

# Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about American slavery in the years before the Civil War. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical American History class.

## ★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

**Important notice: Assessment 1 contains a racial epithet.**

## ★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- *A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of American History*

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- *Based on primary or secondary sources*

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone.

- *Brief tasks promoting historical literacy*

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the students' mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- *Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments*

A BASIC and an ADVANCED version of each assessment are provided. The BASIC Assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The ADVANCED Assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the BASIC version.

- *Easy to use both as learning and assessment tools*

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess student historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- *Evaluating student responses*

Brief but specific suggestions are provided defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

# Slavery Assessment 1

Basic Level

## Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8

### ★ Key Ideas and Details

1. (6–8) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

### ★ Using this Assessment

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*Slavery: Assessment 1* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

**Important notice: Document 2 contains a racial epithet.**

### ★ Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment

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## Slavery: Assessment 1

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read a secondary source document and two primary source documents carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

### Document 1: A Secondary Source

Was American slavery evil because of how cruel it was? This question may seem odd. How could a system of total control over human beings not be cruel? And yet, abolitionists in the 1840s did argue about this. For example, Theodore Weld felt it was important to focus above all on the cruelty of slavery. He stressed the slave owners' use of whips and chains as means of control; the endless hours of toil forced on men, women, children alike, all for no pay; the poor food and clothing and shelter provided; the constant terror that loved ones might be torn from their families and sold to other slave owners. On the other hand, William Lloyd Garrison said these forms of cruelty were not the only thing to focus on. He said slavery might actually at times be rather mild in its effects. In his view, slavery itself was a sin— whether the slave owner was kind or not. The “sin” was in depriving human beings of the ability to live freely and choose freely as God meant them to. In fact, there were slave owners who were kind, who did not whip their slaves, who kept them together as families and treated them almost as members of their own family. To abolitionists like Garrison this did not excuse anything. And he feared that by focusing only on cruelty, abolitionists might only encourage efforts to improve the lot of the slaves without ending slavery itself.

**Source Information:** This document is a secondary source account of how abolitionists differed in the way they argued against slavery. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. As a secondary source, this document is not evidence from the era of slavery in the United States. It is a later account by someone writing about that time. This particular historical account was written in 2013 specifically for use as part of this activity.

## Document 2: A Primary Source

*Mr. Young didn't have to worry about his hands running away, because he wasn't a mean man like some of the slave holders was. He never spoke harshly or whipped 'em, and he didn't allow anybody else to do it either. I remember one day a fellow come from across from another farm and spoke something about Mr. Young being too easy with his servants. He said, "Them darn niggers will think they are as good as you if you keep up at the rate you're going now, Young." Mr. Young just up and told him if he ever spoke like that again he'd call his bluff. Mr. Young told him that he didn't work his people like they were oxen.*

**Source Information:** During the Great Depression in the 1930s, more than 2,300 former slaves were interviewed by the Federal Writers' Project, a New Deal agency in the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This is a brief excerpt from one former slave, William Henry Towns, who had been enslaved in Alabama.

Source: National Humanities Center. "Enslaved Labor on Southern Plantations: Selections from the WPA interviews of formerly enslaved African Americans, 1938–1938." *The Making of African American Identity, Vol. 1, 1500–1865*. <http://www.nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/enlavement/text5/plantationlaborwpa.pdf>.

## Document 3: A Primary Source

*Old Boss he sent us out in any kind of weather, rain or snow, it never mattered. We had to go to the mountains, cut wood and drag it down to the house. Many times we come in with our clothes stuck to our poor old cold bodies, but it weren't no use to try to get them dry. If the old Boss or the old Missie saw us they would yell: "Get on out of here you old black thing and get your work outta the way!" And Lordy, honey, we knew to get or else we'd get the lash. They didn't care how old or how young you were, you were never too big to get the lash. The rich white folks never did any work; they had the darkies to do it for them. In the summer, we had to work outdoors, in the winter in the house. I had to card and spin till ten o'clock. Never got much rest, and to get up at four the next morning and start again. Didn't get much to eat, neither, just a little corn bread and molasses. Lordy, honey, you can't know what a time I had. All cold and hungry. No ma'm, I ain't telling no lies. It's the gospel truth. It sure is.*

**Source Information:** This brief excerpt is also from the collection of interviews with former slaves by the Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s. This brief excerpt is from Sarah Gudger, who was enslaved in North Carolina.

