

Harriet Tubman series, no 1 by Jacob Lawrence, 1939-1940  
Harvard Fine Arts Library, Visual Collections



Harriet Tubman series, no 24 by Jacob Lawrence, 1939-1940  
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## Harriet Tubman: Women and the Civil War

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** To what extent did Harriet Tubman impact the Civil War?

### OBJECTIVES:

Students shall investigate the causes and effects of war in the early history of the United States.

**Grade:** Grade 4  
**Subject:** Social Studies

### FRAMEWORKS:

- G.2.4.1 Research elements of culture in a community, state, or nation.
- G.3.2.2 Explain how people are influenced by, adapt to, and alter the environment.
- H.6.4.6 Identify events that led to Arkansas' involvement in the Civil War: excise taxes, state's rights, slavery.
- H.6.4.8 Discuss how differences between people lead to conflict (e.g. social, political, economic).

**TIME FRAME:** 2 DAYS

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** paper, pencil, white boards, color pencils, list of vocabulary words, copy of PowerPoint, and copy of *Harriet Tubman* by Matha E. H. Rustad

## **TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Harriet Tubman is well known for risking her life as a “conductor” led escaped slaves to freedom. Her efforts to free slaves led to the term “Underground Railroad” being used for all the various routes and means that people used to escape slavery although most did not have conductors to help them. During a ten-year span, she made 19 trips to slave states and escorted over 300 slaves to freedom and, as she once proudly pointed out to Frederick Douglass, in all of her journeys she “never lost a single passenger.”<sup>i</sup> Challenging the exploitative system of slavery from the inside, Tubman worked over the course of her life to free herself and many others. Called “Moses” by all who loved and respected her<sup>ii</sup>, Tubman also served as a cook, a nurse, and even a spy for the Union during the Civil War, and she also was the first woman in American history to lead a military expedition.

Harriet Tubman decided to help the Union Army because she wanted freedom for all of the people who were forced into slavery. She convinced many other brave African Americans to join her as spies, even knowing the risk of being hanged if they were caught. In one of her most dramatic and dangerous roles, Tubman helped Colonel James Montgomery plan a raid to free slaves from plantations along the Combahee River in South Carolina.

Early on the morning of June 1, 1863, three gunboats carrying several hundred male soldiers along with Harriet Tubman set out on their mission. Tubman had gathered key information from her scouts about the Confederate’s positions. She knew where they were hiding along the shore. She also found out they had placed torpedoes, barrels filled with gunpowder, in the water. Ultimately, they freed about 750 slaves—men, women, children, and babies—and did not lose one soldier in the attack.<sup>iii</sup> Frederick Douglass said, “Excepting John Brown – of sacred memory – I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than [Harriet Tubman].”<sup>iv</sup>

Sarah H. Bradford author of Harriet: The Moses of Her People, states:

Harriet Tubman was a woman, and that she succeeded in piloting only three or four hundred slaves from the land of bondage to the land of freedom. Her cry to the slave-holders was ever like his [Moses] to Pharaoh, “Let my people go!” Her name deserves to be handed down to posterity, side by side with the names of Jeanne D’ Arc, Grace Darling, and Florence Nightingale, for not one of these women, noble and brave as they were, has shown more courage, and power of endurance, in facing danger and death to relieve human suffering, than this poor black woman, whose story I am endeavoring in a most imperfect way to give you.

**This lesson would serve as one of several lessons on the Civil War.**

# Day 1

1. Daily Opener- WRITING PROMPT/PERSUASIVE (15 minutes)

**Mix things up and have students respond to the prompt on index cards rather than notebook paper. As students enter the classroom, advise them to respond to the Writing Prompt on the 5x7 index cards that are on their desk.**

Pretend you are an abolitionist from the North. Persuade both Northerners and Southerners to believe that slavery is bad and should be abolished. Give examples to support your argument. (Allow several students to share)

**Present the lesson topic, advising students that the class will continue to learn about the Civil War. The next activity will assist students by expanding on essential vocabulary that will help students interpret and understand the causes and effects of the war.**

2. Vocabulary Exercise- FOLDABLE AND COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK (25 minutes)

## Vocabulary Words

Union Army	Confederate Army	slavery	Underground Railroad
Contraband	conductor	spy	Harriet Tubman
Overseer	abolitionist		

**Distribute 8x11 paper to each student (white or color paper). Place students in groups of three or four. Each group will select only four vocabulary words from the list. Encourage students to select words that they are familiar with and to allow each one in the group to contribute. Students will fold the paper and title their foldable, *Harriet Tubman and the Civil War* (Figure 1). Then, have students fold the paper into four sections (Figure 2). Advise students that each section is devoted to one vocabulary word (Figure 3). Groups should define the terms (in their own words) on the left hand side and create an illustration on the right (Figure 4). Allow students to use color pencils to draw their illustrations. Students will share their work at the next class.**

