This mini-unit is part of the unit on the Civil War. Students will already know the differences between the economies of the North and South. They will understand the disagreements about whether or not new states should be slave or free. They will also have an understanding of what life under slavery was like. After completing this mini-unit the students will be able to describe the various ways that slaves resisted their enslavement, and how Nat Turner in particular resisted slavery. They will be able to discuss the various perspectives of slave owners, abolitionists, and slaves concerning this revolt, as well as the direct effects of the rebellion. (They will be able to explain the enactment of the slave codes as well as why this rebellion helped lead Virginia to secession and war.) The students will be able to analyze various primary and secondary sources that will lead them to the understandings discussed above.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Differences in the Northern and Southern economies became evident during the early 1800s, a period of much growth and change. Many important events occurred at this time. In 1801, Thomas Jefferson became President. In 1804, Lewis and Clark explored the Louisiana Purchase. In 1809, Madison became President, followed by Monroe in 1817. The War of 1812 with Britain occurred. In 1823, President Monroe issued the Monroe Doctrine. Arguments arose between the states as to whether or not new states should be labeled as slave or free. In 1822, Denmark Vesey's attempt at insurrection failed. In 1829, a convention met in Virginia to write a new state constitution that gave only whites the right to vote. There was also a backlash against anti-slavery literature and the Virginia legislature made it illegal to teach slaves to read or write. Following this, on September 25, 1830, the first national Negro convention occurred in Philadelphia. In 1831, Garrison published his first issue of The Liberator. Lastly, in 1833, after Nat Turner's rebellion, the American Anti-Slavery Society was formed on December 4, 1833, in Philadelphia.

Slavery changed over time and was enforced differently in various regions. It did not consist solely of a cruel master abusing a slave on a large cotton plantation. Poor whites for example, had little interest in enforcing slavery. In South Carolina and Virginia, slavery was introduced when the frontier was being explored, and thus many blacks worked with whites and indentured servants. In Virginia, some African Americans worked on small farms. And thus were treated differently than those on larger plantations in other states. During the frontier period, slaves were viewed as cunning and deceptive. When the plantation system arose however, slaves were often

viewed as stupid and witless. Over time, slaves came to be viewed more and more as property rather than servants. The American Revolution however, gave slaves an opportunity to point to the injustice of the system. It also led many slave owners to gain political power in the new country. The Supreme Court was also ruled by slaveholders between the ratification of the Constitution and the Civil War.

Slavery was a controversial issue for many Americans. When slavery was first introduced in the Americas, there was some difficulty in determining whether a person would be categorized as a slave nor not. In 1808, the slave trade was prohibited by Article I, Section 9, Clause 1 of the Constitution, but by then, only South Carolina was still importing slaves. Article 4, Section 2, Clause 3 of the Constitution stated that a runaway slave had to be returned to their owner. However, Thomas Jefferson had doubts as to the validity of slavery. After the American Revolution, slavery seemed very hypocritical. Later on, Lincoln suggested that the Civil War was divine punishment by God for the institution of slavery.

From 1800 to 1860, Virginia had more slaves than any other state. Slaves were treated as property and were often separated from their families. They usually worked five-and-a-half days a week. Some slaves planted, others were domestic servants, blacksmiths, carpenters, and other skilled laborers. Slave children often worked in the gardens and kitchens and took care of livestock. Slaves resisted their enslavement in many ways, including running away, breaking tools, allowing farm animals to escape, and stealing.

Nat Turner was born on 3 October 1800, on the Benjamin Turner Farm in Southampton County, Virginia. He learned to read and write with the Turner children and eventually became a religious mystic and itinerate preacher. He believed that he was God's messenger, sent to save his people. He came to this belief through several visions he had of black and white angels fighting. Several signs, including a solar eclipse, and a strange atmospheric effect in the sky, persuaded Turner that it was time for his violent rebellion. Turner and six other men: Hark, Henry, Nelson, Sam, Will and Jack, met on 21 August 1831, to launch the rebellion. The revolt occurred in Southampton County, Virginia, an area of mostly small farms. The people in the county as well as Virginia in general, considered themselves to be benevolent slave owners. They did not expect their slaves to rebel. The rebellion began at Joseph Travis's house. Travis was the stepfather of Nat Turner's owner, Putnam Moore. At the Travis house Turner's followers killed the entire family. The slaves went from farm to farm for 12 hours, killing any whites in sight. Most of the people killed were women and children as many of the men were away at a revival. Some slaves helped defend their masters against the rebels. Other slaves joined the revolt throughout the day; so that there were almost 60 slaves participating in the rebellion before it was suppressed by the militia. Turner's main objective, as he stated to Thomas Gray, was to create terror and alarm. In all, 57 whites were killed. Turner admitted to only having killed one teenaged girl. He hid in the woods for several days after the revolt until he was captured and jailed in Jerusalem (today's Courtland) on October 30. Nat Turner and 20 of his followers were killed because of his revolt, more deaths than in any other slave revolt in United States' history.

The revolt caused a tremendous amount of fear in the area. Governor John Floyd received many demands for men and guns to put down supposed slave rebellions. Many innocent blacks, at least 120, were murdered in the aftermath. Governor Floyd thought that Nat Turner's revolt was the

result of black preachers and Northern agitators promoting the abolition of slavery. Many Southerners connected this rebellion to Northern abolitionists' desires to end slavery. Some charged William Garrison with instigating Turner as well. Garrison denied this by saying that he and his abolitionists were Christian pacifists who sought to earn their liberation through moral argument.

Before Turner's revolt, many lawmakers wanted to end slavery. Nevertheless, the violence and fear triggered by this event made many feel they needed to control slaves more strictly. Some whites considered Turner a cruel, deceptive man who used religion to persuade other slaves to commit horrific crimes. Others viewed him as a true religious fanatic. Some whites who considered Turner's actions evil still believed that slavery needed to be abolished, and that slavery was immoral. The black abolitionist David Walker and Thomas Jefferson had both predicted that slavery would cause such a dangerous and rebellious person as Nat Turner. His revolt led many abolitionists to further action.

The Virginia legislature met as a result of the revolt. Some representatives from areas west of the Blue Ridge Mountains wanted slavery abolished. Governor Floyd, a slave owner, thought that statewide abolition was the only way to prevent future attacks of a similar nature. Some put forth plans to have all blacks colonized at the state's expense in Liberia, on the east coast of Africa. They debated the gradual abolition of slavery, but decided to tighten the slave codes instead. These codes strengthened the militia systems. It became illegal for black preachers to preach without a white man present or for blacks to assemble without a white presence. African Americans were not allowed to own guns or to learn to read or write. Speaking against slavery also became a crime. The point of these codes was to prevent African Americans from communicating or meeting in large groups. Thomas Randolph, a grandson of Thomas Jefferson's, who had advocated gradual abolition, predicted at the meeting of the House of Delegates that the dissolution of the Union would soon occur because of slavery. Slave discipline was enforced more strictly in order to prevent another rebellion. However, to many blacks of the period, Nat Turner became a hero who had stood up against injustice, giving the whites a taste of their own medicine.

Overall, there were few slave rebellions in the U.S. because slavery was policed very diligently. The three major 19th-century plots in the United States (by Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner) all occurred outside the plantation belt, and all the leaders were more educated men than the average slave. Religion was also important in these three rebellions, reflecting its importance in the slave community. Such rebellions showed that slaves were not happy and that the plantation system was not as seamless as it seemed.

Harriet Tubman later (1850-1860) helped slaves resist slavery by leading them northward on the Underground Railroad. In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe spoke out against slavery in her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A slave, 'Fed,' later called John Brown, who was born in Southampton County, was sold into harsh slavery in Georgia and eventually escaped north via the Underground Railway. He published a telling book in 1854 entitled *A Narration of a Slave's Life in Georgia*, similar to other books such as *Twelve Years a Slave* that told the story of slavery in the Deep South. In 1857, the Dred Scott decision was a landmark Supreme Court decision which stated that anyone of African descent was not an American citizen and that slavery could be

practiced throughout the United States. In 1859, abolitionist John Brown led a raid at Harper's Ferry, in today's West Virginia, in an attempt to start a slave rebellion. Then in 1861, the Confederacy was formed prompted by the 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln as president.

Turner remains a problematic figure today. If he is accepted as an American revolutionary, then his means of violence is also sanctioned. Still, others consider him a man of God who acted against injustice. He is viewed by some as a leader in the black community, and by others as a religious fanatic. Still others believe him to be motivated by pure vengeance. Nat Turner will always be a controversial figure in United States history.

