

# What is the most effective way to resist?



*"Smithsonian Learning Lab Resource: The Slave [Sculpture] / (Photographed by Peter A. Juley & Son)." Smithsonian Learning Lab, Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access, 1 Jan. 1970.*

## Supporting Questions

1. What about the daily life of enslaved laborers would have prompted resistance?
2. What were means of resistance to slavery?
3. What were the risks of resistance to slavery?
4. What were the results of resistance to slavery?

11<sup>th</sup> Grade United States/ Virginia History

What is the most effective way to resist?	
<b>Virginia Social Studies Standards</b>	The student will apply social science skills to understand major events in Virginia and United States history during the first half of the nineteenth century by evaluating the cultural, economic, and political issues that divided the nation, including tariffs, slavery, the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements, and the role of the states in the Union;  TT Standards: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	Read an article about protests to <a href="#">Confederate monuments in Richmond</a> then complete a <a href="#">Think, Puzzle, Explore routine</a> . This serves as a way to connect history and current events.

Supporting Question	Supporting Question	Supporting Question	Supporting Question
What about the daily life of enslaved people would have prompted resistance?	What were means of resistance to slavery?	What were the risks of resisting slavery?	What were the results of resistance to slavery?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Create a list of circumstances that would cause individuals to resist slavery.	Construct a chart listing different means and methods of resistance to slavery and their cultural economic and political impact.	Create a cost-benefit chart to list the methods of resistance and their potential risks.	Construct a chart listing examples of resistance to slavery, the results of resistance and the cultural, economic and political impact of resistance.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<b>Source A:</b> Excerpt from Amistad – Mutiny at Sea <b>Source B:</b> Views of Slavery <b>Source C:</b> Cotton pickers	<b>Source A:</b> Nat Turner's Slave Revolt <b>Source B:</b> Frederick Douglas <b>Source C:</b> Image of Lear Green Escaping Slavery <b>Source D:</b> Passive Resistance <b>Source E:</b> Cultural Resistance	<b>Source A:</b> Resistance and Punishment <b>Source B:</b> Advertisement for a Runaway Slave <b>Source C:</b> Punishment of Slaves <b>Source D:</b> Operations of the Fugitive Slave Law	<b>Source A:</b> Account of Free Frank McWorter <b>Source B:</b> Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad <b>Source C:</b> Gabriel Prosser's Execution

<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<b>ARGUMENT.</b> What is the most effective way to resist? Identify and describe the most effective means to resist slavery prior to the Civil War using specific examples and evidence from the examined sources.
	<b>EXTENSION.</b> List other known forms of resistance in history or the present day and categorize them as active or passive.
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<b>UNDERSTAND.</b> Identify and describe ways in which resistance can occur in the present day. <b>ASSESS.</b> Create a list of possible resistance efforts that involve passive and active measures. <b>ACT.</b> Choose one of the options and implement it as an individual, small group or class project.

*\*Featured sources are suggested and links are provided. It may be that these links are broken and we apologize in advance for the inconvenience. This inquiry was developed by ...*

## Overview

### Inquiry Description

This inquiry focuses on why enslaved people resisted slavery, the ways in which enslaved people showed resistance despite risks and the results of resistance.

The questions, tasks, and sources in this inquiry asks students to examine the cultural, economic and political impacts of resistance to slavery.

This inquiry highlights the following Virginia social studies standards.

- The student will apply social science skills to understand major events in Virginia and United States history during the first half of the nineteenth century by
  - e) evaluating the cultural, economic, and political issues that divided the nation, including tariffs, slavery, the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements, and the role of the states in the Union;

This inquiry is expected to take four 50-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (e.g., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, featured sources, writing). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. This inquiry lends itself to differentiation and modeling of historical thinking skills while assisting students in reading the variety of sources.

### Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question, students will need to explore and analyze a variety of primary and secondary sources including images, artifacts, writings, quotes and videos to address the four supporting questions.

