

The House of Dies Drear: A 5th Grade Literacy Focus Unit
Created by
Christa Hunter

FEATURED SELECTION:

The House of Dies Drear by Virginia Hamilton. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1968.

Thomas Small, his parents, and twin brothers move from North Carolina to Ohio because of Mr. Small's new teaching job at a college. The setting is at the beginning of the Civil Rights movement during the 1960s. Their new home was once part of the Underground Railroad a hundred years ago. Come to find out, the owner, and two former slaves were murdered in this house long ago! While exploring the house, Thomas falls into a tunnel under the house. The house contains many more secret passages and strange sounds. The secret of the house is revealed in an exciting final sequence filled with drama, fear, and danger.

great summary

RELATED MATERIALS:

1. "We Wear the Mask" poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar. Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1896.

- Provides insight to the "mask" that people, specifically African Americans, wear to hide true feelings. Poem easily relates to slavery and the true, inner feelings that slaves experienced.
- Reading level: 5th grade and up

Neat choice different

2. Harriet Tubman: A Photo-Illustrated Biography by Margo McLoone. Mankato: Bridgestone Press, 1997.

- Explores one of the most famous slave women that helped lead hundreds of slaves along the Underground Railroad. Relates directly to the book because the house Thomas is living in was part of the Underground Railroad.
- Reading level: 3rd-6th

3. "Eliza's Escape" video clip at www.cincinnati.com/sponsors/nurfc/toons/html

- Depicts the story of how John Rankin helped a young woman and her baby reach freedom after crossing the icy Ohio River. Another source that reiterates the danger of helping free slaves.
- Reading level: 2nd-5th

4. Daily Life on a Southern Plantation 1863 by Paul Erickson. Bound to Stay Bound, 2001.

- Excellent vehicle for bringing slavery, and the plantation life it enabled, into focus. Starting with some brief history about the origins and conventions of slavery, the book goes on to follow individual inhabitants of the plantation for a single day.
- Reading level: 3rd and up

5. "Did You Know For Kids" at www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/kids.html

- Gives three facts about slavery that kids might not know otherwise. A good way to begin the focus unit.
- Reading level: 4th-6th

GOALS/STANDARDS:

Reading

- 5.1.1 Read aloud grade-level-appropriate narrative text (stories) and expository text (information) fluently and accurately and with appropriate timing, changes in voice, and expression.
- Goal: Students will read independently, with partners, and in a large group and be able to read fluently and with expression to their classmates.
- Strategies for fluent reading, context clues, phonics, etc.

Writing

- 5.4.1 Discuss ideas for writing, keep a list or notebook of ideas, and use graphic organizers to plan writing.
- 5.5.2 Write responses to literature that:
 - demonstrate an understanding of a literary work.
 - support statements with evidence from the text.
 - develop interpretations that exhibit careful reading and understanding.
- Goal: Comprehend the story better by writing thoughts on paper and using journals, graphic organizers, etc.
- Learn strategies for writing: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing

Oral Language

- 5.7.1 Ask questions that seek information not already discussed.
- 5.7.3 Make inferences or draw conclusions based on an oral report.
- 5.7.6 Use volume, phrasing, timing, and gestures appropriately to enhance meaning.
- Goal: Help students feel comfortable talking in a group setting about the story.

Math

- 5.7.1 Analyze problems by identifying relationships, telling relevant from irrelevant information, sequencing and prioritizing information, and observing patterns.
- Goal: Students decide what elements of a story problem are necessary for solving the problem.

Science

- 5.3.2 Observe and describe that stars are like the sun, some being smaller and some being larger, but they are so far away that they look like points of light.
- 5.3.3 Observe the stars and identify stars that are unusually bright and those that have unusual colors, such as reddish or bluish.
- Goal: Discover the importance of stars, especially during the time of Slavery and the use of the Underground Railroad.

Physical Education

- 5.1.1 Demonstrate the ability to integrate locomotor (traveling action), non-locomotor (movement in place), and stability (balance) movements in more complex skills.
- Goal: Through locomotor and non-locomotor movements, students will experience troubles that an escaping slave went through.
- Practice locomotor skills

Social Studies

- 5.3.12 Describe and analyze how specific physical features influenced historical events and movements.
- Goal: Learn how locations of the Underground Railroad were chosen due to various land features, lakes, roads, etc.

Music

- 5.9.1 Investigate and perform music associated with historical periods, individuals, events, and movements in the United States such as songs of the railroad, American heroes, the American Revolution, or a specific decade.
- Goal: Hear a variety of music that is different from what we hear today.