MAJOR UNDERSTANDING

Students will understand that Nat Turner's rebellion was a sign of the underlying discontent of slaves in the South. Moreover, this rebellion was one of the factors that eventually helped lead Virginia to secession. It caused greater fear and stricter enforcement of the slave codes by Southern whites. It also solidified the divisions in various Americans' perspectives on the institution of slavery.

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION – EVENTS OF THE REBELLION

TIME ESTIMATED: 1 DAY

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Examine *The Confessions of Nat Turner* to describe how Nat Turner resisted his enslavement.
2. Examine an article from *The Liberator*, another newspaper account, and a woodcut from the time to explain the reactions of slave owners, abolitionists, and slaves to this revolt.
3. Be given a primary source quote from a person of the time, and will participate in a role play meeting of the Virginia legislature in order to decide what should be done concerning Turner's revolt.
4. Compare and contrast the results of their role play with the historical information available.
5. State the effects of the rebellion (How it was one of the events leading to secession, and how it caused stricter slave codes to be enacted).
6. Create a newspaper article or cartoon that reflects a particular perspective from the time.
7. Analyze newspaper articles, a woodcut, a message from the Governor, and a draft of a bill that are primary sources from this time period.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Skills

VS.1 The student will develop skills for historical and geographical analysis including the ability to:

- a) Identify and interpret artifacts and primary and secondary source documents to understand events in history;
- b) Determine cause and effect relationships.

Content

VS.7 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the issues that divided our nation and led to the Civil War by:

- a) Identifying the events and differences between the Northern and Southern states that divided Virginians and led to secession, war, and the creation of West Virginia, such as that: Nat Turner led a revolt against slave owners in Virginia.

CULMINATING ASSESSMENT

The assessment will be broken into two days. On the first day, the students will be given a role to play in the Virginia Assembly. They will need to determine whether to keep or end slavery.

Objectives

Students will:

1. Predict how slaves might respond to slavery;
2. Analyze a woodcut image by Samuel Warner to determine the point of view and the message it portrays;
3. Examine *The Confessions of Nat Turner* to explain what took place during Nat Turner's revolt and why Turner led his revolt;
4. Determine Thomas Gray's point of view by examining Turner's confessions.

Materials

- Utilize selections from *The Confessions of Nat Turner* - <http://www.melanet.com/nat/nat.html>
- Establish vocabulary from *The Confessions of Nat Turner*
- Provide guiding questions for Turner's confession
- Prepare teacher's notes on how slaves dealt with slavery (see Historical Background section)
- Develop teacher's notes on the context of Turner's confession (see Historical Background section)
- Create teacher's notes on Turner's rebellion (see Historical Background section)
- Analyze woodcut image "Horrid Massacre in Virginia" by Samuel Warner – <http://www.historymatters/gmu.edu/d/6811>
- Design guiding questions for Warner's woodcut image
- Develop Virginia timeline of important events (wall timeline)

Strategies

1. Hook: Students predict to a partner and then share predictions with the class about how slaves will respond to slavery. What choices do the slaves have? Which choices will they most likely pick and why?
2. Review Virginia timeline posted. Review/discuss events of the time period. What direction do we seem to be heading toward? (Students should point out tensions between North and South over a variety of issues, including slavery.)
3. Introduce Nat Turner – provide a brief character sketch. Inform students that he chose to respond to slavery by leading a revolt.
4. Pass out Samuel Warner’s woodcut and guiding questions worksheet – explain questions and models how to analyze the image.
5. Students analyze Samuel Warner’s woodcut with a partner, working through the guiding questions worksheet.
6. After students have completed the first few questions that deal purely with observation, the class will share their answers. The teacher will then model a “think aloud” for the students on how to use these observations to draw conclusions about the maker’s perspective and the message being portrayed. (E.g. “We said that this woodcut shows a white man and woman on their knees being killed.”)

Reading List

Nat Turner, Lightning Rod

This article details the events of the rebellion, as well as various perspectives of people at the time and in present day.

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/black_voices_display.cfm?id=70

“The Confessions of Nat Turner”

Nat Turner explains his motivation for his revolt, as well as what occurred before, during and after the rebellion.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h499t.html>

The *Richmond Enquirer* on Nat Turner’s Rebellion

Provides an excerpt from the newspaper’s account describing the men involved in the slave rebellion as blood-thirsty wolves. Calls for a stricter enforcement of the law and the forbidding of black men to preach. This site also gives an extract of a letter from Jerusalem, Virginia, denouncing Turner and applauding the slaves who stood by their masters.

<http://www.pbd.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h500.html>

This source provides Nat Turner’s confessions, as well as context information on the circumstances in which he gave Thomas Gray his confessions, and Grey’s perspectives on Turner.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1561.html>

This site provides a biography of William Lloyd Garrison.

<http://www.melanet.com/nat/nat.html>

This site provides the complete text of *The Confessions of Nat Turner* that are used in the lessons.

The Confessions of Nat Turner
(Use with Lesson 1)

Be it remembered, That on this tenth day of November, Anno Domini, eighteen hundred and thirty-one, **Thomas R. Gray** of the said District, deposited in this office the title of a book, which is in the words as following.

The Confessions of Nat Turner, the leader of the late insurrection in Southampton, Virginia, as fully and voluntarily made to Thomas R. Gray, in the prison where he was confined. and acknowledged by him to be such when read before the Court of Southampton, with the certificate, under seal, of the Court convened at Jerusalem, November 5, 1831, for his trial. Also, an authentic account of the whole insurrection, and with lists of the whites who were murdered, and of the negroes brought before the Court of Southampton, and there sentenced, &., the right where of he claims as proprietor, in conformity with an Act of Congress, entitled, "An act to amend the several acts respecting Copy Rights."

The Confession

Agreeable to his own appointment, on the evening he was committed to prison, with permission of the jailer, I visited NAT on Tuesday the 1st November, when, without being questioned at all, he commenced his narrative in the following words:

SIR, - You have asked me to give a history of the motives which induced me to undertake the late insurrection, as you call it - To do so I must go back to the days of my infancy, and even before I was born. I was thirty-one years of age the 2nd of October last, and born the property of Benj. Tuner, of this county. In my childhood a circumstance occurred which made an indelible impression on my mind, and laid the ground work of that enthusiasm, which has terminated so fatally to many, both white and black, and for which I am about to atone at the gallows. It is here necessary to relate this circumstance - trifling as it may seem, it was the commencement of that belief which has grown with time, and even now, sir, in this dungeon, helpless and forsaken as I am, I cannot divest myself of. Being at play with other children, when three or four years old, I was telling them something, which my mother overhearing, said it had happened before I was born - I stuck to my story, however, and related some thing's which went, in her opinion, to confirm it - others being called on were greatly astonished, knowing that these things had happened, and caused them to say in my hearing, I surely would be a prophet, as the Lord had shewn me things that had happened before my birth. And my father and mother strengthened me in this my first impression, saying in my presence, I was intended for some great purpose, which they had always thought from certain marks on my head and breast - [a parcel of excrescence's which I believe are not at all uncommon, particularly among Negroes, as I have seen several with the same. In this case he has either cut them off or they have nearly disappeared] - My

