

# THEMATIC UNIT

## Related to ELA Prototypes



Theme: **Freedom**

Suggested for: **Middle School**

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## ~Thematic Units~

Dear Colleagues:

The purpose of this project was to organize thematic units related to previously published MEAP ELA prototypes using best practices in reading and writing.

These were developed by, **real teachers**, just like you! We worked to make them teacher friendly for easy implementation in your classroom. Teachers from school districts across St. Clair County gathered the material. The units are a representation of what each group of teachers thought was important to your grade level and to the themes in the prototypes.

Every packet includes **THEME RELATED TEXT SETS**. These are titles that can be used in a variety of ways to develop a deeper understanding of themes. We have noted the **PAIRED TEXTS** (look for the #2) and **LISTENING TEXT** (#3) that are included in the prototypes. We also noted the title(s) we used for **FRAYER'S MODEL** (#1).

A **PROFUNDITY MATRIX** was developed for each set of paired texts in the prototype to help in identifying possible themes. The matrix also helps look across text to make cross text connections. Blank copies of this chart are included and can be used in your classroom to help students make connections between other texts.

**CROSS TEXT QUESTIONS** were written and answered to aid in responding to both the multiple choice questions and the provocative question given in the second writing piece of the ELA MEAP assessment.

Many packets include one or more **WRITING MODELS** for the second writing piece. We suggest you use these before or after student writing to exhibit a well written constructed response.

The **TEACHER SUGGESTION PAGE** is a personal response by the individuals involved in the project. Some contain anecdotes from the use of the material in their classrooms. Others contain a plethora of ideas to implement. We hope these help.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** (#4) are poems, plays, articles, reader's theater presentations and related suggestions to further develop understanding of the themes.

It is our sincere hope these packets are useful to you and your students.

Happy reading and writing!

# ELA Prototype Materials

- **Thematically related texts**
- **Fruyer’s model examples**
- **Writing from knowledge and experience using narrative strategies**
- **Profundity examples**
- **Cross Text Question examples**
- **Writing in Response to Reading example**

These materials were designed to provide examples of instructional approaches that will help you and your students prepare for the ELA assessment. The examples are all possible answers; they are not to be considered the “right” answers. We wanted to provide examples of other teachers’ thinking through Fruyer’s, Profundity and cross text questions to help guide you through your own thinking.

The sequence of instruction would be to introduce the theme through using the Fruyer’s model of concept attainment. Have students write from knowledge and experience. Think through each reading selection using the profundity scale to create a matrix by which cross text questions can be posed and answered. Examples and blank copies are provided to help you in planning instruction.

## Thematically Related Text Sets – Fairness

CODE	TITLE	AUTHOR
1	The Empty Pot	Demi
1	The Rag Coat	Lauren A. Mills
3	Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express	Margaret K. Wetterer
2 (set 1)	Sarah Emma Edmonds <a href="http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/shm2002/edmonds.html">www.pinn.net/~sunshine/shm2002/edmonds.html</a>	
2 (set 1)	Helen Keller – A Remarkable Woman (Reader's Theater) <a href="http://www.lisabiau.com">www.lisabiau.com</a>	
2 (set 2)	Angel Island Li Keng Wong's Story <a href="http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/asian-american/angel_island/index.htm">http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/asian-american/angel_island/index.htm</a>	
2 (set 2)	A Boy's Journey <a href="http://teacher.scholastic.com/immigrat/seymour/chap1.htm">http://teacher.scholastic.com/immigrat/seymour/chap1.htm</a>	
2 (set 3)	Follow the Drinking Gourd	Jeanette Winter
2 (set 3)	Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt	Deborah Hopkinson
3	Frederick Douglas Speech (audio tape)	Great American Speeches published by Scholastic
3	Patrick Henry Speech (includes audio tape)	Great American Speeches published by Scholastic
4	Encounter	Jane Yolen
4	First Biography Christ	Jan Gleiter and Kathleen Thompson
4	Stone Fox	John Reynolds Gardiner
4	Sarah, Plain and Tall	Patricia MacLachlan
4	A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman	David Adler
4	Little House on the Prairie	Laura Ingalls Wilder
4	Leaving Hunger Behind (play)	Scholastic Read-Aloud Plays

