

From Slavery to Racism in Northern States

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My ultimate goal with this lesson is to utilize some primary documents as I attempt to dispel the myth of the north's relationship with slavery. Additionally, I want to highlight how the north's attitude towards slaves and blacks changed over time. The documents and resources I have included below would become a part of a much larger discussion about slavery and race in America, ultimately ending with an exploration of racism in the Pioneer Valley in Massachusetts in the present and what it looks like, as compared to the blatant racism of the past.

Directions:

1. As a class brainstorm about slavery in general and write a list on the board.
2. Using the Historical Thinking model, have students read the first 4 documents and think about whether or not the information from them matches the ideas the class came up with earlier in the class period, discuss as a class when they are finished reading. Be sure to have them talk about the source information, especially where the documents are from.
3. After using the first four documents to discuss slavery in the north, I would then ask students to proceed to documents 5 and 6 and complete the same process, leading into a discussion about how slavery ended in the north and how, as communities reshaped themselves, racism began to appear.
4. I would then talk about how Thomas Rice created his character Jim Crow in the early 19th century as a part of his minstrel show. We will then look at some performances of old minstrel songs such as "Old Jim Crow" and "Zip Coon" and compare them to the broadsheets.
5. We will then look at some of the blackface minstrel shows and cartoons of the early to mid-20th century in order to open a discussion about how views of race in media either changed or didn't change.

Zip Coon Video - <https://youtu.be/dMK45nYx4oc>

Jump Jim Crow Video - <https://youtu.be/T5FpKAxQNKU>

Warner Bros. Cartoons 1930's - <https://youtu.be/eWhdBUXKOpO>

1940's Black Face Minstrel Show - <https://youtu.be/h-1mo9j7it8>

1940's Black Face Stump Speech - <https://youtu.be/ezyQdqBETVs>

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Document 1

To our noble Governor John Winthrop Esqr. these deliver Boston

Sir, Mr. Endecot and my selfe salute you in the Lord Jesus. Etc. Wee have heard of a dividence of women and children in the bay and would bee glad of a share viz: a young woman or girle and a boy if you thinke good: I wrote to you for some boyes for Bermudas, which I thinke is considerable.

Besdies wee are bold to impart our thoughts about the Corne at Pequoit, which wee wish were all cut downe, or left to the Naragansicks rather than for us to take it, for wee feare it will prove a snare thus to hunt after their goods, whilst wee come forth pretending only the doing of justice, and wee believe it would strike more terror into the Indians so to doe: It will never quit cost for us to keepe it.

Wee are not well at ease some of us vix. Mr. Endecot and my selfe, but wee have a strong God to whom wee commend you and my deere and much honoured sister, tendering all our respects unto you unfaynedly I rest yours unworthy of you.

*Hugh Peters,
Salem, Last day [ca. July 15, 1637]*

Sourcing: before reading the entire document consider the document's author, date and purpose

Sourcing Question 1: Who is the creator of the document?

Sourcing Question 2: When was the document created?

Sourcing Question 3: What type of document does this appear to be?

Close Reading: read the document carefully and consider what the source says and the language used to say it.

Close Reading Question 1: What is Peters asking Governor Winthrop to do for him?

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Document 2

Massachusetts Body of Liberties 1641

91. There shall never be any bond slaverie, villinage or Captivitie amongst us unles it be lawfull Captives taken in just warres, and such strangers as willingly selle themselves or are sold to us. And these shall have all the liberties and Christian usages which the law of god established in Israell concerning such persons doeth morally require. This exempts none from servitude who shall be Judged thereto by Authoritie.

Sourcing: before reading the entire document consider the document's author, date and purpose

Sourcing Question 1: Who is the creator of the document?

Sourcing Question 2: When was the document created?

Sourcing Question 3: What type of document does this appear to be?

Close Reading: read the document carefully and consider what the source says and the language used to say it.

Close Reading Question 1: What does this passage say about slavery?

Close Reading Question 2: What do you think the term "just warres" means?

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At this point I want you to try to source and close read the documents without any guidance in order to practice the skill.