grandmother, who was very religious, and to whom I was much attached - my master, who belonged to the church, and other religious persons who visited the house, and whom I often saw at prayers, noticing the singularity of my manners, I suppose, and my uncommon intelligence for a child, remarked I had too much sense to be raised, and if I was, I would never be of any service to any one as a slave - To a mind like mine, restless, inquisitive and observant of every thing that was passing, it is easy to suppose that religion was the subject to which it would be directed, and although this subject principally occupied my thoughts - there was nothing that I saw or heard of to which my attention was not directed - The manner in which I learned to read and write, not only had great influence on my own mind, as I acquired it with the most perfect ease, so much so, that I have no recollection whatever of learning the alphabet- but to the astonishment of the family, one day when a book was shewn to me to keep me from crying, I began spelling the names of different objects - this was a source of wonder to all in the neighborhood, particularly the blacks - and this learning was constantly improved at all opportunities - when I got large enough to go to work, while employed, I was reflecting on many things that would present themselves to my imagination, and whenever an opportunity occurred of looking at a book, when the school children were getting their lessons, I would find many things that the fertility of my own imagination had depicted to me before; all my time, not devoted to my master's service, was spent either in prayer, or in making experiments in casting different things in molds made of earth, in attempting to make paper, gun-powder and many other experiments, that although I could not perfect, yet convinced me of its practicability if I had the means. I was not addicted to stealing in my youth, nor have ever been - Yet such was the confidence of the Negroes in the neighborhood, even at this early period of my life, in my superior judgment, that they would often carry me with them when they were going on any roguery, to plan for them. Growing up among them with this confidence in my superior judgment, and when this, in their opinions, was perfected by Divine inspiration, from the circumstances already alluded to in my infancy, and which belief was ever afterwards zealously inculcated by the austerity of my life and manners, which became the subject of remark by white and black. Having soon discovered to be great, I must appear so, and therefore studiously avoided mixing in society, and wrapped myself in mystery, devoting my time to fasting and prayer - By this time having arrived to man's estate, and hearing the scriptures commented on at meetings, I was struck with that particular passage which says: "Seek ye the kingdom of Heaven and all things shall be added unto you." I reflected much on this passage, and prayed daily for light on this subject - As I was praying one day at my plough, the spirit spoke to me, saying "Seed ye the kingdom of Heaven and all things shall be added unto you." Question - what do you mean by the Spirit. Ans. The Spirit that spoke to the prophets in former days - and I was greatly astonished, and for two years prayed continually, whenever my duty would permit - and then again I had the same revelation, which fully confirmed me in the impression that I was ordained for some great purpose in the hands of the Almighty. Several years rolled round, in which many events occurred to strengthen me in this my belief. At this time I reverted in my mind to the remarks made of me in my childhood, and the things that had been shewn me - and as it had been said of me in my childhood by those by whom I had been taught to pray, both white and black, and in whom I had the greatest confidence, that I had too much sense to be raised, and if I was, I would never be of any use to any one as a slave. Now finding I had arrived to man's estate, and was a slave, and these revelations being made known to me, I began to direct my attention to this great object, to fulfill the purpose for which, by this time, I felt assured I was intended. Knowing the influence I had obtained over the minds of my fellow servants, (not by the means of conjuring and such like

tricks - for to them I always spoke of such things with contempt) but by the communion of the Spirit whose revelations I often communicated to them, and they believed and said my wisdom came from God. I now began to prepare them for my purpose, by telling them something was about to happen that would terminate in fulfilling the great promise that had been made to me - About this time I was placed under an overseer, from whom I ran away and after remaining in the woods thirty days, I returned, to the astonishment of the Negroes on the plantation, who thought I had made my escape to some other part of the country, as my father had done before. But the reason of my return was, that the Spirit appeared to me and said I had my wishes directed to the things of this world, and not to the kingdom of Heaven, and that I should return to the service of my earthly master - "For he who knoweth his Master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, and thus have I chastened you." And the Negroes found fault, and murmured against me, saying that if they had my sense they would not serve any master in the world. And about this time I had a vision - and I saw white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle, and the sun was darkened - the thunder rolled in the Heavens, and blood flowed in streams and I heard a voice saying, "Such is your luck, such you are called to see, and let it come rough or smooth, you must surely bare it. I now withdrew myself as much as my situation would permit, from the intercourse of my fellow servants, for the avowed purpose of serving the Spirit more fully - and it appeared to me, and reminded me of the things it had already shown me, and that it would then reveal to me the knowledge of the elements, the revolution of the planets, the operation of tides, and changes of the seasons. After this revelation in the year of 1825, and the knowledge of the elements being made known to me, I sought more than ever to obtain true holiness before the great day of judgment should appear, and then I began to receive the true knowledge of faith. And from the first steps of righteousness until the last, was I made perfect; and the Holy Ghost was with me, and said, "Behold me as I stand in the Heavens" - and I looked and saw the forms of men in different attitudes - and there were lights in the sky to which the children of darkness gave other names than what they really were- for they were the lights of the Savior's hands, stretched forth from east to west, even as they were extended on the cross on Calvary for the redemption of sinners. And I wondered greatly at these miracles, and prayed to be informed of a certainty of the meaning thereof - and shortly afterwards, while laboring in the field, I discovered drops of blood on the corn as though it were dew from heaven - and I communicated it to many, both white and black, in the neighborhood - and I then found on the leaves in the woods hieroglyphic characters, and numbers, with the forms of men in different attitudes, portrayed in blood, and representing the figures I had seen before in the heavens. And now the Holy Ghost had revealed itself to me, and made plain the miracles it had shown me - For as the blood of Christ had been shed on this earth, and had ascended to heaven for the salvation of sinners, and was now returning to earth again in the form of dew - and as the leaves on the trees bore impression of the figures I had seen in the heavens, it was plain to me that the Savior was about to lay down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and the great day of judgment was at hand. About this time I told these things to a white man, (Etheldred T. Brantley) on whom it had a wonderful effect - and he ceased from his wickedness, and was attacked immediately with a cutaneous eruption, and blood oozed from the pores of his skin, and after praying and fasting nine days, he was healed, and the Spirit appeared to me again, and said, as the Savior had been baptised so should we be also - and when the white people would not let us be baptised by the church, we went down into the water together, in the sight of many who reviled us, and were baptised by the spirit - After this I rejoiced greatly, and gave thanks to God. And on the 12th of May, 1828, I heard a loud noise in the heavens, and the Spirit instantly appeared to me and said

the Serpent was loosened, and Christ had laid down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and that I should take it on and fight against the Serpent, for the time was fast approaching when the first should be last and the last should be first.

Ques. Do you not find yourself mistaken now?

Ans. Was not Christ crucified? And by signs in the heavens that it would make known to me when I should commence the great work - and until the first sign appeared, I should conceal it from the knowledge of men - And on the appearance of the sign, (the eclipse of the sun last February) I should arise and prepare myself, and slay my enemies with their own weapons. And immediately on the sign appearing in the heavens, the seal was removed from my lips, and I communicated the great work laid out for me to do, to four in whom I had the greatest confidence, (Henry, Hark, Nelson, and Sam) - It was intended by us to have begun the work of death on the 4th of July last - Many were the plans formed and rejected by us, and it affected my mind to such degree, that I fell sick, and the time passed without our coming to any determination how to commence - Still forming new schemes and rejecting them, when the sign appeared again, which determined me not to wait longer.

Since the commencement of 1830, I had been living with Mr. Joseph Travis, who was to me a kind master, and placed the greatest confidence in me; in fact, I had no cause to complain of his treatment to me. On Saturday evening, the 20th of August, it was agreed between Henry, Hark, and myself, to prepare a dinner the next day for the men we expected, and then to concert a plan, as we had not yet determined on any. Hark, on the following morning, brought a pig, and Henry brandy, and being joined by Sam, Nelson, Will and Jack, they prepared in the woods a dinner, where, about three o'clock, I joined them.

Q. Why were you so backward in joining them?

A. The same reason that had caused me not to mix with them for years before.

I saluted them on coming up, and asked Will how came he there, he answered, his life was worth no more than others, and his liberty as dear to him. I asked him if he thought to obtain it. He said he would, or lose his life. This was enough to put him in full confidence. Jack, I knew, was only a tool in the hands of Hark, it was quickly agreed we should commence at home (Mr. J. Travis') on that night, and until we had armed and equipped ourselves, and gathered sufficient force, neither age nor sex was to be spared, (which was invariably adhered to). We remained at the feast, until about two hours in the night, when we went to the house and found Austin; they all went to the cider press and drank, except myself. On returning to the house, Hark went to the door with an axe, for the purpose of breaking it open, as we knew we were strong enough to murder the family, if they were awaked by the noise; but reflecting that it might create an alarm in the neighborhood, we determined to enter the house secretly, and murder them whilst sleeping. Hark got a ladder and set it against the chimney, on which I ascended, and hoisting a window, entered and came down stairs, unbarred the door, and removed the guns from their places. It was then observed that I must spill the first blood. On which, armed with a hatchet, and accompanied by Will, I entered my master's chamber, it being dark, I could not give a death blow, the hatchet glanced from his head, he sprang from the bed and called his wife, it was his last word, Will laid him dead, with a blow of his axe, and Mrs. Travis shared the same fate, as she lay in bed. The