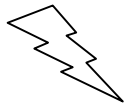
Code Key: <u>Suggested Uses</u>
1 – Frayer's Model
2 – Paired Text
3 – Listening
4 – Others (additional titles)

## Thematically Related Text Sets – Freedom

CODE	TITLE	AUTHOR
1, 2	From <i>Long Walk to Freedom</i>	Nelson Mandela
1, 2	Harriet Tubman	Researcher: Rachel Sahlman <a href="http://www.incwell.com/Biographies/Tubman.html">www.incwell.com/Biographies/Tubman.html</a>
3	The People Could Fly	Retold by Virginia Hamilton
*	5 Tests of Your Freedoms	USA Weekend, June 27-29 2003, usaweekend.com
*	Riding to Freedom <i>The Underground Railroad 1793-1850</i>	10 Easy to Read American History Plays Scholastic, Inc.
*	From <i>The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank</i>	Willy Lindwer
*	From <i>Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad</i>	Ann Petry
*	Letter to Harriet Tubman	Frederick Douglass
*	Number the Stars	Lois Lowry
*	Gleam and Glow	Eve Bunting

**Code Key:**  
**Suggested Uses**

- 1 – Frayer’s Model/  
Brainstorming the Theme
- 2 – Paired Text
- 3 – Listening
- \* – Extension Activities



## Brainstorming the Theme



### Freedom means . . .

- Everybody has the same rights.
- Everyone has the right to choose.
- Everyone is guaranteed the rights in our Constitution.
- Nobody telling me what I can or cannot do.

Note: Accept all reasonable responses from students that focus on the definition of the theme.

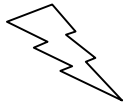
### Examples of Freedom . . .

- Worshipping at whatever church I choose.
- No one is anyone else's property.
- I can speak out against my government.
- Being able to do what I want (within the law) as long as it doesn't hurt others.
- Living in a country free from fear.
- Helping other countries fight for their freedom. (WWII, Iraq)
- Harriet Tubman helped establish the Underground Railroad.
- Nelson Mandela worked against apartheid.

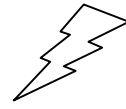
Note: Students should brainstorm events, personal experiences, examples from related text, a person from history, or someone that students know that demonstrate/support the theme.

### Circle one example from above that you will write about.

Note: Students select one of the above examples and use as a writing topic. (MEAP Part 1 writing)



# Brainstorming the Theme



## Freedom means . . .

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## Examples of Freedom . . .

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**Circle one example from above that you will write about.**

## Writing From Knowledge and Experience

The English Language Arts MEAP assessment requires students to write from knowledge and experience. Students may choose the style or genre of writing that suites them best. However, the majority of students choose to write personal narratives. Dr. Elaine Weber, Barbara Nelson, and Ray Woods the authors of *Profiles in Writing 2002*, have granted permission to us to offer you some information from the book. This information may help you as you instruct students in personal narratives.

These resources will provide you with:

- Description of the four qualities of writing the MEAP assessment used to evaluate student writing;
- A model for creating writing prompts;
- Examples of well written student papers;
- Attributes of writing that commonly appear at this grade level;
- Strategies used by narrative writers; and
- Examples of student papers with the narratives strategies highlighted.

# *attributes of* **writing**

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## **Note**

This year the Profiles Project has reorganized the attributes of writing to align with the 4-trait rubric most widely used by Profiles Network members:

### **Focus on Content and Ideas**

**Organization**

**Voice/Style,**

**and**

**Conventions.**

### **focus** on content

Focus refers to concentration on the content and ideas of the piece of writing and to the development of the content and major ideas with appropriate details, examples, etc.

### **or g a n i z a t i o n**

Organization refers to the structure of a piece of writing with logical sequence; beginning, middle, and end; flow; cohesion, coherence, unity, effective leads; transitions and conclusions; sense of wholeness, etc.

### **Voice/style**

Voice refers to the writer's ability/attempts to engage and interest the reader through stylistic elements and techniques such as: descriptive detail, precise word choice, sentence variety, strong verbs, humor, figurative language, personal reflection, etc.

