

NEW CURRICULUM PACKAGE

Focus/Topic: Slave Revolts

Title: Armed Resistance to Slavery

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Course: African American History

Grade: 9 – 12

Standards Met: Reading Process Concepts

Scope of Curriculum Package: One class period

Notes to the Teacher: Tell the class that a common nightmare of whites in the South was the fear that slaves might rise up in rebellion. Ask: Why was this so? (Possible answers: Blacks outnumbered whites in many areas; whites had to mistreated blacks that they feared rebellious blacks would retaliate; whites may have had guilty consciences about slavery.) Read the following reference to slave revolts from Thomas Jefferson’s book, Notes On Virginia:

Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep forever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference!

Discuss what Jefferson meant by “an exchange of situation” (Blacks gaining the upper hand over whites) and by “supernatural interference” (an act of God against slaveholders).

Have students discuss why slave revolts were usually unsuccessful. Write responses on the chalkboard.

Materials: textbook. The African American Experience (pgs. 113 – 117), construction paper, class set of rulers

Vocabulary: rebellion, betrayal, Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner

Procedure: 1. Have students use the map on page 114 to draw a timeline showing slave resistance between 1712 – 1831.
Have students read pages 113 – 117.

2. Have students answer the following questions:
 - A. Describe the attitude towards slavery held by each of the three men.
 - B. What caused two of the revolts to never occur?
 - C. Why would other slaves warn the white citizens?
 - D. What do these revolts reveal about the character of African people during slavery?
3. Divide the class into groups of 3 to 4 students. Tell the students to Imagine that they are slaves who have just learned of plans for a slave rebellion. On a sheet of paper, have each group list the pros and cons of joining the rebellion.

Assessment: Students will take a ten-question quiz on the reading.

- Extension/Enrichment:**
1. Have the students imagine that they are a news reporter covering the events of a failed slave revolt. Write news article about one of the three slave revolts discussed in this chapter.
 2. Show the video, Roots: The Gift. Discuss the dilemma confronting Fiddler. Why does he decide to help aid the runaways?

Bibliography:

The African American Experience, A History;
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