murder of this family, five in number, was the work of a moment, not one of them awoke; there was a little infant sleeping in a cradle, that was forgotten, until we had left the house and gone some distance, when Henry and Will returned and killed it; we got here, four guns that would shoot, and several old muskets, with a pound or two of powder. We remained some time at the barn, where we paraded; I formed them in a line as soldiers, and after carrying them through all the maneuvers I was master of marched them off to Mr. Salathul Francis', about six hundred yards distant. Sam and Will went to the door and knocked. Mr. Francis asked who was there, Sam replied it was him, and he had a letter for him, on which he got up and came to the door; they immediately seized him, and dragging him out a little from the door, he was dispatched by repeated blows on the head; there was no other white person in the family. We started from there for Mrs. Reese's, Maintaining the most perfect silence on our march, where finding the door unlocked, we entered, and murdered Mrs. Reese in her bed, while sleeping; her son awoke, but it was only to sleep the sleep of death, he had only time to say who is that, and he was no more. From Mrs. Reese's we went to Mrs. Turner's, a mile distant, which we reached about sunrise, on Monday morning. Henry, Austin, and Sam, went to the still, where, finding Mr. Peeples, Austin shot him, and the rest of us went to the house; as we approached, the family discovered us, and shut the door. Vain hope! Will, with one stroke of his axe, opened it, and we entered and found Mrs. Turner and Mrs. Newsome in the middle of a room, almost frightened to death. Will immediately killed Mrs. Turner, with one blow of his axe. I took Mrs. Newsome by the hand, and with the sword I had when I was apprehended, I struck her several blows over the head, but not being able to kill her, as the sword was dull. Will turning around and discovering it, despatched her also. A general destruction of property and search for money and ammunition always succeeded the murders. By this time my company amounted to fifteen, and nine men mounted, who started for Mrs. Whitehead's (the other six were to go through a by way to Mr. Bryant's and rejoin us at Mrs. Whitehead's,) as we approached the house we discovered Mr. Richard Whitehead standing in the cotton patch, near the lane fence; we called him over into the lane, and Will, the executioner, was near at hand, with his fatal axe, to send him to an untimely grave. As we pushed on to the house, I discovered some one run round the garden, and thinking it was some of the white family, I pursued them, but finding it was a servant girl belonging to the house, I left, had not been idle; all the family were already murdered, but Mrs. Whitehead and her daughter Margaret. As I came round to the door I saw Will pulling Mrs. Whitehead out of the house, and at the step he nearly severed her head from her body, with his broad axe. Miss Margaret, when I discovered her, had concealed herself in the corner, formed by the projection of cellar cap from the house; on my approach she fled, but was soon overtaken, and after repeated blows with a sword, I killed her by a blow on the head, with a fence rail. BY this time, the six who had gone by Mr. Bryant's, rejoined us, and informed me they had done the work of death assigned them. We again divided, part going to Mr. Richard Porter's, and from thence to Nathaniel Francis', the others to Mr. Howell Harris', and Mr. T. Doyles. On my reaching Mr. Porter's, he had escaped with his family. I understood there, that the alarm had already spread, and I immediately returned to bring up those sent to Mr. Doyles, and Mr. Howell Harris'; the party I left going on to Mr. Francis', having told them I would join them in that neighborhood. I met these sent to Mr. Doyles' and Mr. Harris' returning, having met Mr. Doyle on the road and killed him; and learning from some who joined them, that Mr. Harris was from home, I immediately pursued the course taken by the party gone on before; but knowing they would complete the work of death and pillage at Mr. Francis' before I could get there, I went to Mr. Peter Edwards', expecting to find them there, but they had been here also. I then went to Mr.

John T. Barrow's they had been here and murdered him. I pursued on their track to Capt. Newitt Harris', where I found the greater part mounted, and ready to start; the men now amounting to about forty, shouted and hurraed as I rode up, some were in the yard, loading their guns, others drinking. They said Captain Harris and his family had escaped, the property in the houses they destroyed, robbing him of money and other valuables. I ordered them to mount and march instantly, this was about nine or ten o'clock, Monday morning. I proceeded to Mr. Levi Waller's, two or three miles distant. I took my station in the rear, and as it was my object to carry terror and devastation wherever we went, I placed fifteen or twenty of the best armed and most relied on, in front, who generally approached the houses as fast as their horses could run; this was for two purposes, to prevent escape and strike terror to the inhabitants - on this account I never got to the houses, after leaving Mrs. Whitehead's, until the murders were committed, except in one case. I sometimes got in sight in time to see the work of death completed, viewed the mangled bodied as they lay, in silent satisfaction, and immediately started in quest of other victims - Having murdered Mrs. Waller and ten children, we started for Mr. William'- having killed him and two little boys that were there; while engaged in this, Mrs. Williams fled and got some distance from the house, but she was pursued, overtaken, and compelled to get up behind one of the company, who brought her back, and after showing her the mangled body of her lifeless husband, she was told to get down and lay by his side, where she was shot dead. I then started for Mr. Jacob Williams. where the family were murdered - Here he found a young man named Drury, who had come on business with Mr. Williams - he was pursued, overtaken and shot. Mrs. Vaughan was the next place we visited - and after murdering the family here, I determined on starting for Jerusalem - Our number amounted now to fifty or sixty, all mounted and armed with guns, axes, swords and clubs - On reaching Mr. James W. Parker's gate, immediately on the road leading to Jerusalem, and about three miles distant, it was proposed to me to call there, but objected, as I knew he was gone to Jerusalem, and my object was to reach there as soon as possible; but some of the men having relations at Mr. Parker's it was agreed that they might call and get his people. I remained at the gate on the road, with seven or eight; the others going across the field to the house, about half a mile off. After waiting some time for them, I became impatient, and stated to the house for them, and on our return we were met by a party of white men, who had pursued our blood-stained track, and who had fired on those at the gate, and dispersed them, which I knew nothing of, not having been at that time rejoined by any of them - Immediately on discovering the whites. I ordered my men to halt and form, as they appeared to be alarmed - The white men, eighteen in number, approached us in about one hundred yards, when one of them fired, (this was against the positive orders of Captain Alexander P. Peete, who commanded, and who had directed the men to reserve their fire until within thirty paces) - And I discovered about half of them retreating, I then ordered my men to fire and rush on them; the few remaining stood their ground until we approached within fifty yards, when they fired and retreated. We pursued and overtook some of them who we thought we left dead; (they were not killed) after pursuing them about two hundred yards, and rising a little hill, I discovered they were met by another party, and had halted, and were re-loading their guns, (this was a small party from Jerusalem who knew the Negroes were in the field, and had just tied their horses to await their return to the road, knowing that Mr. Parker and family were in Jerusalem, but knew nothing of the party that had gone in with Captain Peete; on hearing the firing they immediately rushed to the spot and arrived just in time to arrest the progress of these barbarous villains, and save the lives of their friends and fellow citizens). Thinking that those who retreated first, and the party who fired on us at fifty or sixty yards distant, had all fallen back to meet others with ammunition.

As I saw them reloading their guns, and more coming up than I saw at first. and several of my bravest men being wounded, the others became panick struck and squandered over the field; the white men pursued and fired on us several times. Hark had his horse shot under him, and I caught another for him as it was running by me; five or six of my men were wounded, but none left on the field; finding myself defeated here I instantly determined to go through a private way, and cross the Nottoway river at the Cypress Bridge, three miles below Jerusalem, and attack that place in the rear, as I expected they would look for me on the other road, and I had a great desire to get there to procure arms and ammunition. After going a short distance in this private way, accompanied by about twenty men, I overtook two or three who told me the others were dispersed in every direction. After trying in vain to collect a sufficient force to proceed to Jerusalem, I determined to return, as I was sure they would make back to their old neighborhood, where they would rejoin me, make new recruits, and come down again. On my way back, I called at Mrs. Thomas's, Mrs. Spencer's and several other places, the white families having fled, we found no more victims to gratify our thirst for blood, we stopped at Major Ridley's quarter for the night, and being joined by four of his men, with the recruits made since my defeat, we mustered now about forty strong. After placing out sentinels, I laid down to sleep, but was quickly roused by a great racket; starting up, I found some mounted, and others in great confusion; one of the sentinels having given the alarm that we were about to be attacked, I ordered some to ride round and reconnoitre, and on their return the others being more alarmed, not knowing who they were, fled in different ways, so that I was reduced to about twenty again; with this I determined to attempt to recruit, and proceed on to rally in the neighborhood, I had left. Dr. Blunt's was the nearest house, which we reached just before day; on riding up the yard, Hark fired a gun. We expected Dr. Blunt and his family were at Maj. Ridley's as I knew there was a company of men there; the gun was fired to ascertain if any of the family were at home; we were immediately fired upon and retreated, leaving several of my men. I do not know what became of them, as I never saw them afterwards. Pursuing our course back and coming in sight of Captain Harris', where we had been the day before, we discovered a party of white men at the house, on which all deserted me but two, (Jacob and Nat), we concealed ourselves in the woods until near night, when I sent them in search of Henry, Sam, Nelson, and Hark, and directed them to rally all they could, at the place we had had our dinner the Sunday before, where they would find me, and I accordingly returned there as soon as it was dark and remained until Wednesday evening, when discovering white men riding around the place as though they were looking for some one, and none of my men joining me, I concluded Jacob and Nat had been taken, and compelled to betray me. On this I gave up all hope for the present; and on Thursday night after having supplied myself with provisions from Mr. Travis's, I scratched a hole under a pile of fence rails in a field, where I concealed myself for six weeks, never leaving my hiding place but for a few minutes in the dead of night to get water which was very near; thinking by this time I could venture out, I began to go about in the night and eaves drop the houses in the neighborhood; pursuing this course for about a fortnight and gathering little or no intelligence, afraid of speaking to any human being, and returning every morning to my cave before the dawn of day. I know not how long I might have led this life, if accident had not betrayed me, a dog in the neighborhood passing by my hiding place one night while I was out, was attracted by some meat I had in my cave, and crawled in and stole it, and was coming out just as I returned. A few nights after, two Negroes having started to go hunting with the same dog, and passed that way, the dog came again to the place, and having just gone out to walk about, discovered me and barked, on which thinking myself discovered, I spoke to them to beg concealment. On making myself

