

Lesson 2: Resisting Slavery

Vocabulary

slave codes laws to control the behavior of slaves

Underground Railroad a secret system set up to help enslaved people escape from the South to freedom in the North

African Americans Resist Slavery

Enslaved people were treated badly. They were beaten. Their families were broken apart. **Slave codes** made life hard for slaves. They could not own property. They could not leave plantations without permission. Many slaves resisted, or acted against, slave owners. Some slaves resisted by not obeying their masters. Other slaves ran away. Some refused to work. They also worked slowly or pretended to be sick. Still others broke work tools. Many slaves were not allowed to learn to read or write. Some resisted by learning in secret.

Slave Rebellions

Slave owners worried about rebellions, or battles, against slave owners. They did not allow slaves to hold meetings. Yet some slaves did lead rebellions. Nat Turner was a slave in Virginia. He led a rebellion in 1831. Turner and his followers killed 60 whites. United States and Virginia troops stopped the rebellion. They killed more than 100 African Americans. In 1839 Africans took over a Spanish slave ship that was bringing them to Cuba. The ship was called the *Amistad*. The United States captured the ship. The Africans were taken to prison. The Supreme Court ruled that the Africans should be freed.

Underground Railroad

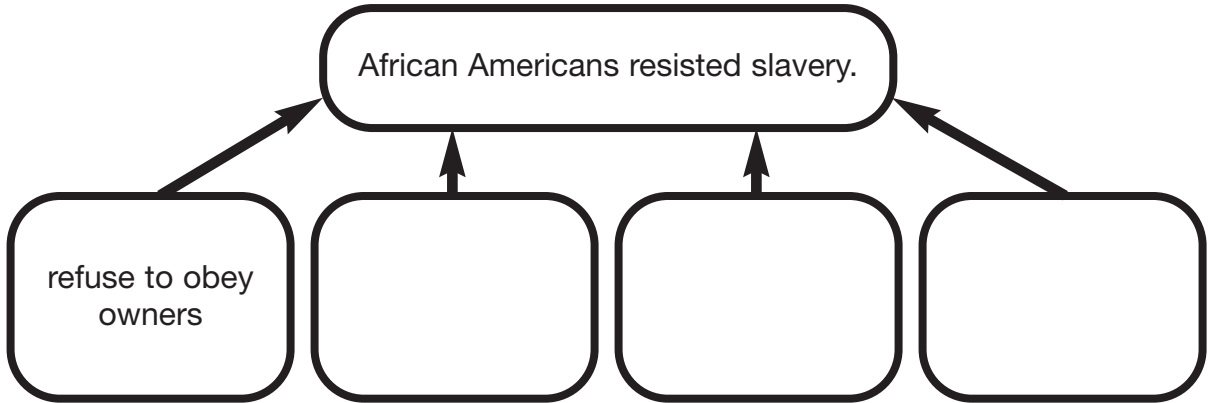
The **Underground Railroad** helped thousands of slaves escape. It was a secret system that helped slaves escape from the South to the North. Certain people helped slaves escape. They were called “conductors.” Conductors hid enslaved people on the journey north. They led enslaved people from one hiding place to another. Harriet Tubman was the most famous conductor. Tubman had escaped from slavery in about 1849. She helped free more than 300 people.

Free African Americans

By 1860 only a small number of African Americans were free. They faced many difficulties. Slave owners could capture escaped slaves in the North. Many Southern states did not let free African Americans work certain jobs. Some white people in the South and North threatened or hurt African Americans who were looking for work. But many free African Americans found jobs and owned property.

Lesson 2: Review

1.  **Main Idea and Details** Complete the graphic organizer to show the details that support the main idea that enslaved African Americans resisted slavery.



2. Compare and contrast different ways by which African Americans resisted slavery.

3. **Critical Thinking: Cause and Effect** What did slave owners do to try to prevent rebellions such as that of Nat Turner and his followers?

4. Describe how enslaved African Americans escaped to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

5. What challenges were faced by free African Americans in the North and South?