Document 3

Connecticut Courant, Sept. 8, 1766

Hadley, August 28, 1766

Run away from the Widow Elizabeth Porter of Hadley, a Negro Man named Zebulon Prut, about 30 years old, about five Feet high, a whitish Complexion, suppos'd to have a Squaw in Company: Carried away with him, a light brown Camblet Coat, lind and trimm'd with the same Colour – a blue plain Cloth Coat, with Metal Buttons, without Lining - a new redish brown plain Cloth Coat, with Plate Buttons, no lining – a light brown Waistcoat, and a dark brown ditto, both without Sleves - a Pair of Check'd, and a Pair of Tow Trowsers - a Pair of blue Yarn stockings, and a Pair of Thred ditto - two Pair of Shoes- two Hats – an old red Duffle Great Coat. – Whoever will take up said Negro, and bring him to Mrs. Porter, or to Oliver Warner of said Hadley, shall have Ten Dollars Reward, and all necessary Charges paid by Oliver Warner.

Sourcing: before reading the entire document consider the document's author, date and purpose

Sourcing:

Close Reading: read the document carefully and consider what the source says and the language used to say it.

Close Reading:

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Document 4

[Excerpt] An inventory of the House of Isaac Royall, Esq' taken by us the Subscribers this twenty-ninth day of July 1739

Cattle		
20 cows @ £10	200:0:0	
2 bulls 8	16:0:0	
1 Steere	12:0:0	
2 Yoak Oxen 28	56:0:0	
2 heffers 7	14:0:0	
4 Calves 2	8:0:0	
A mair & 2 colts	20:0:0	
5 score Sheep @ 18	90:0:0	
1 Cart horse 16	16:0:0	
14 Swine 2	28:0:0	
4 Coach horses	200:0:0	
A Chariot and 2 pr harnesses	300:0:0	
2 Carts	12:0:0	
9 Negro Men named Fortune Barron Peter Ned house Peter Robin Quamino Cuffe Smith Phillip	900:0:0	
4 Negro Women names Ruth Trace sue & Jonto	300:0:0	2172:0:0

Sourcing: before reading the entire document consider the document's author, date and purpose

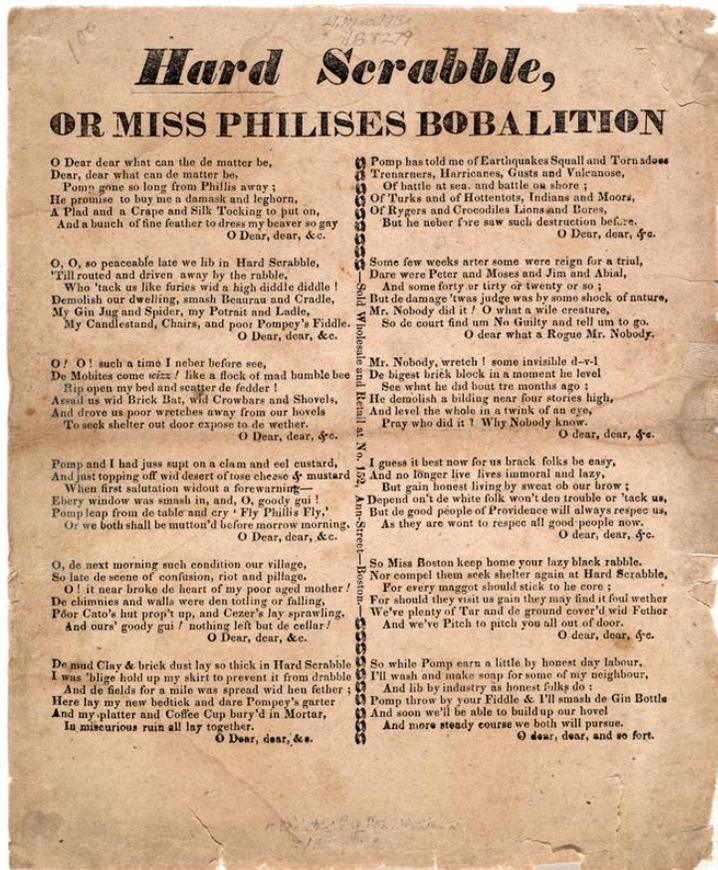
Sourcing:

Close Reading: read the document carefully and consider what the source says and the language used to say it.

Close Reading:

Document 5

Broadsheet, 1824



Sourcing: before reading the entire document consider the document's author, date and purpose

Sourcing:

Close Reading: read the document carefully and consider what the source says and the language used to say it.

Close Reading:

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Document 6

Broadsheet, 1829



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<p>Sourcing:</p>
<p>Close Reading: read the document carefully and consider what the source says and the language used to say it.</p>
<p>Close Reading:</p>