known they fled from me. Knowing then they would betray me, I immediately left my hiding place, and was pursued almost incessantly until I was taken a fortnight afterwards by Mr. Benjamin Phipps, in a little hole I had dug out with my sword, for the purpose of concealment, under the top of a fallen tree. On Mr. Phipps' discovering the place of my concealment, he cocked his gun and aimed at me. I requested him not to shoot and I would give up, upon which he demanded my sword. I delivered it to him, and he brought me to prison. During the time I was pursued, I had many hair breadth escapes, which your time will not permit you to relate. I am here loaded with chains, and willing to suffer the fate that awaits me.

here I proceeded to make some inquiries of him, after assuring him of the certain death that awaited him, and that concealment would only bring destruction on the innocent as well as guilty, of his own color, if he knew of any extensive or concerted plan.

His answer was, I do not.

When I questioned him as to the insurrection in North Carolina happening about the same time, he denied any knowledge of it; and when I looked him in the face as though I would search his inmost thoughts, he replied, "I see sir, you doubt my word; but can you not think the same ideas, and strange appearances about this time in the heaven's might prompt others, as well as myself, to this undertaking."

I now had much conversation with him and asked him many questions, having forborne to do so previously, except in the cases noted in parenthesis; but during his statement, I had, unnoticed by him, taken notes as to some particular circumstances, and having the advantage of his statement before me in writing, on the evening of the third day that I had been with him, I began a cross examination, and found his statement corroborated by every circumstance coming within my own knowledge or the confessions of others who had been either killed or executed, and whom he had not seen nor had any knowledge since 22nd of August last, he expressed himself fully satisfied as to the impracticability of his attempt. It has been said he was ignorant and cowardly, and that his object was to murder and rob for the purpose of obtaining money to make his escape. It is notorious, that he was never known to have a dollar in his life; to swear an oath, or drink a drop of spirits. As to his ignorance, he certainly never had the advantages of education, but he can read and write, (it was taught him by his parents), and for natural intelligence and quickness of apprehension, is surpassed by few men I have ever seen. As to his being a coward, his reason as given for not resisting Mr. Phipps, shews the decision of his character. When he saw Mr. Phipps present his gun, he said he knew it was impossible for him to escape as the woods were full of men; he therefore thought it was better to surrender, and trust to fortune for his escape. He is a complete fanatic, or plays his part most admirably. On other subjects he possesses an uncommon share of intelligence, with a mind capable of attaining any thing; but warped and perverted by the influence of early impressions. He is below the ordinary stature, though strong and active, having the true Negro face, ever feature of which is strongly marked. I shall not attempt to describe the effect of his narrative, as told and commented on by himself, in the condemned hole of the prison. The calm, deliberate composure with which he spoke of his late deeds and intentions, the expression of his fiend-like face when excited by enthusiasm, still bearing the stains of the blood of helpless innocence about him; clothed with rags and covered with chains; yet daring to raise his manacled hands to heaven, with a spirit soaring above the attributes of man; I looked on him and my blood curdled in my veins.

I will not shock the feelings of humanity, nor wound afresh the bosoms of the disconsolate sufferers in this unparalleled and inhuman massacre, by detailing the deeds of their fiend-like barbarity. There were two or three who were in the power of these wretches, had they known it, and who escaped in the most providential manner. There were two whom they thought they left dead on the field at Mr. Parker's, but who were only stunned by the blows of their guns, as they did not take time to re-load when they charged on them. The escape of a little girl who went to school at Mr. Waller's, and where the children were collecting for that purpose, excited general sympathy. As their teacher had not arrived, they were at play in the yard, and seeing the Negroes approach, she ran up on a dirt chimney, (such as are common to log houses,) and remained there unnoticed during the massacre of the eleven that were killed at this place. She remained on her hiding place till just before the arrival of a party, who were in pursuit of the murderers, when she came down and fled to a swamp where, a mere child as she was, with the horrors of the late scene before her, she lay concealed until the next day, when seeing a party go up to the house, she came up, and on being asked how she escaped, replied with the utmost simplicity, "The Lord helped her." She was taken up behind a gentleman of the party, and returned to the arms of her weeping mother. Miss Whitehead concealed herself between the bed and the mat that supported it, while they murdered her sister in the same room, without discovering her. She was afterwards carried off, and concealed for protection by a slave of the family, who gave evidence against several of them on their trial. Mrs. Nathaniel Francis, while concealed in a closet heard their blows, and the shrieks of the victims of these ruthless savages; they then entered the closet, where she was concealed, and went out without discovering her. While in this hiding place, she heard two of her women in a quarrel about the division of her clothes. Mr. John T. Baron, discovering them approaching his house, told his wife to make her escape, and scorning to fly, fell fighting on his own threshold. After firing his rifle, he discharged his gun at them, and then broke it over the villain who first approached him, but he was overpowered, and slain. His bravery, however, saved from the hands of these monsters, his lovely and amiable wife, who will long lament a husband so deserving of her love. As directed by him, she attempted to escape through the garden, when she was caught and held by one of her servant girls, but another coming to her rescue, she fled to the woods, and concealed herself. Few indeed, were those who escaped their work of death. But fortunate for society, the hand of retributive justice has overtaken them; and not one that was known to be concerned has escaped.

Herein ends the Confessions of the great hero and liberator...

Nat Turner

Guiding Questions for the Woodcut Image "Horrid Massacre in Virginia" (Use with Lesson 1)

1. List the objects and people you see in this woodcut.

2. Write down the woodcut's title.
3. Record any important dates or numbers that appear on the woodcut. Why do you think these numbers are there?
4. List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the woodcut.
5. Describe the action taking place in the top half of the woodcut.
6. Describe the action taking place in the bottom half of the woodcut.
7. How does the title match the images shown?
8. What is the message of this woodcut? (How does the creator feel about Nat Turner's rebellion?)
9. What types of people do you think would agree with the woodcut's message? What types of people do you think would disagree with the woodcut's message?
10. What is the author's perspective on the rebellion?

Newspaper Article – *Richmond Enquirer*

1. What type of document is this?
2. Where and when do you think this document was probably published?
3. List all the adjectives the author uses to describe Nat Turner. How does the author portray Turner?
4. Why does the author praise some slaves? Why do think this is included in the article?

5. What importance do you think the author places on the skills of reading and writing?
6. How would the author respond to abolitionists who claim that slavery itself will lead slaves to rebellion?

Compare and Contrast *The Liberator* and the Newspaper Article

1. Why does Garrison think the rebellion occurred? (Who or what does he blame for the revolt?)
2. Why does the author of the newspaper article think the rebellion occurred? (Who or what does he blame for the rebellion?)
3. How would Garrison respond if he read the newspaper article?

Guiding Questions for *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (Use with Lesson 1)

1. Who wrote this document?
2. What is the date this document was written?
3. Where was Nat Turner when he was giving his confessions? How might his location affect what he said?
4. Why did Nat Turner feel called upon to lead a revolt?

