

The Underground Railroad in Virginia

Critical Literacy: Using a Newspaper Article

Distribute copies of the article to pairs of students. Assign each pair a short section of the article to read. After, have the students write, in their own words, the most salient points of the selection they read. On large chart paper or sentence strips, have the students record their ideas to share with the class.

Following the class discussion, ask these questions:

1. There are many clues in this article that tell how historians work, how they find out about things that happened in the past. What are some of the things the historians did to find out about the Underground Railroad in Virginia?
2. How will what historians have learned about the Underground Railroad in Virginia be shared with others?

Next pass out copies of the map that accompanied the story. Use the following questions and "think-pair-share" to discuss the information on the map.

1. Look carefully at the map. On a piece of paper, list all the clues that tell you the map is of Washington, D.C.
2. How many of the numbered sites listed can be positively identified as Underground Railroad stations?
3. Why are some of the sites listed as Possible Underground Railroad stations? What clues could the historians have found that lead them to believe these sites might have been Underground Railroad stations?

4. Tell what you think the name of each site means.

As a culminating activity, have each pair find the answers to these two questions:

1. What takes place inside the United States Capitol?
2. How is a capitol different from a capital?