The formative performance tasks ask students to synthesize information gathered from featured sources to illustrate the ways in which enslaved people resisted slavery despite risks and the results of the resistance.

Ultimately, students make an argument in response to the compelling question identifying the most effective form of resistance to slavery.

## Staging the Compelling Question

In staging the compelling question, students are asked to read an article about protests to Confederate monuments in Richmond then complete a Think, Puzzle, Explore routine. This serves as a way to connect history and current events.

The staging task is not designed to delve too far into the specific content of the compelling question. Instead, it's intended to provide a frame of reference and context for the inquiry. Specifically, students are asked to reflect on a present-day example of resistance as a way to connect to the examples from history.

This task may be completed in a brief period of time, depending on how much overall time is available for the inquiry. If following the guidelines described in the inquiry overview (three or five 50-minute class periods), then this staging task would likely only last 10-15 minutes.

## Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question asks, "What about the daily life of enslaved laborers would have prompted resistance?" The purpose of the question is to build context about the lives of enslaved people. Students will see an example of transportation from Africa to the United States, scenes of the types of ways enslaved people were sold and treated as property and some of the types of work in which enslaved laborers performed.

The featured sources include an Excerpt from the video *Amistad – Mutiny at Sea*, an image with six scenarios in *Views of Slavery* and an image of enslaved people picking cotton.

The formative performance task is to create a list of circumstances that would cause individuals to resist slavery.

The following procedures may be used to support students as they complete this task.

- Students watch the excerpt of the video *Amistad- Mutiny at Sea*. They will get an overview of the slave trade and the torturous conditions endured during transport from Africa to the United States.
- Students will view the six images put forth in *Views of Slavery*. The images show different images exemplifying the brutality and cruelty of slavery.
- Students will view an image of enslaved people picking cotton. The image shows the physically demanding nature of the work of picking cotton.

Work on the formative performance task provides students an opportunity to gather information they will need in responding to the compelling question.

## Supporting Question 1

## Featured Source

Source A: An excerpt from Amistad – Mutiny at Sea

This source is a four minute video from The History Channel and is available online at [The History Channel web site](https://www.history.com/shows/amistad).





## Supporting Question 1

### Featured Source

### Source B: Views of Slavery

This source is an image “Views of Slavery” from Emancipator, a newsletter published by the American Anti-Slavery Society in the 1830s and is available online at the [Smithsonian Learning Lab](https://learninglab.si.edu/exhibits/american-anti-slavery-society).