Art

- 5.8.1 Apply elements (line, shape, form, texture, color, value, and space) and principles (repetition, variety, rhythm, proportion, movement, balance, emphasis, and unity) in work that effectively communicates their ideas.
- Goal: Learn elements and principles of art and apply them to their own creative ideas.
- Review skills, such as, using a ruler, drawing converging lines, drawing parallel lines, etc.

UNIT PLAN:

Pre-Reading

- ✓ **Activity:** I will introduced the picture book of Harriet Tubman, life on the southern plantations, and show facts about slavery on the National Geographic website. Learn about former slaves and the impact they had on many run-away slaves.
- ✓ **Grouping:** Whole class
- ✓ **Assessment:** I will make sure everyone is engaging in conversation and asking questions. If I see student's not paying attention, I will make sure to call on them to share something about the related materials.
- ✓ **Monitor:** I will make myself aware of what the students are doing during conversation, keep everyone involved, and stay on topic.

- ✓ **Activity:** I will show a video clip called "Eliza's Escape" about a man who helped a young woman and her baby escape to freedom across the icy Ohio River.
- ✓ **Grouping:** Whole class
- ✓ **Assessment:** After the video, a discussion on the dangers of escaping slavery will take place.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Keep eye on each student and make sure all students are raising hands, asking questions, talking about concerns, and sharing comments.

- ✓ **Activity:** I will introduce several songs that slaves were known to sing while working on the fields. (Music)
- ✓ **Grouping:** Five groups
- ✓ **Assessment:** Each group will have a different song, and after listening to it they will have to come up with one sentence to describe it.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Make sure each group shares the sentence they came up with.

Excellent!

Reading

- ✓ **Activity:** *The House of Dies Drear* by Virginia Hamilton will be introduced the same day the pre-reading activities began. I will read the first chapter of the novel aloud, making sure to stop and ask questions. (Reading)
- ✓ **Grouping:** Whole class for the first chapter. Buddy reading, independent, small group for the rest of the book.
- ✓ **Assessment:** A final exam consisting of questions made up by the student will be given when the book is completed.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Activities, discussion, and journals each day will give me an idea which students are doing the readings.

Lucas liked this book, as did Elizabeth

Responding

- ✓ **Activity:** Students will keep learning logs while reading the book. They are encouraged to write down major events, important quotes, connections, and themes in the learning logs. (Writing)
- ✓ **Grouping:** Individual
- ✓ **Assessment:** I will collect learning logs once a week and make sure to respond to what the student's are writing in them.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Read each journal entry
- ✓ **Activity:** Students will use sticky notes ^{neat strategy} to make predictions while reading independently. The next day, students will discuss predictions before reading the next assignment. (Oral Language)
- ✓ **Grouping:** Individual
- ✓ **Assessment:** Check predictions
- ✓ **Monitor:** Walk around the room and read some of the predictions being made.

Exploring

- ✓ **Activity:** Students will learn about the North Star and how it helped slaves on the Underground Railroad. We will also take a field trip to a planetarium to learn more about stars in general. (Science)
- ✓ **Grouping:** Whole class
- ✓ **Assessment:** Students will write in journals about experience to the planetarium.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Make sure each student is writing during journal writing time.
- ✓ **Activity:** Students will use the internet to explore where locations of the Underground Railroad were. Inferences can be made about why they were located there. (land, hills, lakes, etc) After researching, students will make by hand, a map of the United States showing locations of houses that were involved in the Underground Railroad. (Social Studies)) great
- ✓ **Grouping:** Individual
- ✓ **Assessment:** The maps will be turned in and checked for accurate information. It would be fun to make the map on crinkled paper bags
- ✓ **Monitor:** Keep eye on students using the Internet.
- ✓ **Activity:** Complete story problems that are directly related to the book we are reading. (Example: Between the years 1810 and 1850, forty-thousand slaves out of one-hundred thousand slaves crossed the Ohio River. How many slaves didn't cross?) (Math)
- ✓ **Grouping:** Partners
- ✓ **Assessment:** Answers will be turned in and answers will be discussed aloud in class.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Walk around class and make sure each partner is pulling his/her weight in the work.

Applying

- ✓ **Activity:** Students will be challenged to climb a rock wall and make it to the top! The difficulty of this task will demonstrate the hardships the slaves went through to gain freedom. (Physical Education)
- ✓ **Grouping:** Each student will attempt the rock wall individually
- ✓ **Assessment:** Everyone must try!
- ✓ **Accommodations:** For students who are limited in locomotor movement, I will have an obstacle course set up, which would be accessible to students in wheelchairs as well.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Check for students following directions, having a positive attitude, and being safe around the rock wall.

- ✓ **Activity:** Students will design on paper an architectural structure of Dies Drear's house. Include passageways, tunnels, bedrooms, kitchens, etc. (Art)
- ✓ **Grouping:** Individual
- ✓ **Assessment:** Students will be graded on use of proper art tools, neatness, and creativity.
- ✓ **Accommodations:** Instead of using paper, this could also be done using Popsicle sticks, toothpicks, cotton swabs, etc.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Moving from desk to desk checking on the progress of the project, making sure art tools are being used properly.

