

The Underground Railroad

Concept(s) Cause and Consequence

Exemplary example of Cause and Consequence

Prepared for Grade(s) 5

Province AB

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Time Period(s) 1800-1900

Time allotment 3 x 35 minutes

Brief Description of the Task

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In this lesson, students use the National Geographic website to participate in an online simulation that traces the journey to freedom on the Underground Railroad. As part of this process, students gather information to explain the history and presence of Black communities throughout Canada. Students will be encouraged to identify possible causes for the development of The Underground Railroad, and various consequences related to its existence. Students will also discuss the historical context of the time period to better understand the existence of slavery and the role of The Underground Railroad in its dissolution.

Required Knowledge & Skills

Prior to beginning this lesson, students should have experience working with Cause and Consequence and the application of this concept in relation to historical events. Specifically, as indicated in "Teaching about Historical Thinking" (Seixas and Clark, 2006):

- "The challenge for students is to understand the role of human agency and social, economic, political, and environmental forces at play in shaping the course of history and then to trace the consequences of these events" (p.36).
- "Although some causes are more significant than others it is important for students to appreciate that events rarely have a single or even just a few causes" (p.36).
- "Also important is student appreciation of the unrecognized influences of groups that typically are excluded from historical narratives and school texts. For example, minority groups, women and working people are rarely given as much credit for historical change as are political, industrial and military leaders (i.e. Who really built the CPR?)" (p.36).

- "In attributing causal relationships, it is not sufficient that one event precedes another; students must look for evidence that would link the two events" (p.36).
- "Looking for broader underlying factors is as or more important than identifying immediate particular causes" (p. 37).
- "Actions have unintended consequences" (p. 36).

Prior to beginning the lesson, students would benefit from having some knowledge of The Underground Railroad. One suggestion would be to read various fiction/non-fiction stories/narratives to students as precursor to this lesson. (See Attachment 1 — The Underground Railroad Suggested Resources.)

Detailed Instructions

1. To foster understanding of cause and consequence, lead students through the following practice activity found in Attachment 2 — Oilers Reading Contest). Begin by defining and explaining to students the following terms: causes, antecedent events, consequences, and subsequent events. Although definitions are provided you may wish to flesh these out for students by adopting language that is appropriate for their age/developmental level.

Causes: an event or incident that influences or contributed to a subsequent event.

Antecedent events: events or incidents that precede subsequent events but have no direct relationship with these events or incidents, they merely came before.

Consequences: subsequent events or incidents that are a result of particular historical influences and events.

Subsequent events: unrelated incidents or events that follow an event.

Note to teachers: This would be a good time to explain to students that simply because an event came either before or after another event does not mean that the prior event caused or contributed to the subsequent event. For example, if I left the house angry after having a dispute with my spouse and subsequently get in a car accident, we should presume that the marital rift contributed to the accident. It may have influenced the outcome; but then again, the accident may have had nothing to do with my being distracted. In attributing causal relationships, it is not sufficient that one event in this case, precedes another; students must look for evidence that would link the two events. For example, the expansion of the Canadian Pacific Railway and joining the British Columbia in Confederation preceded the ban on the Potlatch. Yet these earlier events may not have had any causal influence on the ban. In establishing a causal link students would need to find evidences connecting these events to an increased political and social will to assimilate First Nations people (taken from Denos & Case, 2006, p. 36).

2. Help connect these concepts by using a student-friendly scenario. For example, describe a scenario where the class has won free tickets to an Edmonton Oilers Hockey game. Explain to them that in order to understand how they were able to win free tickets to the Oilers hockey game, you first have to look for what caused the event (winning tickets) to happen in the first place. Explain that they have to work

backwards from the event, in order to understand how it happened. Within this scenario the Edmonton Oilers held a reading contest where students in the class had to read a predetermined number of books and enter their name into a draw. Subsequent to this, last week, your class was picked from hundreds of entries!

3. In order to help students understand the concepts of cause and consequence (and antecedent and subsequent events), brainstorm all the events that might have led up to the class winning the free Oilers tickets and what events might have resulted in them winning the free Oilers tickets. Some possible responses you might expect from students are listed below. Work with students to organize the following events (and any they come up with) into the following categories: Causes (C), Antecedent Events (A), Consequences (CON) and Subsequent events (S). An answer key is provided in brackets.

Categorize the first few events with students, helping them to understand cause and consequence. Have students explain what makes something a cause, an antecedent event, etc. and clarify with the class to ensure that students are gaining an understanding of how to apply these concepts to the events listed below (and any others they may have suggested).

- class attends the game (S)
- the Oilers organization wants to encourage youth interest in hockey (C)
- the class enters the contest (A)
- the class wins the draw to get free tickets (CON)
- the class enjoyed the game with friends (S)
- the class reads a lot of books (A or S)
- posters are put around the school about the contest (A)
- bus ride as a group to and from the game (S)
- the principle puts the school name in the draw (A)
- possible development of interest in reading (S)
- the Oilers organization and the school district want to have more youth participating in reading (C)
- possible development of interest in hockey (S)

Distinguish between personal reasons for a student to become involved in the contest (i.e., student likes to read, student wants to go to the game, student likes participating in contests) and broader social influences (i.e., student participating wants the group's approval; the Oiler's want to encourage students to develop an interest in hockey and come to more games in the future).