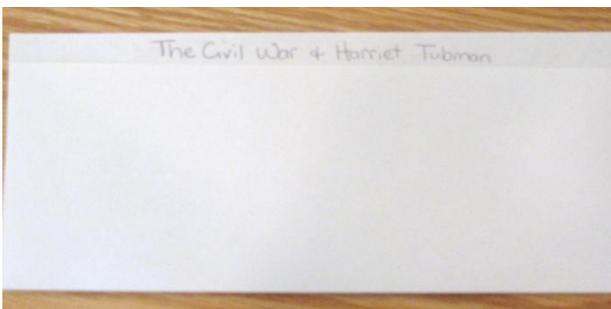


Figure 1

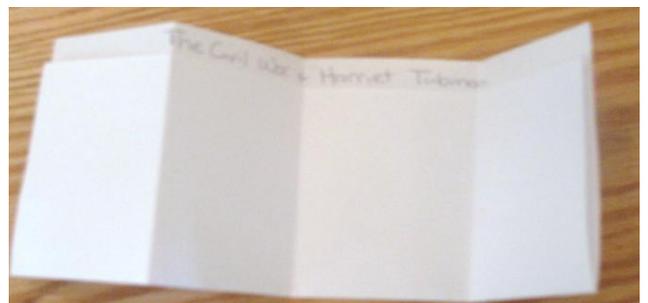


Figure 2

3 Harriet Tubman and the Civil War

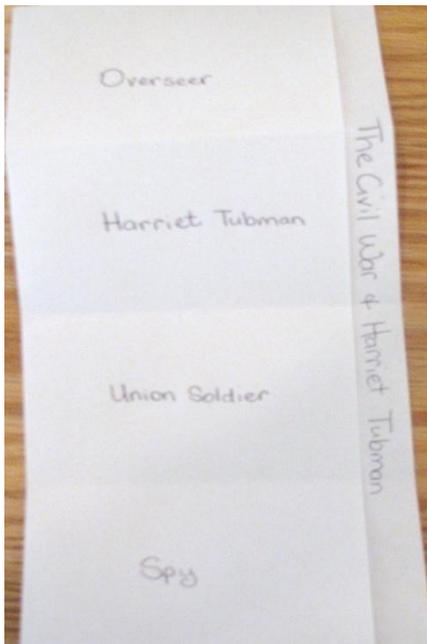


Figure 3

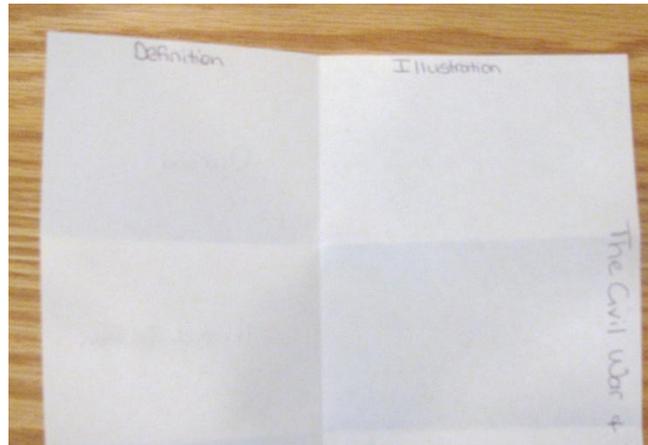


Figure 4

**Homework:** INTERNET RESEARCH (explanation/10 minutes)- Students may choose:

1. Describe the different roles of African American women in the Civil War.
- OR
2. How did women participate as spies in the Civil War?

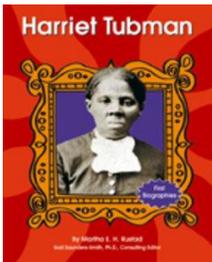
## Day 2

1. Bell Ringer- (BRAINSTORMING 5 minutes). Many students are visual learners, have the following image displayed. You can display the image in a [PowerPoint](#) (See Example). Have students respond on their white boards to the following question, “What do you know about Harriet Tubman?”



*Harriet Tubman*, Harvard Fine Arts Library, Visual Collections.

**Advise students that you are going to read a book on Harriet Tubman to the class. Encourage students to write (on their whiteboards) down anything that they think is surprising as they listen to you read**



2. Read Aloud (15 minutes) – *Harriet Tubman* by Matha E. H. Rustad. Allow students to share in a class discussion, comparing and contrasting the read aloud to what they wrote down.