### **con·ven·tion(s)**

Conventions refer to a writer's presentation of a piece of writing through accurate and effective use of writing form including: directionality, spacing, mechanics (capitalization, punctuation), grammar and usage, spelling, etc.

# attributes **grade eight**

## **focus** on content

- ✓ focuses and elaborates on one topic
- ✓ elaborates through detail and description
- ✓ develops with creativity and imagination
- ✓ includes insightful presentation of message
- ✓ uses consistent point of view
- ✓ subtly weaves theme
- ✓ expresses point of view
- ✓ includes effective title
- ✓ uses logical effective argument
- ✓ includes complex and realistic character development
- ✓ develops with sensory details

## **organization**

- ✓ organization unifies writing
- ✓ includes strong introduction and conclusion
- ✓ strong lead that engages reader
- ✓ ending links to beginning
- ✓ uses logical sequence of events
- ✓ flow
- ✓ coherent
- ✓ uses transitional devices for progression
- ✓ refined paragraph organization
- ✓ reflective ending

## **Voice/style**

- ✓ compelling voice shows deep personal influence
- ✓ uses emotional appeal
- ✓ "explodes a moment"
- ✓ includes "thoughtshots"
- ✓ meshes creativity with craft
- ✓ uses conversational tone
- ✓ shows depth and complexity
- ✓ brings in reader as part of the story
- ✓ uses humor/sarcasm/understatement
- ✓ builds suspense
- ✓ creates imagery through sensory detail
- ✓ uses figurative language: metaphor, simile, irony, flashback
- ✓ mature word choice
- ✓ uses varied and complex sentence structure
- ✓ effective use of dialogue
- ✓ risk-taking with vocabulary
- ✓ title as double entendre
- ✓ uses hyperbole
- ✓ attention to objectivity
- ✓ uses personally unique tone
- ✓ uses conversational tone
- ✓ uses reflective tone
- ✓ poetic tone
- ✓ uses strong verbs
- ✓ effective use of repetition
- ✓ uses sensory language

## **con-ven-tion(s)**

- ✓ uses standard writing conventions
- ✓ shows control over mechanics
- ✓ uses sophisticated punctuation
- ✓ uses consistent verb tense

# grade eight (A Special Place)

## My Special Place

As the sun smiles brightly, a cool spring breeze gently ruffles the treetops. I sit lazily, staring up at the azure sky dotted with clusters of fluffy white clouds. Lost deep in a blue ocean of thought, I swing gently back and forth, feeling the tickle of the grass on my bare feet. Welcome to my special spot—the tree swing in my backyard.

The swing hangs from the lowest branch of an ancient maple tree. It has been there as long as I can remember. There were days when I had to be lifted onto the swing by one of my older sisters, since my feet couldn't touch the ground. In those days, the swing simply provided entertainment. Now, I consider it a friend.

I visit my swing on an almost daily basis, if only for a few minutes. It serves as a source of tranquility in a hectic world. When I feel sad, I go to my swing to sit alone and cry. On lazy summer days, I take a glass of iced tea and a good book and spend hours lost in my own world. When I have lots of energy, or feel especially happy, I head to my swing and swing as high as I can, loving the feeling of soaring through the air. When I need to think, or I have an important decision to make, my swing allows me to clear my mind and concentrate completely on the issue at hand. When I'm very stressed out, I will just stop dead in the middle of whatever I'm doing and head to my swing for 5 minutes. Being able to do that helps me keep things in perspective.

Whatever the reason, I know I can always run to my swing for a while and just be. Unminded, unobserved, unjudged, I allow myself to simply be, in the presence of a friend. The fact that I can do that is very important to me.