5. What was the purpose of the revolt according to Turner?

6. Why was this document written? What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? (Quote the document.)

7. What was Thomas Gray's opinion of Nat Turner?

8. Write a question that you would like to ask Nat Turner if you were interviewing him.

Vocabulary from *The Confessions of Nat Turner*
(Use with Lesson 1)

Deposited – delivered and left

Insurrection – rebellion

Convened – met

Authentic – real, not fake

Proprietor – someone who has the right to something or to own property

Commence – to start

Induced – caused

Singularity – unusual, unique

Inquisitive – curious

Acquired – to get as one's own

Conjuring – magic, spells

Revelations – information received from God

Terminate – to end

Obtain – to get

Adhered – to stick to

Hoisting – to raise or lift up

Succeeded – followed after

Inhabitants -- people who live in an area

Notorious – well known for something bad

Apprehension – fear of an event taking place

Surpassed – to go beyond the normal in excellence or achievement

Fanatic – a person with extreme enthusiasm for a cause (such as religion)

Attaining – getting

Warped – distorted, messed up

Stature – height, appearance

Condemned – to be pronounced guilty

Deliberate – careful and slow

Fiend – a cruel or wicked person

Manacled – chained

Curdled – to fill one with horror or fear

Retribution – to get back at someone for a wrong done

LESSON 2: REACTIONS TO THE REBELLION

Time Estimated: 1 day

Objectives

Students will

1. Read and evaluate selections from two articles written by two whites at the time, one from the North (Garrison) and one from the South (Gray) to determine each author's point of view.
2. Compare and contrast the perspectives presented in the two articles.

Materials

- Talking points about Garrison
- Selections from *The Liberator*, Boston, Massachusetts, 3 September 1831 (From *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831*, page 62.
- Vocabulary from *The Liberator*
- Guiding questions worksheet for the two articles
- Newspaper article from http://www.gilderlehrman.org/teachers/seminar_docs/slavery_doc1.html
- Talking points about various perspectives on the rebellion

Strategies

1. Hook: Teacher says, "There has been a rebellion by the cafeteria workers and they have injured 50 students. They say they got sick of working and felt students were taking advantage of them. What do you think about this?"
2. Students share reactions.
3. Ask students to predict how they think people will respond to Nat Turner's rebellion. What will their reactions be? Discuss.
4. Teacher provides background on Garrison – who he was and what *The Liberator* was about.
5. Teacher hands out two articles – selections from Garrison's and another newspaper article.
6. Review how to read primary sources. Teacher reads beginning of article with students and again performs a "think aloud" to determine what Garrison is saying. Re-word his difficult words for the students. Then give students an opportunity to re-word the next few sentences. Correct/revise their answers as necessary. What is Garrison saying?
7. The students will analyze and answer the guiding questions on Garrison's article with a partner first to determine Garrison's perspective on the rebellion.
8. Students will read the second newspaper article and answer the guiding questions trying to determine what type of person might have written this article. What is the author's perspective? (Remind the students again of the strategies for reading primary sources.)
9. Students will answer questions comparing and contrasting the views presented in the two articles. What would the two authors think of each other's opinions?

**Selections from *The Liberator*, Boston, Massachusetts, 3 September 1831
(Use with Lesson 2)**

THE INSURRECTION

In the first number of *The Liberator*, we alluded to the hour of vengeance in the following lines:

Wo if it comes with storm, and blood, and fire,
When midnight darkness veils the earth and sky!
Wo to the innocent babe – the guilty sire –
Mother and daughter – friends of kindred tie
Stranger and citizen alike shall die!
Red-handed Slaughter his revenge shall feed,
And Havoc yell his ominous death-cry,
And wild Despair in vain for Mercy plead, –
While hell itself shall shrink and sicken at the deed!

Read the account of the insurrection in Virginia, and say whether our prophecy be not fulfilled. What was poetry – imagination – in January, I know a bloody reality... Turn again to the record of slaughter! Whole families have been cut off – not a mother, not a daughter, not a babe left. Dreadful retaliation! “The dead bodies of white and black lying just as they were slain, unburied” – the oppressor and the oppressed equal at last in death – what a spectacle! ...

Ye patriotic hypocrites! Ye panegyrist of Frenchman, Greeks and Poles! Ye fustian declaimers for liberty! Ye valiant sticklers for equal rights among yourselves! ... Cast no reproach upon the conduct of the slaves, but let your lips and cheeks wear the blisters of condemnation!

Ye accuse the pacific friends of emancipation of instigating the slaves to revolt... The slaves need no incentive at our hands. They will find in their stripes – in their emaciated bodies – in their ceaseless toil – in their ignorant minds—in every field, in every valley, on every hill top and mountain, wherever you and your fathers have fought for liberty – in your speeches and conversation, your celebrations, your pamphlets, your newspapers – voices in the air, sounds from across the ocean, invitations to resistance above, below, around them! What more do they need? Surrounded by such influences, and smarting under the newly made wounds, is it wonderful that they should rise to contend – as other “heroes” have contended – for their lost rights? It is *not* wonderful!

For ourselves, we are horror-struck at the late tidings. We have exerted our utmost efforts to avert the calamity. We have warned our countrymen of the danger of persisting in their unrighteous conduct... We shall cry, in trumpet tones, night and day, -- millions of her sons cries aloud for redress! IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION can alone save her from the vengeance of Heaven, and cancel the debt of ages!

Talking Points about Garrison (Use with Lesson 2)

William Lloyd Garrison was born in 1805 in Massachusetts. He had a tough life when he was young. His father abandoned his family and they were left to survive on their own. Because of this, Garrison had to go to work at a young age. In 1818, Garrison began working as a writer and editor for a newspaper. At the age of 25, he joined the Abolition movement. At first, he was a part of the American Colonization Society (ACS), but later he decided that he did not want to continue to be a member. He felt that most people in the ACS did not want equal rights for African Americans, but rather wanted to continue slavery by relocating all free blacks. He, on the other hand, wanted immediate emancipation of all slaves; he believed they deserved the same rights as whites. He started his own abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*; the first issue went out in 1831. His last issue was printed in 1865. He stressed nonviolence and passive resistance as the means to end slavery. Garrison founded the New England Anti-Slavery Society and the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Talking Points on Various Perspectives on the Rebellion (Use with Lesson 2)

1. Governor Floyd and others thought revolt was the result of black preachers and Northern agitators.
2. Many Southerners connected the revolt to Northern abolitionists.
3. Some charged Garrison with instigating the revolt.
4. Some felt the need to control slaves more strictly.
5. Some felt the need to end slavery to prevent a revolt from occurring again.
6. Some believed Nat Turner to be a cruel, deceptive man who used religion to persuade the slaves to commit a terrible crime.
7. Some believed Turner was a true religious fanatic.
8. Some saw Turner as a leader of the black community, leading slaves to freedom.
9. Some saw Turner as motivated by pure vengeance.
10. Some whites and blacks believed Turner's actions were evil, but that slavery still needed to be abolished as slavery was immoral.
11. Black abolitionist David Walker and Thomas Jefferson predicted the institution of slavery would cause a rebellion.
12. Some advocated black colonization.
13. Some advocated gradual abolition.

Guiding Questions Worksheet for Two Articles:
***The Liberator* and Newspaper Article**
(Use with Lesson 2)

The Liberator

1. What type of document is this?
2. What is the date of the document?
3. Who wrote the document?
4. For what audience was this document written?
5. List three things the author said that you think important and why?

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6. What is the meaning of the poem at the beginning of this document?

7. Why does the author call the readers hypocrites?

8. Why does the author say Nat Turner and the other slaves rebelled?

9. Why do you think this document was written? What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? (Quote from the document.)

10. What is the author's perspective on the rebellion?

Newspaper Article

1. What type of document is this?

2. Where and when do you think this document was probably published?

3. List all the adjectives the author uses to describe Nat Turner. How does the author portray Turner?

4. Why does the author praise some slaves? Why do think this is included in the article?

5. What importance do you think the author places on the skills of reading and writing?

6. How would the author respond to abolitionists who claim that slavery itself will lead slaves to rebellion?

Compare and Contrast *The Liberator* and the Newspaper Article

1. Why does Garrison think the rebellion occurred? (Who or what does he blame for the revolt?)
2. Why does the author of the newspaper article think the rebellion occurred? (Who or what does he blame for the rebellion?)
3. How would Garrison respond if he read the newspaper article?

