

Title	Silent Signals
Name	Eve Ensley
Date	7/24/01
School	Ball State University (Student)
City/state	Muncie, Indiana
Topic  (Overall theme)	Signs of the Underground Railroad
Classroom sessions or estimated time	3-40 minute periods
Grade Level(s)	Third
Purpose	To peak children's interest about the Underground Railroad  To address misconceptions about the Underground Railroad  To use children's literature to learn about the signs of the Underground Railroad
* <a href="#">Geography Standards Addressed</a>	Places and Regions: #4; #6  Human Systems: #10; #12; #13;  Environment and Society: #15  The Uses of Geography: #17
* <a href="#">Indiana Social Studies Academic Standards addressed</a>	3.1.4  3.1.5  3.1.7  3.5.1

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

Discuss the frustrations of navigating the Underground Railroad.

List the symbols and signs used to communicate on the Underground Railroad.

Describe the signs used on the Underground Railroad.

Apply what they have learned about the signs of the Underground Railroad to the extension project.

## \*Teacher Background Materials

### Children's Books

Bial, Raymond. The Underground Railroad. Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Hopkinson, Deborah. Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt. A. Knopf, 1995.

Lawrence, Jacob. Harriet and the Promised Land. Simon and Schuster for Young Readers, 1993.

Levine, Ellen, and Williams, Richard. If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad. Scholastic, 1988.

Rappaport, Doreen. Freedom River. Hyperion Books for Children 2000.

Riggio, Anita. Secret Signs. Boyds Mills Press, 1997.

Smucker, Barbara. Runaway to Freedom: A Story of the Underground Railroad. Harper & Row, 1979.

Winter, Jeanette. Follow the Drinking Gourd. Knopf, 1988.

### Adult Books

Hanson, Ellen. The Underground Railroad. Discovery Enterprises, 1995.

Weaving a Network of Freedom: Proceedings of the Second Kentucky Underground Railroad Symposium. Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet, 1999

Tobin, Jacqueline, L., and Dobard, Raymond, G. Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad. Anchor Books, 1999.

## Web Sites (current as 7-26-01)

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/>

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/99/railroad/j4.html>

<http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/WWW/ihb/terrain.html>

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/>

<http://www.historychannel.com>

<http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/ltc/special/mlk/gourd2.html>

[http://home.columbus.rr.com/bradshaw/UNDERRR/page\\_4.htm](http://home.columbus.rr.com/bradshaw/UNDERRR/page_4.htm)

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASunderground.htm>

<http://www.worldbook.com/fun/aajourney/html/bh040.html>

<http://www.undergroundrailroad.org/index.asp>

<http://www.nps.gov/undergroundrr/>

<http://www.ugrr.org>

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/99/railroad/>

<http://education.ucdavis.edu/NEW/STC/lesson/socstud/railroad/title.htm>

\*Purpose of  
Materials

Children's Book

*Secret Signs*

*Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*

*Freedom River*

*Follow the Drinking Gourd*

*Runaway to Freedom*

Green, Red, Yellow Stars

Facsimiles- quilts, lanterns, constellation pictures, pictures of free Blacks, spirituals

Procedures

(This lesson should be implemented only after an introductory/overview lesson on the Underground Railroad.)

**Engagement:**

1. Begin by playing an Underground Railroad game.
2. Give one student a green star and have he/she place it in his/her palm. (This student represents a conductor on the Underground Railroad.)
3. Give two students yellow stars and have them place them in their palm. (These students represent the free Blacks who helped the slaves on the Underground Railroad.)
4. Give three students red stars and have them place them in their palm. (These students represent the slave catchers.)
5. The rest of the students represent the slaves and do not receive any stars.
6. The objective of the game is for the slaves to get to the North (designated spot in the classroom) by trying to find out who the conductor is. If the slaves find the slave catchers, they are taken back to the South (the student's seat). The free Blacks help the slave locate the conductors. (If a student finds a free Black, he/she can stay in the game and continue looking for the conductor.)
7. After the students have played the game, encourage the students to take part in a discussion. Use the following questions as prompts:  
  
How did you determine who the conductor was?  
  
How did you feel when you were caught by the slave catcher?  
  
What would have helped you find the conductor?

**Exploration:**

1. Split the class into groups of four or five.
2. Have each group choose a book about the signs of the Underground Railroad. The following is a list a books that could be used:

*Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*

*Secret Signs*

*Follow the Drinking Gourd*

*Freedom River*

*Runaway to Freedom: A Story of the Underground Railway* by  
Barbara Smucker

3. Have each group read the story.
4. As students read their stories, have them pay attention to the ways slaves and others communicated along the Underground Railroad.
5. After reading the story, have the students answer the following questions:

What sign was used in the book?

How was it used to help the slaves along the Underground Railroad?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the type of communication used in the story?

6. Show students facsimiles of some of the signs on Underground Railroad.
7. As a group, have students pick one of the extension activities to culminate the lesson.

\*Teaching  
Strategies

Whole group; small group; interdisciplinary instruction in literature, history, and geography

<p>*Assessments (key questions to simulate critical thinking)</p>	<p>Were students able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the frustrations of navigating the Underground Railroad?</li> <li>List the symbols and signs used to communicate on the Underground Railroad?</li> <li>Describe the signs used on the Underground Railroad?</li> <li>Apply what they have learned about the signs of the Underground Railroad to the extension project?</li> </ul> <p>This should be assessed through small group and Individual observation. Students should also be evaluated on their quality of participation in both the discussion and the culminating activity.</p>
<p>Adaptations and/or Extensions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students make a class quilt that communicates a message similar to the way quilts were used during the Underground Railroad.</li> <li>Teach tessellation's in quilt patterns</li> <li>Discuss constellations using the Big Dipper and the North Star as a springboard</li> <li>Make a "Choose your own Adventure" game with <i>PowerPoint</i>, <i>Dreamweaver</i>, <i>Flash</i>, or a web page</li> <li>Analyze the meaning of Spirituals</li> <li>Write your own spirituals</li> </ul>

on the Underground Railroad. Scholastic, 1988.