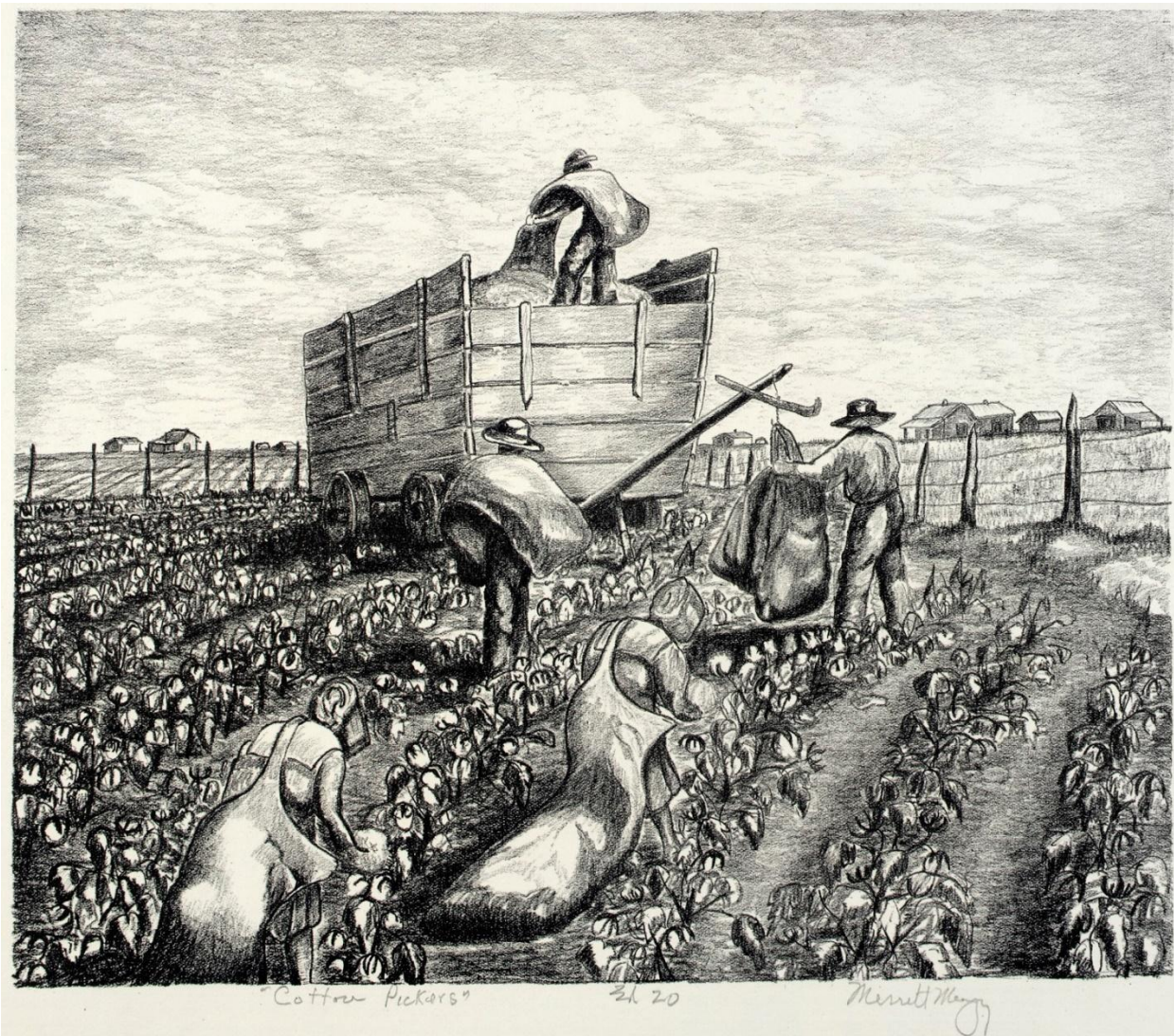


## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source C: Cotton Pickers

This source is an image of enslaved laborers picking cotton and is available online at the [Smithsonian Learning Lab](https://learninglab.si.edu/exhibits/slavery-and-cotton).





## Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question asks, "What were means of resistance to slavery?" The purpose of the question is for students to see the wide variety of ways in which enslaved people showed resistance to their enslavement. Students will see examples of both active and passive resistance coupled with resilience in the face of a brutal and cruel system.

The featured sources include an image and brief account of Nat Turner's Slave Revolt, an image of Frederick Douglas and brief account of his influence as a spokesperson for abolition, an image and narrative of Lear Green's escape from slavery, a short video showing a variety of means of passive resistance, an image of a gourd head banjo and some information about other ways enslaved people showed their cultural resistance to enslavement.

The formative performance task is to construct a chart listing different means and methods of resistance to slavery and their cultural, economic and political impact.

The following procedure may be used to support students as they complete this task.

- Students will view the image "Horrid Massacre in Virginia" and read the brief account of Nat Turner's rebellion to see an example of an active form of resistance to slavery.
- Students will view the image and read the brief account of the way in which Frederick Douglas showed resistance to slavery through his speeches.
- Students will view the image and read the brief narrative of Lear Green showing resistance by escaping enslavement.
- Students will watch a brief video of the various methods of passive resistance enslaved people performed daily.

Work on the formative performance task provides students an opportunity to gather information they will need in responding to the compelling question.

## Supporting Question 2

## Featured Source

## Source A: Nat Turner's Revolt

This source is an image of a woodcut showing Nat Turner's slave revolt in 1831 and a brief explanatory reading and is available online at [Encyclopedia Virginia](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Nat-Turner-s-Revolt-1831).