Vocabulary from *The Liberator* (Use with Lesson 2)

Alluded – to refer to

Vengeance – revenge

Veils – covers

Kindred – relatives

Havoc – great destruction

Ominous – threatening, warning of evil or harm

Plead – to beg

Insurrection – rebellion

Prophecy – to tell the future

Retaliation – revenge

Oppressor – one who rules over someone else unjustly or cruelly

Spectacle – sight, show or display

Hypocrites – people who say one thing but do another, or people who pretend to have benefits that they don't really have

Panegyrists – praisers

Fustian declaimers – worthless speakers or writers

Valiant – brave

Reproach – criticism

Instigating – to urge to come to action (as in get people to start a revolt)

Incentive – reward to get someone to do something

Emaciated – to make very thin

Toil – work

Contend – to fight for

Tidings – news

Exerted – put forth

Avert – avoid

Calamity – trouble

Persisting – to continue in a certain direction or path

Redress – relief from wrong

Lesson 3: Effects of the Rebellion

Time Estimated: 1 day

Objectives

Students will:

1. Use a primary source quote to play a role in the Virginia legislature as they decide what action to take concerning Turner's rebellion.
2. Compare and contrast the decision made by the class to the Virginia legislature's actual outcome.

Materials

- Primary source quotes from people of the time on slips of paper
- Governor Floyd's 6 December 1831 message to the Virginia legislature from *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831* (for teacher's background knowledge)
- Draft of a bill concerning "Slaves, Free Negroes, and Mullatoes," December 1831, from *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831* (for teacher's background knowledge)
- Talking points developed on the decision of the Virginia legislature (see historical background)

Strategies

1. Tell students that today they will be a member of the Virginia legislature as they discuss what to do about Turner's rebellion.
2. Discuss options that the legislature has.
3. Pass out pieces of paper with the quotes from people of the time. Every two minutes students get a piece of paper.
4. Explain to students that their paper is a quote from the person they are supposed to be today.
5. The students are to work with a partner to re-word the quote so that it is in their own words.
6. Based on their re-worded quote, the partners need to decide together what to say during the meeting and how they will vote at the meeting's conclusion. What option concerning the revolt would their person be most in favor of?
7. Working with their partners, the students come up with what they want to say and how they will vote using the re-worded primary source quote.
8. Students re-enact a role play of the Virginia legislature's meeting. Pairs of students take turns standing up and having their say. At the end, once everyone has spoken, the class will take a vote on what option should be taken.
9. Discuss with the students what really happened. Share with them the legislature's decision and have the students compare and contrast their vote with the actual vote. (Teachers may need to guide students – point out specific words/phrases that they should compare in contrasting the two views. Encourage the use of Venn diagrams.)
10. Partners share their conclusions with their own group of four that they are seated with.
11. Groups share conclusions with the class about the author's perspectives.
12. Teacher asks "What other points of view do you think people had?"
13. Students share and teacher clarifies the many different opinions.
14. Homework: Students write a paragraph explaining their personal opinion of the revolt and how they would have responded.

Differentiation

Students of lower reading ability will be provided with highlighters to use as they read the articles. They will again be encouraged to scratch out less important details in the articles. The

pairs will be heterogeneous as well to provide support. Difficult vocabulary will again be defined in parenthesis after the words. The guiding questions for this group will be more direct in leading students to their conclusions. Have the students who have difficulty identifying the similarities and differences between the historic documents. Then, go back through the articles with another color pen to circle the sentences that explicitly state their opinions concerning the revolt. These sentences can then be compared.

Primary Source Quotes from People of the Time For Students' Role Play (Use with Lesson 3)

Samuel Warner: "...Yet we cannot hold those entirely blameless, who first brought them from their native plains – who robbed them of their domestic joys – who tore them from their weeping children and dearest connections, and doomed then in this "Land of Liberty" to a state of cruel bondage! ... The colonization scheme of which we have heard at Washington, was opened to the public with feeling and pathetic acknowledgements that Africans were men and that from us they had a right to look for justice."

From http://www.gilderlehrman.org/search/display_results.php?id=GLC04548

Thomas Jefferson: "The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the ...most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other...Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever."

From http://www.gilderlehrman.org/teacher/module?tool_is_popl.html

Richmond Enquirer author: "The case of Nat Turner warms us. No black man ought to be permitted to turn a Preacher through the country. The law must be enforced or the tragedy of Southampton appeals to us in vain."

From: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h499t.html>

Richmond Enquirer author: "It is believed that the brigands were slaves – and most, if not all these, the property of kind and indulgent masters."

From: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h499t.html>

Governor Floyd: "Not only should the severest punishment be inflicted upon those disturbers of our peace.... But decisive measure should be adopted to make all their measures abortive. The public good requires the negro preachers to be silenced, who full of ignorance, are incapable of inculcating any thing but notions of the wildest superstition...I cannot fail to recommend to your

early attention, the revisions of all the laws intended to preserve, in due subordination, the slave population of our State...”

From: *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831*, page 434, Message of Governor Floyd to the Virginia Legislature

Thomas J. Randolph: “There is one circumstance to which we are to look as inevitable in the fullness of time; a dissolution of this Union. God grant it may not happen in our time, or that of our children, but sire, it must come, sooner or later, and when it does come, border war follows it, as certain as the night follows the day,” so spoke Randolph addressing the House of Delegates. [Randolph put forth a plan of gradual emancipation.]

From:

<http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/web/20051111-nat-turner-slavery-rebellion-virginia>

A Virginian: “[Slavery] is a mildew which has blighted in its course every region it has touched from the creation of the world.”

From: Boyer, Paul, ed. *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People*. 1990. Chapter 10, “The Old South and Slavery, 1800-1860,” page 351.

Richmond Enquirer: The indication of public sentiment from every part of the commonwealth, show that the people are deeply impressed with the necessity of getting rid, as speedily as possible, of the free people of colour. No one feels this necessity more than I do....

From: Tragle, Henry Irving. *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1971, page 128, quoting *Richmond Enquirer*, 21 October 1831.

A Native of Eastern Virginia: “A memorial is circulating among you, the object of which is to call the attention of the ensuing Legislature to the subject of the bond and free coloured population of the State, and to urge upon them the necessity of devising some means by which the blacks may be removed beyond our borders, and by which, too, the number of slaves may be gradually diminished.”

From: Tragle, Henry Irving. *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1971, page 140, quoting *Richmond Enquirer*, 15 November 1831.

To the Editors of the Richmond Enquirer: [If send slaves away] “Our State, which is now purely agricultural; and which ought to continue so for many years to come. Will be no longer...It is important that they [slaves] should be kept at home, upon their respective plantations, that they should be prohibited from going upon other plantations, without a pass from their master or mistress! That they should be prevented from assembling on Sundays...”

From: Tragle, Henry Irving. *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1971, quoting *Richmond Enquirer*, 25 November 1831.

Richmond Enquirer: “I am of the opinion that security is to be found only in the rigid enforcement of the laws, regulating this class of our population, united with humane and just treatment in the owners, and a determination to keep their slaves at home...in the observance of regular patrols, composed of men of character and discretion, in the form of volunteer corps who might frequently traverse every part, and produce an impression by the exhibition of a military force always prepared for prompt action...”

From: Tragle, Henry Irving. *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1971, page 99, quoting *Richmond Enquirer* letter, Jerusalem, 21 September 1831.

Rubric for Role Play (Use with Lesson 3)

Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Poor
Works Cooperatively with partner	Actively works with partner to accomplish task. Works well, is on task, and is a contributing member.	Works with partner to accomplish task. Works well, is mostly on task, and is a contributing member with few needed cues from the teacher.	Works with partner, but is somewhat off task. His / her partner does a greater share of the work.	Is off task and contributes little to nothing to the group.
Presents perspective clearly	Speaks clearly and loudly when presenting using voice intonation and expression.	For the most part, speaks clearly and loudly, using voice intonation and expression.	Speaks somewhat clearly. There is some voice intonation and expression used.	Presentation is not clear. Little to no intonation and expression used.
Uses primary source quote to determine an accurate statement of what his / her person might say	Statement of opinion is accurate and reflects historical understanding of the perspective given.	Statement of opinion is accurate and for the most part, reflects historical understanding of the perspective given.	Statement of opinion is mostly accurate and reflects some historical understanding of the perspective given.	Statement of opinion has multiple inaccuracies and reflects little to no understanding of the perspective given.
Votes according to how his / her person would at the meeting of the VA legislature	Vote is in line with how the actual person would mostly likely have voted.	N/A	N/A	Vote is inaccurate, the actual person would not have voted this way.