Source: National Humanities Center. "Enslaved Labor on Southern Plantations: Selections from the WPA interviews of formerly enslaved African Americans, 1938–1938." *The Making of African American Identity, Vol. 1, 1500–1865*. <http://www.nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/enlavement/text5/plantationlaborwpa.pdf>.

## Assessment Questions

1. Document 1 describes a difference of opinion between abolitionists Theodore Weld and William Lloyd Garrison. Documents 2 and 3 are accounts by former slaves. In speaking against slavery, Weld probably would have used Document 3, not Document 2. Why? In answering, identify three details from Document 3 that Weld would have stressed.
2. Garrison would probably have used both documents to support his view. Choose one detail from each document that backs up his point of view about slavery. Explain your choices.

# Slavery Assessment 7

*Advanced Level*

## Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–12

### ★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 7. (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### ★ *Using this Assessment*

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*Slavery: Assessment 7* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

### ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment*

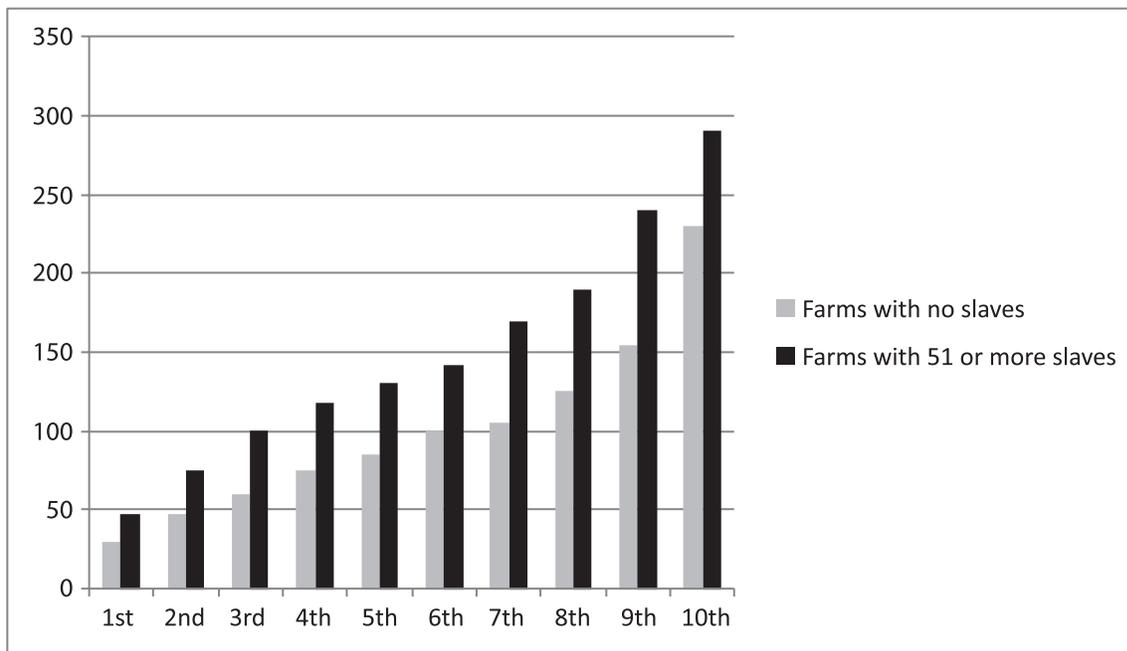
[ This section is not available for review on sample pages ]

## Slavery: Assessment 7

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer two questions focused on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 7: (9–10)** Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### Document 1: A Primary Source Table



**Source Information:** This chart compares two kinds of farms in the South in 1860—farms with no slaves and larger plantations with 51 or more slaves. The numbers on the left side of the chart are a production index. This index is a measure of how productive each group of farms was. The farms are grouped in tenths, from the least productive tenth to the most productive tenth. This table is adapted from one published in Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), p.76.

