

Annotation and Critical Reading Lesson

NEH Landmark Institute, summer 2013

Objective: Students will be able to recognize (both concrete and abstract) details in several documents dating from the late 17th and 18th centuries concerning slavery in New England. Because the very nature of slavery can be difficult to understand, this activity will help to show that the practice of slavery is one that operate(s/d) on both concrete and abstract levels.

Writings/excerpts to be considered are:

1. Samuel Sewall's "The Selling of Joseph a Memorial" <http://www.masshist.org/database/53>
2. Cotton Mather's "A Good Master Well Served: A Brief Discourse on the Necessary Properties & Practices of a Good Servant, in Every Kind of Servitude"- both can be found here:
<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/ideas/text3/slaverychristian.pdf>
3. "Transcription of 1794 Deposition From the Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society"
http://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/stoweddocuments/Slave_overboard_doc.pdf

In their AP writing journals, students will create a "T" chart on their papers with the title of each article at the top center. Next, students will write "Abstract" on the top left of the T chart and "Concrete" on the top right side of the T chart.

The teacher will model the first few paragraphs of the exercise on the board or chart paper with the class copying this into their AP journals.

Examples:

"The Selling of Joseph a Memorial"

Abstract	Concrete
Welfare	Province
Years (time)	Servants; slaves
Freedom/free/liberty	[skin] color/hair

This will be repeated by the students independently in their writing journals.

Once complete, the student will then share the T chart with his/her neighbor for 10 minutes circling or highlighting terms that are found on both charts. Next, the teacher will ask 3 different pairs to share their findings (one partner will read aloud the common words in each column for one of the readings). While the student reads aloud, the teacher will write the common words on the board and the rest of the students will highlight/circle/underline common words in their own journals. Finally, the teacher will discuss why each term was placed in its corresponding column and what this might say about the speaker (writer), the audience and the subject.