Lesson 4: Creation of a Newspaper Article/Cartoon

Time Estimated: 1 day

Objectives

Students will

1. Create with a partner either a newspaper article or a cartoon that states the facts of what happened during Turner's revolt and afterwards, but also that clearly portrays a specific perspective from a person of the time.
2. Incorporate primary source material into their articles or cartoons that was provided earlier in this course

Materials

- Primary sources from earlier in this course
- Directions for newspaper article
- Directions for cartoon
- Rubric for article
- Rubric for cartoon
- Paper (lined and blank)

Strategies

1. Review various perspectives on Turner's revolt.
2. Explain assignment and rubric for creating a newspaper article or cartoon that explains the events of Turner's rebellion and its aftermath and that clearly portrays a specific perspective. (Students can use primary sources throughout the course as examples and can incorporate specific quotes.)
3. Assign students a partner for the assignment.
4. Students work with their partners to write a newspaper article or draw a cartoon.
5. Homework: Finish whatever work not completed in class.

Differentiation

If students are having difficulty writing a newspaper article, the teacher will aid them by giving them the specific perspective that the teacher wants their writing to reflect. The teacher will also point them to specific primary sources that would reflect that point of view. Another option would be that their article could be written by the same person that they portrayed at the meeting of the Virginia legislature. Those students who are more visually oriented could choose to draw a cartoon rather than write an article.

Directions for Newspaper Article

Use with Lesson 4

Select and review one of the previous articles and become the writer of that document. Endeavor to:

- Pick a viewpoint that you wish to express.
- Develop new descriptions of Nat Turner and his followers.
- What is your opinion of what the Virginia General Assembly should do about slavery following Nat Turner's Rebellion?

Rubric for Newspaper Article (Use with Lesson 4)

Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Poor
Reflects a clear historical perspective	Reflects an accurate perspective from the time. Perspective is shown through choice of adjectives, quotes, and description of events and aftermath of the revolt.	Reflects an accurate perspective from the time. Perspective is shown through choice of adjectives, quotes, and description of events and aftermath of the revolt, but perspective could be clearer.	Perspective is mostly accurate. Few adjectives and descriptions to identify the perspective. Events and aftermath vaguely reflect a particular perspective, but it is harder to identify.	Perspective has multiple inaccuracies or is unclear and unable to be identified through the way the story is told.
Describes the events of the revolt accurately	The revolt is described in detail using descriptive language. The facts are accurate. 5 sentences.	The revolt is described with details, but more could be used. The facts are accurate. 5 sentences.	The revolt is described, but there are few details. The facts are mostly accurate. It may be less than 5 sentences.	The revolt is not described in any detail. There are inaccuracies in historical content. It may be less than 5 sentences.
Describes the consequences of the revolt accurately	The aftermath of the revolt is described in detail using descriptive language. The facts are accurate. 5 sentences.	The aftermath of the revolt is described with details, but more could be used. The facts are accurate. 5 sentences.	The aftermath of the revolt is described, but there are few details. The facts are mostly accurate. It may be less than 5 sentences.	The aftermath of the revolt is not described in any detail. There are inaccuracies in historical content. It may be less than 5 sentences.
Incorporates a primary source	Has at least one primary source. The primary source supports the content of the article and contributes to the author's perspective.	Has at least one primary source. The primary source for the most part supports the content of the article and contributes to the author's perspective.	Has at least one primary source. The primary source does not support well the content of the article or detracts from the author's own perspective.	Has at least one primary source, but the source does not support the content of the article and appears randomly chosen. It detracts from the author's perspective.
Grammar / Spelling	Correct grammar and spelling is used.	Grammar and spelling are mostly correct.	Multiple mistakes in grammar and spelling	So many mistakes in grammar and spelling that it is unreadable.
Works Cooperatively with partner	Actively works with partner to accomplish task. Works well, is on task, and is a contributing member.	Works with partner to accomplish task. Works well, is mostly on task, and is a contributing member with few needed cues from the teacher.	Works with partner, but is somewhat off task. His / her partner does a greater share of the work.	Is off task and contributes little to nothing to the group.

Directions for Cartoon

Use with Lesson 4

1. Pick a perspective from a person of the time that you wish to portray. (Example: You want to show Turner's rebellion as a horrid massacre. You believe that slaves need to be controlled more strictly.)
2. Brainstorm a list of adjectives to describe Turner and his rebellion that match up with your particular perspective. (Example for perspective above: evil, cruel, etc.) How could you portray these adjectives and beliefs through images?
3. OR decide what your person would say should be done after Turner's rebellion. What would their opinion be of the Virginia legislature's decision to make stricter laws governing the slaves? How could you portray this in images?
4. Draw your cartoon incorporating the information from above. Make sure that your cartoon:
 - Portrays the events of the rebellion OR portrays the events that occurred after or because of the rebellion.
 - Reflects a clear perspective from a person of the time.
 - Includes a title that reflects the perspective you are portraying.

Rubric for Cartoon (Use with Lesson 4)

Criteria	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Poor
Reflects a clear historical perspective	Reflects an accurate perspective from the time. Perspective is shown through choice of image drawn and portrayal of the chosen images.	Reflects an accurate perspective from the time, but perspective could be clearer.	Perspective is mostly accurate, the cartoon vaguely reflect a particular perspective, but it is harder to identify.	Perspective has multiple inaccuracies or is unclear and unable to be identified through the images portrayed.
Portrays the events of the rebellion OR its aftermath	Images reflect a solid understanding of the historical events.	Images reflect an understanding of the historical events.	Images reflect some understanding of historical events.	Little to no understanding of historical events is demonstrated.
Title matches the image	Title fits the image well and reflects the perspective desired.	Title is appropriate and reflects the perspective desired for the most part.	Title fits, but does not reflect a perspective.	Title does not fit the image or reflect the perspective.
Image quality	The cartoon is neat and it is clear that attention had been given to detail.	The cartoon is neat and has some detail.	The cartoon is a bit sloppy or is lacking in detail.	The cartoon is sloppy and has no details.
Works Cooperatively with partner	Actively works with partner to accomplish task. Works well, is on task, and is a contributing member.	Works with partner to accomplish task. Works well, is mostly on task, and is a contributing member with few needed cues from the teacher.	Works with partner, but is somewhat off task. His / her partner does a greater share of the work.	Is off task and contributes little to nothing to the group.

Lesson 5: Nat Turner Trail Tour

Time Estimated: 1 day

Objectives

Students will:

1. Tour the Rebecca Vaughan House. Discuss what occurred there. Study map of Nat Turner's route during the insurrection.
2. Visit sites associated with the rebellion: St. Luke's Church, Seven Gables, Rochelle Prince House, Southampton County Courthouse and the Hanging Tree.
3. Students will learn about three other African Americans from Southampton County who took action against slavery.

Differentiation:

Students should discover the Nat Turner's Rebellion history reinforced by the visit to the Nat Turner Trail sites in Courtland. The visit will also introduce Anthony Gardner (president of Liberia), Fed (John Brown, who escaped slavery via the Underground Railroad), and Dred Scott (Dred Scott Decision). The teacher will guide a discussion about how slaves could fight against slavery and attempt to gain freedom.

Lesson 6: Student Presentations

Time Estimated: 1 day

Objectives

Students will

1. Share either their article or their cartoon created with their partner the day before.
2. Determine the point of view presented in their classmates' work.
3. State their personal perspective on the events of the rebellion and its aftermath.

Materials

- Articles and cartoons created by the students

Strategies

1. Explain/model how students are to present their work.
2. Set purpose for listening to classmates' presentations. Afterward, the class must decide on the perspective portrayed.
3. Partners read their articles/show their cartoons.
4. Class decides what perspective the work portrays.

5. As each perspective is identified, the teacher will write a sentence on the board identifying the perspective.
6. Once all students have presented, the class will discuss whether any voices/perspectives are missing.
7. Discuss what the students' own perspectives are. Do they think Turner was justified in his actions? How would they have voted had they been serving in the Virginia legislature?

Differentiation

If students have trouble identifying the perspectives, the teacher can provide clues and have partners presenting their work to provide clues or re-read specific parts of their writing that reflect the author's perspective. Make sure to have copies available of the articles and cartoons so that those who are not auditory learners can read and look at their classmates' work as it is being presented. If needed, give students time to talk about the perspectives with group members before deciding on the perspective.