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## Nat Turner's Revolt (1831)

Contributed by [Patrick H. Breen](#)

On the evening of August 21-22, 1831, an enslaved preacher and self-styled prophet named Nat Turner launched the most deadly slave revolt in the history of the United States. Over the course of a day in Southampton County, Turner and his allies killed fifty-five white men, women, and children as the rebels made their way toward Jerusalem, Virginia (now Courtland). Less than twenty-four hours after the revolt began, the rebels encountered organized resistance and were defeated in an encounter at James Parker's farm. Following this setback, Turner and other rebels scrambled to reassemble their forces. The next day, a series of defeats led to the effective end of the revolt. Whites quickly and brutally reasserted their control over Southampton County, killing roughly three dozen blacks without trials. Within a few days of the revolt, white leaders in Southampton became increasingly confident that the revolt had been suppressed and worked to limit the extralegal killing of blacks. Instead, white leaders made sure that the remaining suspected slaves were tried, which also meant that the white slave owners would receive compensation from the state for condemned slaves, a benefit that the state did not extend to slave owners who owned suspected rebels killed without trials. This effort, which reached a climax with the declaration of martial law in Southampton a week after the revolt began, meant that Southampton court system would ultimately decide what to do with suspected slave rebels. Trials began on August 31, 1831, and the majority of trials were completed within a month. By the time that the trials were finished the following spring, thirty slaves and one free black had been condemned to death. Of these, nineteen were executed in Southampton: Governor John Floyd, following the recommendations of the court in Southampton, commuted twelve sentences. Turner himself had eluded whites throughout September and into October when two slaves spotted him close to where the revolt began. Once detected, Turner was forced to move, but he was unable to elude the renewed manhunt. He was captured on October 30. While in jail, sometimes told Turner and his friends with whites about the revolt. Local lawyer Thomas R. Conway approached Turner with a plan to settle down his



*Horrid Massacre in Virginia*

## Supporting Question 2

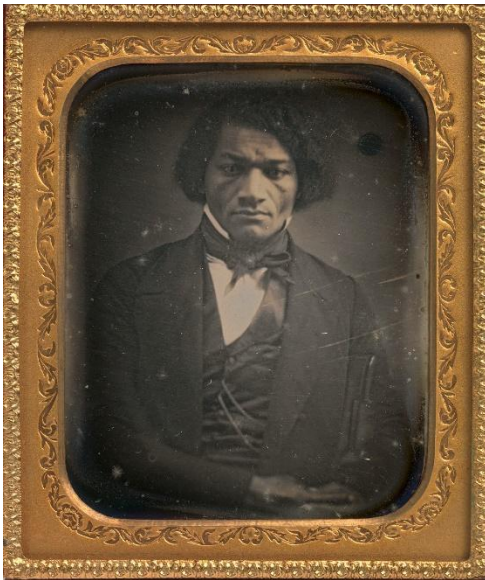
## Featured Source

Source B: Frederick Douglass

This source is an image of Frederick Douglass and a brief reading about the ways in which he resisted slavery through his speeches and is available online at the [Smithsonian Learning Lab](#).

## Frederick Douglass

In the years following his escape from bondage in 1838, Frederick Douglass emerged as a powerful and persuasive spokesman for the cause of abolition. Douglass's effectiveness as an antislavery advocate was due in large measure to his firsthand experience with the evils of slavery and his extraordinary skill as an orator whose "glowing logic, biting irony, melting appeals, and electrifying eloquence" astonished and enthralled his audiences. Convinced that a peaceful end to slavery was impossible, Douglass embraced the Civil War as a fight for emancipation and called upon President Lincoln to enlist black troops in the cause.

