



THE VALUE OF A PERSON

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Course/Grade Level

- Grade 11 & 12

Teaching Hard History Framework Grades 6-12:

- [Summary Objective 9](#): Students will describe the principal ways the labor of enslaved people was organized and controlled in what is now the United States.
- [Summary Objective 17](#): Students will recognize that slavery continued in many forms through most of the 19th century in what is now the United States.

Delaware History Standards

- History Standard Two 9-12b: Students will examine and analyze primary and secondary sources in order to differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.

Lesson Essential Questions

- What was the cost and/or value of enslaved people during the era of enslavement in the United States and Delaware?
- How are the systems of slavery still present today?

Materials:

- Teacher Computer
- Student Computer
- Slide deck
- [Josiah Henson Video](#)
- Smart Board

Verification:

Steps to check for student understanding

- Exit Ticket
- Jamboard – Discussion Questions

Activity

1. Begin by discussing modern day advertisements. What is their purpose? Why do we have them? What are some modern ways we advertise today? What sort of items and services do we advertise?
 - a. Various advertisements can be used—cars, products, etc. Consider using local advertisements, or an advertisement that may help students laugh and lighten the mood.
2. Discuss details that students notice about the advertisements. Cost, item being sold, font, letter size, impact, etc.
 - a. How might these details attract consumers to the ads? What are ways that we use advertisements? Can an advertisement impact our perception of a product's value? Why are they important? Millions of dollars are spent on advertisements to get consumers to consume.
3. Discuss the value of a person. How much are people worth? Does this depend on the person (for example, someone you respect versus someone you do not; someone in your family versus a stranger)? And when we think of a person's worth, do we usually think in terms of monetary value?
 - a. Again, using light humor to play on the concepts: "Who would you be willing to punch for a million dollars?" This question forces us to think about a person's worth and our perceived value of certain humans. Is that person worth more than a million dollars?
4. Discuss the purpose of Classified Ads (an advertisement generally dealing with offers of or requests for jobs, services, houses, used cars, etc.). What do Classified Ads sell? Do we see them as much anymore?
 - a. What is the modern day Classified? (Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace)
5. Show Slave Ads. What do the students notice? Discuss the location of the slave ads. Many may think that there were no enslaved people in New Castle County, but the advertisements show that was not the case. Was Delaware a state in which slavery was legal or illegal? Where was the line that divided states where slavery was legal from states where slavery was illegal? What have you been taught as a child? Discuss the Mason-Dixon Line, its original purpose, and its later significance to slavery.
 - a. How does viewing the ads make the students feel?
 - b. Equate the value of a dollar in 1860 to the value of a dollar today. What can be purchased? Determine how much the enslaved in the ads were considered to be worth. Relate the monetary value assigned to these individuals to the earlier discussion points on perceived human worth and value.
 - c. Discuss the economic impact of cotton in the North versus the South. Why would banks be willing to use a human as collateral to recoup their money?
 - i. Modern-day equivalent—Walmart's Dead Peasant Insurance
6. The Josiah Henson video mentions that banks offered mortgages for enslaved people, so discuss the value of a person again. Discuss how students feel about the fact that enslavers did this?
 - a. Discuss the fact that Walmart may recently have done something similar.
 - b. Have we really changed or just changed the packaging?

- c. Articles for students to review if time allows.
 - i. [JPMorgan: Predecessors linked to slavery—NBC News](#)
 - ii. [JP Morgan admits US slavery links—BBC](#)
 - iii. [What is dead peasant insurance?—Policygenius](#)
 - d. What is generational wealth? Modern-day feudal system? Why the name peasant insurance?
 - e. Play video on the [Unequal Opportunity Race](#): Did the money made from slavery give groups of people a better advantage over others?
 - f. Counterpoint — Was it a choice? Were there systems that kept people down? Or was it a mix of both? (This will lead into the video about Josiah Henson below.)
 - g. Additional conversation — [Kayne West saying Slavery was a Choice](#)
 - h. If enslavement was a choice, why did so many try to escape? Why were there so many abolitionists? Maybe discuss the treatment on the enslavement camps (i.e. plantations); the treatment of the enslaved to break their spirit.
7. Review *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Josiah Henson. Allow opportunity for students to read the [book summary from Britannica](#).
- a. Read and discuss [The Story of Josiah Henson, the Real Inspiration for ‘Uncle Tom's Cabin’](#)
 - b. Discuss what a modern-day Uncle Tom is.
 - i. [How ‘Uncle Tom’ Still Impacts Racial Politics](#)
 - ii. **UNCLE TOM** (*noun* OFFENSIVE; North American)
 - 1. a Black man considered to be excessively obedient or servile to white people.
 - 2. A person regarded as betraying their cultural or social allegiance.
“he called moderates Uncle Toms”
 - 3. Other Articles that can be used to discuss *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*
 - a. [The most famous book about slavery has been rejected by Black thinkers since it was published](#)
 - b. [Her Global impact: Her Words Changed the World](#)
8. Introduce [Redeeming Uncle Tom video clip](#): Give background information on Josiah Henson and the video.
- a. Watch video clip. Minutes 43 to 45 discuss systems that were in place during the era of enslavement in the United States that influenced an enslaved person’s decision to seek their own freedom.
 - b. The entire 55-minute video discusses the life and struggles of Josiah Henson, whose story became the basis for the character of Uncle Tom. It begins with his earliest memory, explores his outlook on enslavement and his reasons for not escaping enslavement at earlier times in his life.
9. Discuss the items that the narrator talked about.

- a. What are some modern-day systems that are in place today?
 - b. How are they similar to those of the 1800s?
 - c. Have we really changed, or just changed the packaging of the systems?
- 10.** So now what? What do we do as a group/class/people to move forward? To be better? To be the change?
- 11.** Have students complete the Exit Ticket (below)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Exit Ticket:

What's one important thing you learned in class today?

What can you do moving forward? What changes can you make for yourself and your community?

What would help make today's lesson more effective?