4. Transition from the first activity to the following by discussing that, in order to understand why certain things in the past happened the way they did, historians also have to look for the causes and consequences of events. Since we often only know about an event and not what caused it, historians also have to work

backwards from an event in order to figure out what happened. What caused certain events to happen in the past? What consequences occurred as a result of those events? Tell students that you are going to study the events surrounding the creation of The Underground Railroad to try to understand just why it was created and what happened as a result of its creation. Tell students that they will have to use their understanding of causes, consequences, and antecedent/subsequent events to create a mind map to demonstrate their understanding of the causes and consequences of The Underground Railroad.

5. Use the Underground Railroad PowerPoint presentation (Attachment 3) and work through the following steps:

a) Access prior knowledge by discussing with students what they already know about the Underground Railroad

b) Go through the slides "What is the Underground Railroad," "Why the Underground Railroad was Formed," and "Code Words of the Underground Railroad" to provide students with some background and understanding of terminology related to the Underground Railroad.

c) Review the "Assessment Activity" slides with students prior to entering the National Geographic site. These include the example slides and rubric slides. Review the exemplars at this point — Attachments 4 and 5 — to help students understand the type of information they need to be thinking about as they engage in the activity. As well, distribute and discuss the rubric, so that students understand how they will be assessed on this task.

d) Hand out copies of the Cause and Consequence Activity Sheet (Attachment 6), and the Cause and Consequence Student Copy (Attachment 7) to students. Review with students prior to proceeding through the National Geographic website. They may add additional information as you navigate through the website, or draw from other sources. Before students go to the computers, tell students to complete the activity sheet after they have finished their work with the National Geographic website.

e) Proceed to the National Geographic online journey (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>). In small groups, have students work through the Underground Railroad Cause and Consequence Activity Sheet. Monitor their progress and understanding of cause and consequence by asking students to explain their responses. Clarify and debrief as necessary.

You may wish to discuss various aspects of cause and consequence as you proceed through the site, including the following:

- Why did slavery exist? (There was a shortage of labour and Europeans who settled in America, especially the south, needed cheap labour to work on their plantations.) Throughout this discussion you may also want to raise the issue of unequal power relations in society. During this period in North American history, supremacy of the white "race" was an accepted theory, thereby giving white Americans (and Canadians) the power to treat non-whites in a discriminatory fashion. This

discriminatory behaviour was sanctioned by the majority of whites, although some did disagree • ergo the creation of the Underground RR.

- Why was slavery abolished in Canada and the northern United States, but not in the southern states? (Some people in the North started to think that slavery was wrong. Some whites who were poor resented having to compete with slaves for employment. In contrast, the white plantation owners of the South needed a pool of cheap labour to gain greater profit and slave labour was cheap. In order to maintain their position of wealth and privilege, they wanted to keep the slave labour force.)

- What were possible reasons for slavery continuing to exist in the southern states? (Economic reasons, slave labour was affordable...)

- Did all slaves want freedom? Why or why not? (No, some slaves did not want to leave their masters because some plantations were a safe place to live, their family members were there, some were too old to leave, and some had no other place to go. Yes, because they did not like the "master" having control over what they could and could not do. And some plantation owners were violent.)

- What people were influential in the development of the Underground Railroad during this time? (The Quakers, Abolitionists, free black people, people of other races who were not in favour of slavery.)

- What happened in Canada as a result of slaves being freed? How did the fabric of Canadian society change as a result of slaves escaping? (Black settlements were formed, people of African descent came to Canada to gain freedom. Because slaves escaped to Canada, Canada now has a larger black population than it would have had if slavery had never existed.) As part of this conversation it should be noted that many black people experienced discrimination when they came to Canada. And in some cases, were forced to live in designated areas. Moreover, Canada's immigration policy from this period until the mid 1970s systematically discriminated against black people.

6. As an optional extension, either provide students with various resources (primary and/or secondary) or challenge students to find other sources (2-3 pieces) to support their mind maps.

7. As a culminating activity, you may choose to ask students to present the mind maps they created to the class in order to demonstrate their understanding of causes, antecedent events, consequences, and subsequent events (primary goal). Students should show the connections between the causes, antecedent events, consequences, and subsequent events of the Underground Railroad (i.e. its effect on the development of black communities in Canada).

Outcomes

Historical Thinking Objectives:

1. Using one or more accounts of an event, students will be able to identify various types of causes for a particular event.

2. Students will be able to identify possible causes for the development of The Underground Railroad, and various consequences related to its existence.

Alberta Social Studies Learning Outcomes:

5.S.2 develop skills of historical thinking:

- use photographs and interviews to make meaning of historical information
- use historical and community resources to understand and organize the sequence of national historical events
- explain the historical context of key events of a given time period

(ICT) organize information, using such tools as a database, spreadsheet or electronic webbing

5.2.8 Examine, critically, ways of life of non-European immigrants by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: What do stories of the Underground Railroad tell us about the history and presence of Black communities in Canada? (CC, I, TCC, LPP)