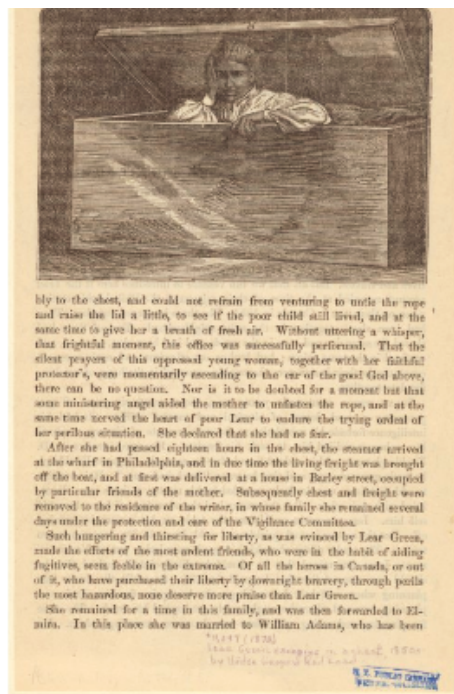


## Supporting Question 2

## Featured Source

## Source C: Image of Lear Green Escaping Slavery

This source is an image and narrative account of Lear Green's escape from enslavement and is available online at the [Digital Public Library of America](https://www.digitalpubliclibraryofamerica.org/).





## Supporting Question 2

### Featured Source

**Source D:** Passive Resistance

This source is a brief video of ways in which enslaved people resisted on a daily basis and is available online on [The History Channel's YouTube page](#).



## Supporting Question 2

## Featured Source

Source E: Cultural Resistance

This source is an image of a gourd head banjo and a brief reading about the ways in which enslaved people maintained culture and created new cultural forms as a method of resistance and resilience and is available online at the [Smithsonian Learning Lab](#).

**Cultural Resistance**

Enslaved people maintained African culture and developed new cultural forms in the United States. Although slave owners often tried to control this, ~~enslaved people showed resiliency by~~ keeping African culture alive in language, food, music, folklore and religious beliefs. This is a gourd made from local materials.



### Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question asks, "What were the risks of resistance to slavery?" The purpose of this question is for students to see the serious risk enslaved people took when they engaged in resistance efforts. Students will get an overview of the mindset of slave owners and their treatment of enslaved people in the face of their resistance.

The featured sources include a web site focusing on resistance and punishment, an image of advertisement for a runaway slave and a brief explanatory reading, an image of enslaved people being punished in a variety of ways, and a drawing of the capture of an enslaved person.

The formative performance task is to create a cost-benefit chart to list the methods of resistance and their potential risks.

The following procedure may be used to support students as they complete this task.

- Students will explore the web site and read quotes from George Washington and other notable figures from the era to understand the mindset of slave owners in relation to slavery and punishment for enslaved people who resisted. Students view images and read an overview of potential punishments enslaved people endured when they participated in resistance.
- Students will view of the image of Thomas Jefferson's advertisement for a runaway slave and read the accompanying explanation.
- Students will view an image of enslaved people being punished in a variety of ways. Students will see the specific and brutal ways in which enslaved people were treated.
- Students will view the image of an enslaved person who escaped being captured and returned to his master despite this daughter's pleadings.

Work on the formative performance task provides students an opportunity to gather information they will need in responding to the compelling question.



## Supporting Question 3

## Featured Source

Source A: Resistance and Punishment

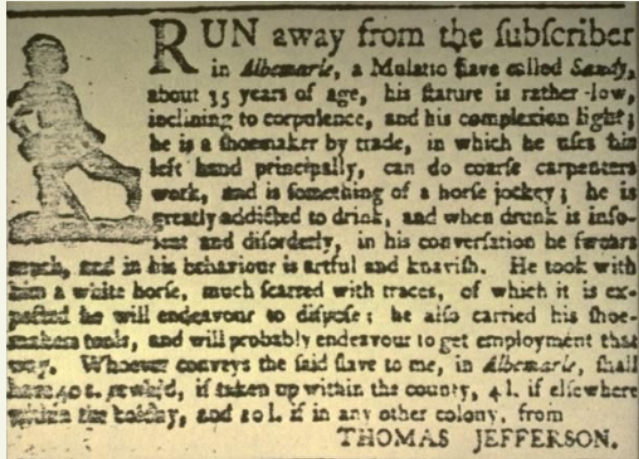
This source is a website with quotes, images and brief readings related to resistance and punishment and is available online at [George Washington's Mount Vernon web site](https://www.mountvernon.org/education/curriculum/Resistance-and-Punishment).



