

American Literature
Who Claims Me?
Projects

Directions: As a group select one of the following projects concerning issues raised in Chapter 2: *Who Claims Me?*

1. Use the Internet to explore the Underground Railroad. The University of California at Davis offers a good place to start on its Web site at education.ucdavis.edu/NEWISTC/lessonsocstud/railroad/Map.htm. On a map of the Eastern U.S., highlight at least a dozen stopping points on the Underground Railroad's network of escape routes. Research the average distance that a person can travel on foot in one day and compute the length of time required for three different escape journeys, including stopovers for rest and hiding. By following links from the Web site listed above, choose a leader in the Underground Railroad and create a class report on his or her life.
2. Research the history and forms of blues music and compose a blues song about escaping to freedom. Perform your composition for the class.
3. According to this story, "in the first month under the new law, newspapers carried reports of a great exodus of fugitives fleeing to Canada from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Cincinnati and elsewhere." Create the front page of a newspaper dated October 30, 1850. Include the following elements in your layout: Name, location and motto of newspaper, date, main headline and article, at least three other articles related to 1850 "current events," at least three graphics with captions, an "almanac" box that contains the weather report, and a quotation from 1850 or earlier.
4. Form small groups and read the sidebar "Rebel With a Cause." Compare Benjamin Lay's actions with those of at least three other American heroes who went "against the grain" to champion a cause they believed in. In your group, prepare a script for a panel presentation featuring the three heroes you selected. If possible, use their own words to describe the costs and rewards of courage and commitment.