## **focus** on content

- ✓ on topic
- ✓ developed with sensory details

## **organization**

- ✓ organized and flows
- ✓ lead engages reader
- ✓ reflective ending

## **Voice/style**

- ✓ creates imagery through sensory detail
- ✓ describes with sensory and figurative language
- ✓ poetic
- ✓ effective use of repetition
- ✓ uses strong verbs
- ✓ binoculars
- ✓ snapshots

## **con-ven-tion(s)**

- ✓ uses standard writing conventions

# grade six A Special Place)

## A Special Place

If you have a special place, you know why I like the stream near my Grandma's house. Whenever I want to get away from everything and just relax, I go there. When I am there, I feel relaxed. The endless babble of the water, and the ongoing conversation of the treefrogs, blend in perfectly with the rustle of the reeds blowing in the breeze. The aroma of lilacs sweeping in from the yard behind me, settles my worries. Minnows, darting here and there, avoiding the shadow of the kingfisher above, look so timeless. Rocks and pebbles at the bottom

of the water look so shiny in the mid-day sun. Almost like jewels at the bottom of the ocean. Sometimes you can hear a cicada, buzzing in a nearby tree, or see a butterfly, fluttering silently over the surface of the water. Early Queen Anne's lace and lavender Forget-me-Nots litter the grass around me. Visiting each one is a bee or butterfly, pollinating busily. Dragonflies glide cheerfully over the water, landing on cattails or reeds. Though I love this place I cannot stay there forever, I have to go back home. Yet, I can always return when I feel like it.

### focus on content

- ✓ on topic
- ✓ develops with concrete details

### Voice/style

- ✓ voice-speaking to reader
- ✓ strong word choice
- ✓ uses sense – sounds, smells
- ✓ uses figurative language – simile, metaphor, personification

### organization

- ✓ well-organized and developed with details
- ✓ effective introduction
- ✓ conclusion summarizes

### con-ven-tion(s)

- ✓ uses standard writing conventions
- ✓ effective use of quotation marks

## *strategies used by* **narrative writers**

*The next step* in the Profile process, after selecting the most effective writings and holistically scoring the papers with a rubric, is to identify writing strategies used by the authors of the effective papers. The following list of writers' strategies is a combination of the original list that came from the New Standards Project shared by Sally Hampton and modified by Barbara Nelson to include the writing strategies of Barry Lane. These writing strategies can be taught in focused lessons. It is also a way to talk about narrative writing with students during writing conferences. The list of strategies used by narrative writers follows:

1. forecasting
2. flashback / flash forward
3. foreshadowing
4. compressing - shrink a century
5. naming (specific names of people or objects quantities, number)
6. describing visual details of scenes, objects, or people (size, colors, shapes, feature, dress) binoculars
7. describing sounds or smells of the scene - snapshots
8. narrating specific action (movements, gestures, postures, expressions) snapshots
9. creating dialogues, interior monologues, or expressing remembered feelings or insights at the time of the incident - thoughtshots
10. slowing the pace to elaborate the central moment in the incident - explode a moment
11. using syntax to support meaning
12. creating suspense or tension - explode a moment
13. including the element of surprise
14. comparing or contrasting other scenes or people
15. detailing subjects' routines habits or typical activities - binoculars
16. humor or irony
17. repetition / recurring events, objects, phrases
18. using various characters' voices to narrate a story
19. inserting historical or factual information into a story
20. figurative language - simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration
21. effective lead
22. effective conclusion, ending
23. literary allusion
24. creative, insightful word choice/word order (eg. active not passive voice, strong verbs, interesting or unusual use of or combination of words, etc.)
25. transitions
26. engaging audience intentionally and effectively (questioning, conversational tone)

# *strategies used by* **narrative writers** (cont.)

## **Eighth Grade**

### **My Special Place**

As the sun smiles brightly, a cool spring breeze gently ruffles **personification** the treetops. I sit lazily, staring up at the azure sky dotted with dusters of fluffy white clouds. Lost deep in a blue ocean of thought, I swing gently back and forth, feeling the tickle of the grass on my bare feet. **binoculars, snapshots**  
Welcome to my special spot – the tree swing in my backyard. **effective lead**

The swing hangs from the lowest branch of an ancient maple tree. It has been there as long as I can remember. There were days when I had to be lifted onto the swing by one of my older sisters, since my feet couldn't touch the ground. In those days, the swing simply provided entertainment. Now, I consider it a friend.