- Synthesis and Inference (5 minutes) -Have students examine the next image in the PowerPoint. It is the book cover of a book written by Sarah Bradford. Ask students to read the book cover and make inferences. Ask students, "Why would a white woman write a book about a black woman?" Ask students, "What they think the book might be about?"



- Foldables- COOPERATIVE GROUP WORKS (15 minutes)

**Have students return to the groups they were in the day before. Advise each group that they will select and present two of their four vocabulary words to the class. Each group will select a spokesperson that will share two of the four terms and definition.**

**Check For Understanding by correcting incorrect information and filling in relevant information. Challenge students to present terms that haven't been used.**

- CLASS DISCUSSION from homework (15 minutes)- African American Women & Women Spies in the Civil War- Have students share the results of their homework. Answers will vary but should include: Women served as spies and passed military secrets. One of the most famous Union spies during the Civil War, Pauline Cushman

### Images

Lawrence, Jacob (1939-1940). Harriet Tubman series no 1 [Painting]. Retrieved from Harvard Fine Arts Library, Visual Collections Online database  
<http://via.lib.harvard.edu:80/via/deliver/deepLinkItem?recordId=olvwork98708&componentId=FHCL:115213>

**Photo Description:** "With sweat and toil and ignorance he consumes his life, to pour the earnings into channels from which he does not drink." --Henry Ward Beecher

Lawrence, Jacob (1939-1940). Harriet Tubman series no 24 [Painting]. Retrieved from Harvard Fine Arts Library, Visual Collections Online database  
<http://via.lib.harvard.edu:80/via/deliver/deepLinkItem?recordId=olvwork98717&componentId=FHCL:115143>

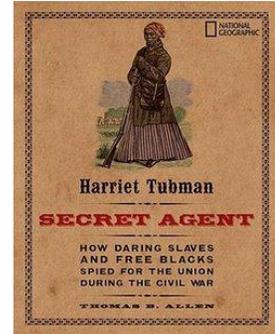
**Photo Description:** It was the year 1859, five years after Harriet Tubman's first trip to Boston. By this time, there was hardly an antislavery worker who did not know the name Harriet Tubman. She had spoken in a dozen cities. People from here and abroad filled her hand with money. And over and over again, she made her mysterious raids.

American school, 19<sup>th</sup> Century (n.d.). Harriet Tubman [Painting]. Retrieved from Harvard Fine Arts Library, Visual Collections Online database  
[http://via.lib.harvard.edu/via/deliver/fullRecordDisplay?\\_collection=via&inoID=193707&recordNumber=6&fullgridwidth=5&method=view&recordViewFormat=grid](http://via.lib.harvard.edu/via/deliver/fullRecordDisplay?_collection=via&inoID=193707&recordNumber=6&fullgridwidth=5&method=view&recordViewFormat=grid)

## RECOMMENDED SOURCES FOR USE IN THE CLASSROOM:

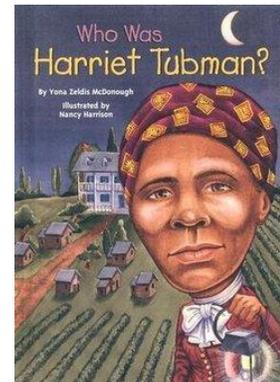
*Harriet Tubman, Secret Agent* by **Tom B. Allen**  
**Publisher: National Geographic Society (2009)**

Annotation: Examines Harriet Tubman's role as a spy for the Union during the Civil War, as well as how other African American created Black Dispatches which provided the Union Army with a stream of intelligence of the Confederate's movement.



*Who Was Harriet Tubman?* By **Yona Zeldis McDonough**  
**Publisher: Grosset & Dunlap (2002)**

Annotation: A biography of the nineteenth-century women who escaped slavery and helped many other slaves get to freedom on the Underground Railroad.



*Female Buffalo Soldier- With Documents*  
**Cathay Williams or William Cathay** (Cathey)  
Private, Thirty-eighth U.S. Infantry 1866-1868

<http://www.buffalosoldier.net/CathayWilliamsFemaleBuffaloSoldierWithDocuments.htm>

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<sup>i</sup> Africans in America (2011). People & Events: Harriet Tubman c. 1820 – 1913. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1535.html>.

<sup>ii</sup> Hewitt, N. (Eds.), (2010). *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

<sup>iii</sup> National Geographic Kids: Dare to Explore! (2011). *Harriet Tubman: Civil War Spy*. Retrieved from <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/stories/peopleplaces/harriettubman/>

<sup>iv</sup> People & Events: Harriet Tubman c. 1820-1913.