## Supporting Question 3

**Source B:** Advertisement for a Runaway Slave

This source is an image of an advertisement for a runaway slave and a brief explanatory reading and is available online at [Encyclopedia Virginia](https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-and-reference-works/encyclopedias/american-encyclopedia/runaway-slave).



### Thomas Jefferson Advertises for Runaway Slave

Thomas Jefferson advertises for the capture of a runaway slave in the September 14, 1769, edition of the *Virginia Gazette*. The enslaved mulatto, a light-skinned thirty-five-year-old shoemaker, is described as being "greatly addicted to drink," prone to using profanity, and "artful and knavish" in his behavior. In addition to his shoemaking skills, the runaway had some proficiency in carpentry and was "something of a horse jockey." Jefferson offered a bounty for the capture and return of the man.

Original Author: Thomas Jefferson  
Created: September 14, 1769  
Medium: Printed newspaper advertisement  
Courtesy of Monticello

#### Featured In

- Printing in Colonial Virginia
- Runaway Slaves and Servants in Colonial Virginia
- Fugitive Slave Laws

## Supporting Question 3

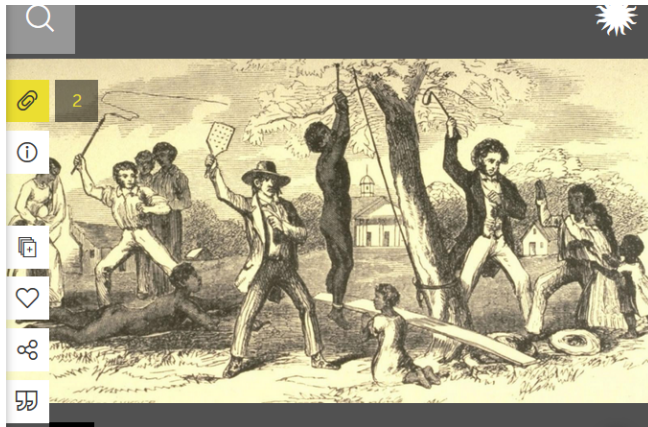
**Source C:** Punishment of Slaves

This source is an image of enslaved people being punished in a variety of ways and a brief related reading and is available online at the [Smithsonian Learning Lab](#).



#### Punishment of slaves

This picture depicts the type of punishment that slaves had to endure. Often times they would take place in front of other slaves, this acts as a deterrent, preventing the other slaves from rebelling.