- ✓ **Activity:** Students will read the poem "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Laurence Dunbar. Discussion about the meaning of the poem and how it relates to the book will take place.
- ✓ **Grouping:** Small groups (3-4 students)
- ✓ **Assessment:** I will listen to the groups and monitor discussion and keep them on track while talking about the poem.
- ✓ **Monitor:** Move from group to group asking questions to make sure they are on task.

Culminating Activity

- ✓ **Activity:** Field trip to a historical site in Fort Wayne. The Rankin House is the only standing structure in Fort Wayne that is known to be connected to abolition or Underground Railroad activities. After visiting, we will have a picnic along the St. Mary's River, which was also important in choosing locations for the Underground Railroad.
- ✓ **Grouping:** Whole class
- ✓ **Assessment:** informal observation
- ✓ **Monitor:** I, along with parent volunteers, will be responsible for a small group of students while on the field trip.

Time Schedule

<p><u>Day 1</u></p> <p>Introduce related materials and read Chpt. 1 in class</p> <p>*HW Read Chpt. 2, 3</p>	<p><u>Day 2</u></p> <p>Grand Convo about Characters in Chpt. 2,3</p> <p>Read Chpt. 4 in class with buddies</p>	<p><u>Day 3</u></p> <p>Make individual predictions while reading Chpt. 5 together</p> <p>*HW Read Chpt. 6 and check predictions</p>	<p><u>Day 4</u></p> <p>Learning Logs and read Chpt. 7</p>	<p><u>Day 5</u></p> <p>Grand Convo-plot, characters, relationships. Read Chpt. 8- small groups</p>
<p><u>Day 6</u></p> <p>Chpt. 9</p> <p>Reader's Theatre</p> <p>*HW Read Chpt. 10 and bring a question to ask</p>	<p><u>Day 7</u></p> <p>Learning Logs and go over questions from HW</p> <p>Read Chpt. 11</p>	<p><u>Day 8</u></p> <p>Chpt. 12</p>	<p><u>Day 9</u></p> <p>Chpt. 13</p> <p>Talk about themes</p>	<p><u>Day 10</u></p> <p>Chpt. 14</p>
<p><u>Day 11</u></p> <p>Chpt. 15</p> <p>Write important quotes in Learning Logs</p>	<p><u>Day 12</u></p> <p>Chpt. 16</p>	<p><u>Day 13</u></p> <p>Chpt 17</p> <p>How have characters changed?</p> <p>*HW Read Chpt. 18 make predictions</p>	<p><u>Day 14</u></p> <p>Grand convo about predictions Read Chpt. 19 and talk about ending</p> <p>Introduce astrology</p>	<p><u>Day 15</u></p> <p>FIELD TRIP to Planetarium!</p>
<p><u>Day 16</u></p> <p>"We Wear the Mask"</p> <p>Rock Wall</p> <p>Introduce Social Studies Lesson</p>	<p><u>Day 17</u></p> <p>Computer Lab to work on map assignment</p>	<p><u>Day 18</u></p> <p>Math story problems related to Underground Railroad</p>	<p><u>Day 19</u></p> <p>Begin Art architectural project</p> <p>*HW continue to work on Art project</p>	<p><u>Day 20</u></p> <p>Finish Art work</p>

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- _____ Learning Logs during unit
- _____ Sticky notes used to make predictions while reading
- _____ Journals about Field Trip to the Planetarium
- _____ Map
- _____ Story problem worksheet
- _____ Architectural Art project

WOW

Christa Hunter

Score 35 / 35

2 Typed (2 points)

5 Featured selection – title, author, publishing information, reading level, 4-7 sentence summary (5 points)

5 Related material – five additional sources listed, including titles, authors, publishing information, and reading levels, 2 sentences describing relationship to feature selection (5 points) Neat-different selection

3 Goals and Indiana Academic Standards identified (3 points) super! very complete

10 Unit plan includes five stages of reading, indicating how the activities will be monitored and how they will be assessed; includes indication of grouping (10 points)

2 Time schedule (2 points)

3 Checklist of activities (3 points)

5 Engaging (5 points)

COMMENTS:

excellent - excellent!



GREAT JOB ON

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THE PROJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING YOU
<input type="checkbox"/> THAT OUTFIT	<input type="checkbox"/> THE PRESENTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> HANDLING THINGS	<input type="checkbox"/> YOUR RECOVERY

Christa -

Excellent work on this project! I hope you actually get to teach it some day!

♥ Heather

AND I REALLY MEAN IT