## Document 2: A Written Primary Source

*Slavery is the source of indolence, and destructive of all industry, which in times past among the wise has ever been regarded as the first friend of religion, morality, and happiness. The poor despise labor, because slavery makes it degrading. The mass of slaveholders are idlers.*

*It is destructive of all mechanical excellence. The free states build ships and steam cars for the nations of the world. The slave states import the handles for their axes—these primitive tools of the architect. The educated population will not work at all. The uneducated must work without science, and of course without skill.*

*It induces national poverty. Slaves consume more and produce less than freemen.*

*Here in the South are three millions of slaves, doing only about one-half of the effective work of the same number of whites in the North, because they are not so skilful, so energetic, and above all, have not the stimulus of self-interest, as the whites. Next they waste as much again through carelessness and design.*

**Source Information:** Cassius Marcellus Clay was a Southern abolitionist. He argued that slavery was not only morally wrong but also harmful to the economy of the South. This document includes excerpts from a long letter he wrote to the *New-York Tribune*. The letter, titled “Slavery! The Evil—The Remedy,” can be found in *The Writings of Cassius Marcellus Clay, Speeches and Addresses* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1848), pp. 204–205 and 224. Available online from the Internet Archive, accessed at [http://archive.org/stream/writingsofcassiu00inclay/writingsofcassiu00inclay\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/writingsofcassiu00inclay/writingsofcassiu00inclay_djvu.txt).

# Student Handout

## Document 3: A Written Primary Source

*We all lived in a little two-room log cabin just off the Big House. Life wasn't ever much for us, because we had to work and slave all the time.*

*Massa Jim had about one of the biggest plantations in the section. I guess he had nigh onto a hundred blacks on the place ...*

*The folks nowadays are always complaining about how they are having such hard times, but they just don't know nothing. They should have come up when I did and they'd see how now they are living just like kings and queens. They don't know what it's like to have to keep up with the leader. You know there was always somebody that could work faster than the rest of the folks, and this fellow was always the leader. And everybody else was supposed to keep up with him or her, whoever it was. If you didn't keep up with the leader you got a good thrashing when you got home at night. It was always good and dark when the hands got in from the field. Of course, if there was a lady that had a baby at home, she could leave just a little before the sun set.*

*Young kids nowadays don't know what it is to be punished. They think if they get a little whipping from their mammy now that they've been punished terrible. They should of had to follow the leader for one day and see how they'd be punished if they got too far behind. The biggest thing that we were punished for was not keeping up ... We worked all day, every day except some Saturdays, we had a half day off. We didn't get many, and only when we asked for them. On Sundays we just laid around most all day.*

**Source Information:** This excerpt is adapted from an interview with a former slave by the Federal Writers' Project, a New Deal agency in the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The interview was with Mary Ella Grandberry, who was enslaved in Alabama.

Source: National Humanities Center. "Enslaved Labor on Southern Plantations: Selections from the WPA interviews of formerly enslaved African Americans, 1938–1938." *The Making of African American Identity, Vol. 1, 1500–1865*. <http://www.nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/enslavement/text5/plantationlaborwpa.pdf>.

## Assessment Questions

1. Briefly interpret the results of the chart in Document 1 and explain how each of the other documents does or does not help explain those results.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Some historians have said that slavery in the South was an economic failure and would in time die out on its own. How much support do these documents provide for that theory? Explain your answer.