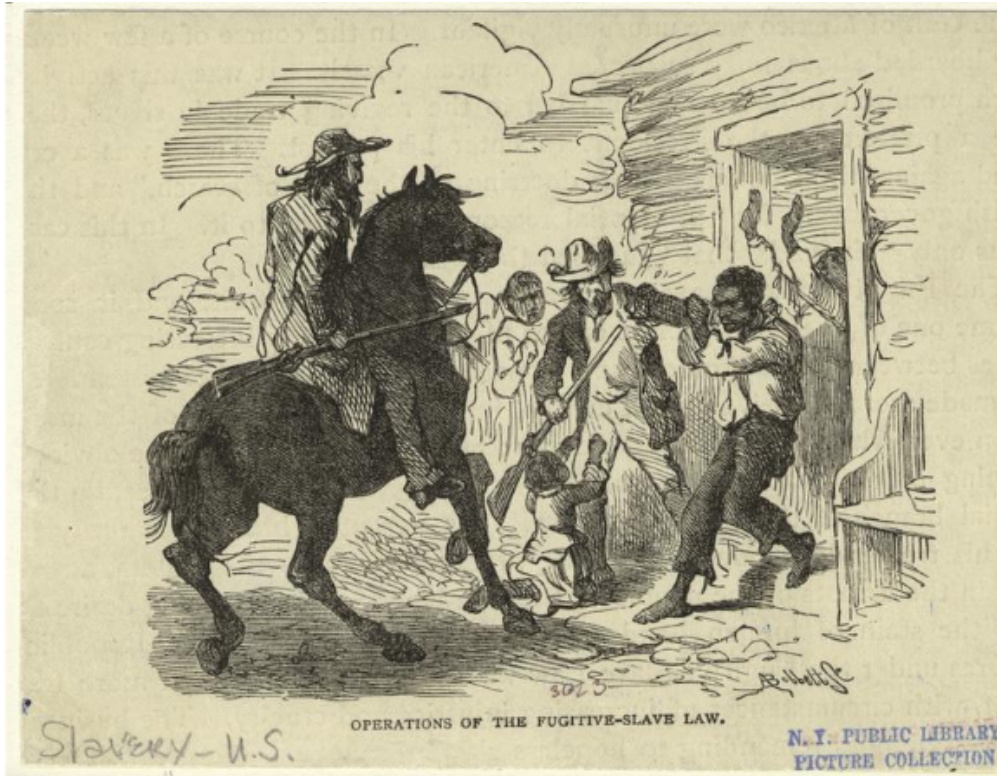


### Supporting Question 3

**Source D:** Operations of the Fugitive Slave Law

This source is a drawing of the capture of a person who escaped slavery and a brief explanation and is available online at

the [Digital Public Library of America](https://www.dpla.org/).



#### Supporting Question 4

The fourth supporting question asks, "What were the results of resistance to slavery?" The purpose of this question is for students to see the variety of experiences enslaved people who resisted encountered. Students will be able to judge the successes, struggles and failures of different methods of resistance.



The featured sources include an account of the life of a Frank McWorter, a former enslaved person who gained freedom, a video of Harriet Tubman guiding enslaved people to freedom and an image of the marker commemorating Gabriel Prosser's execution.

The formative performance task is to construct a chart listing examples of resistance to slavery, the results of resistance and the cultural, economic and political impact of resistance.

The following procedure may be used to support students as they complete this task.

- Students will explore the web site, reading an account of Frank McWorter, a formerly enslaved person who bought freedom for himself and his family, and viewing pictures, maps and images of artifacts.
- Students will view the video about the life of Harriet Tubman, her escape from enslavement and her efforts to assist other enslaved people escape.
- Students will view a marker commemorating the execution of Gabriel, an enslaved person executed for attempting to lead a slave uprising, and read brief explanatory text.

Work on the formative performance task provides students an opportunity to gather information they will need in responding to the compelling question.

## Supporting Question 4

## Featured Source

Source A: The Migration of Free Frank McWorter

This source is a web site chronicling the experience of a formerly enslaved person and their family and is available online at the [American Museum of Natural History](#).

The screenshot shows the Smithsonian National Museum of American History website. The header includes the Smithsonian logo, a search bar, and a 'DONATE' button. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'EXPLORE HISTORY', 'VISIT', and 'ABOUT' links. A purple banner states: 'Our museum is temporarily closed to support the effort to contain the spread of COVID-19. Read a [message from our director](#), and check our website and social media for updates.' The main content area features a sidebar on the left with a purple background and white text. The sidebar lists various topics under the heading 'Many Voices, One Nation', including 'Unsettling the Continent, 1492-1776', 'Peopling the Expanding Nation, 1776-1900', 'Out of Many', 'European Immigration', 'Western Migration', 'The Slave Trade', 'Free Frank McWorter', 'Religious and Utopian Communities', and 'Incorporating Western Lands'. The main article, 'The Migration of Free Frank McWorter', is displayed in a white box. The article text reads: 'Although most of the two million enslaved people in the United States had few options, they often took risks to shape their own lives and gain freedom. Frank McWorter planned his freedom for many years. As a slave, he saved money, purchased his wife's freedom, and then negotiated his own from a Kentucky planter in 1819 at age forty-two. Soon after he purchased his oldest son. In 1830 McWorter migrated with free family members to the Illinois frontier near the Mississippi River, where he established a farm and the community of New Philadelphia. Over his lifetime he was able to purchase his remaining thirteen family members.'

## Supporting Question 4

**Source B:** Harriet Tubman: Rescued 300 Slaves through Underground Railroad

This source is a video of Harriet Tubman's experience escaping slavery and leading enslaved people to freedom and is available online at the [Biography.com YouTube page](https://www.biography.com/youtube/page).



## Supporting Question 4

**Source C:** Execution of Gabriel

This source is an image of a historical marker and a brief explanation and is available online at [The Historical Marker Database](#).

## Execution of Gabriel

**Inscription.** Near here is the early site of the Richmond gallows and "Burial Ground for Negroes." On 10 Oct. 1800, Gabriel, an enslaved blacksmith from Brookfield plantation in Henrico County, was executed there for attempting to lead a mass uprising against slavery on 30 Aug. 1800. A fierce rainstorm delayed the insurrection, which then was betrayed by two slaves. Gabriel escaped and eluded capture until 23 Sept., when he was arrested in Norfolk. He was returned to Richmond on 27 Sept. and incarcerated in the Virginia State Penitentiary. On 6 Oct. he stood trial and was condemned. At least 25 of his supporters were also put to death there or in other jurisdictions.

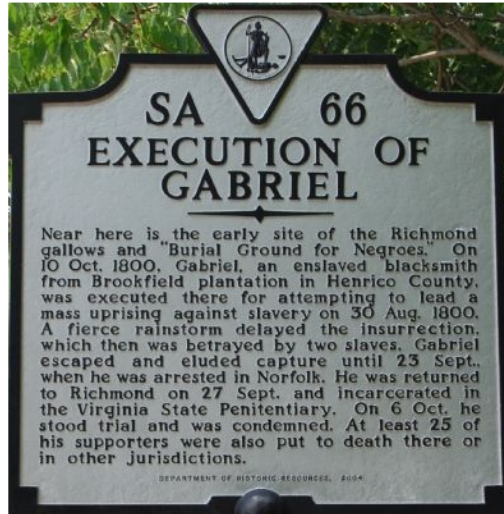
**Erected** 2004 by Department of Historic Resources. (Marker Number SA-66.)

**Topics.** This historical marker is listed in these topic lists: [African Americans](#) • [Cemeteries & Burial Sites](#) • [Heroes](#) • [Notable Events](#).

**Location.** 37° 32.23' N, 77° 25.665' W. Marker is in Richmond, Virginia. Marker is on Broad Street (U.S. 250) 0 miles east of Interstate



95, on the left when



By Dawn Bowen, July 28, 2007

### 1. Execution of Gabriel Marker



## Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry students have examined the ways in which enslaved people resisted slavery and risks and effects of resistance. Students should be able to demonstrate the breadth of their understanding and their ability to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this summative performance task, students are asked to construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question “What is the most effective way to resist?” It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students’ arguments likely will vary, but could include any of the following.

- Large scale revolts were the most effective way to resist.
- Speaking out through speeches and writings against slavery was the most effective way to resist.
- Escaping enslavement and helping others escape enslavement was the most effective way to resist.
- Small and daily subversive actions were the most effective ways to resist.

To extend this inquiry, students can list other known forms of resistance in history or the present day and categorize them as active or passive.

To take informed action students complete the following steps.

- Students demonstrate that they understand by identifying and describing ways in which resistance can occur in the present day.
- Students assess by creating a list of possible resistance efforts that involve passive and active measures. This may include re-thinking public history; creating a student led forum or panel involving community members; designing a social media campaign; or developing a plan for a march / protest.
- Students act by choosing one of the options and implement it as an individual, small group or class project.