I visit my swing on an almost daily basis, if only for a few minutes. It serves as a source of tranquility in a hectic world. When I feel sad, I go to my swing to sit alone and cry. On lazy summer days, I take a glass of ice tea and a good book and spend hours lost in my own worlds. When I have lots of energy, or feel especially happy, I head to my swing and wing as high as I can, loving the feeling of soaring through the air **figurative language**. When I need to think, or I have an important decision to make, my swing allows me to clear my mind, and concentrate completely on the issue at hand. When I'm very stressed out, I will stop dead in the middle of whatever I'm doing and head to my swing for 5 minutes. Being able to do that helps me keep things in perspective.

Whatever the reason, I know I can always run to my swing for a while and just be me. Unnhibited, unobserved, unjudge, I allow myself to simple be, in the presence of a friend. The fact that I can do that is very important to me. **effective conclusion**

## Using Profundity in Grades 3-12

To get third through twelfth graders to think about books at the theme level we use an activity that is systematic, based on the Profundity Scale, and dependent upon group discussion. The activity must be presented using the to, with and by format. First the teachers model the entire activity to their students. Next, teachers will share the responsibility of the activity with their students. Then teachers will guide students working in small groups through the use of the activity. Finally, students will independently work in small discussion groups to complete the activity or independently complete the activity. Following are the directions we give to teachers to guide students working in small groups. From these directions you should be able to model and share the activity and to help students move to independent use of this activity. The directions will be followed by some hints to help you do that. Depending upon the age of the student, adjust how much direction is needed.

To prepare for the activity you need the following materials for each small group working on the activity; sets of eight different color markers, large sheets of unlined chart paper: two sheets for the teacher and one sheet for each small group. You will also need a great book. There is a list of thematically linked text at the beginning of this unit. If they are books that you and your students have enjoyed over time they are probably good books with good lessons to be learned.

We are going to demonstrate the use of the activity using the book, *Elmer*, by David McKee. *Elmer* is the story of a patchwork colored elephant. He is always the center of attention until one day he mistakenly gets the notion that the other elephants are laughing at him, not with him. He leaves the herd to find a berry bush that has elephant colored berries. He covers himself in berry juice until he looks like any other elephant. When he rejoins the herd he is unnoticed by the others. He stands there seriously still until he can't stand it any longer and yells, "Booo!" The other elephants think it is a great joke and make the remark that Elmer should have been there to enjoy the joke. In the next moment a rain cloud showers Elmer back to his normal patchwork color. All the elephants think that what Elmer did was his best joke ever and they decide to have a parade each year to celebrate Elmer's best joke. So, every year Elmer comes to the parade looking like a normal elephant and all the other elephants color themselves patchwork.

To begin, hang two sheets of chart paper up where everyone can see them. Devise a way for students to gather the material they need. We usually have them count the number of buttons on their person. The one with the most buttons gets to come up and get the markers and sheet of chart paper. Once everyone is situated in small groups, four to a group seems to be a workable size, and has the materials they need you tell the students to listen for the actions of the main character in the story as you read. Profundity depends on following the actions of one character throughout the story.

Tell the students to listen for the actions of Elmer as you read the story. Remind them that actions are the things Elmer does. Read the story aloud to the class. As a class cooperatively build a list of important actions on the first piece of chart paper. **This list goes along with the Physical Plane: the reader is aware of the physical actions of the character.** Choose the three actions the class feels are the most important being sure that one of them is the turning point of the story (the turning point is often the clearest example of the theme in stories). Then explain that they will be working in co-operative groups, which means we will listen to each person talk and each person will have an opportunity to talk. The person with the most buttons needs to pick up the black marker and draw this shape (a rectangle divided into three equal parts) in the middle of their group chart paper. Then they write one of the three actions chosen by the class in each of the boxes. As they are writing the teacher also draws the boxes and writes one of the three actions in each of the boxes (on the second sheet of chart paper), as a model.

We always have the students use the markers as their talking sticks. That means when you have the marker in your hand it is your turn to talk and everyone should listen to what you have to say. It is very important to establish this procedure from the very beginning especially if this is the first time the student will be working in cooperative discussion groups. The first student in each group to have a marker is the one with the most buttons on his or her person. We always start there and then have the students exchange the use of the marker by the order they are sitting in, moving clock-wise around the group. So, moving clock-wise around the group the next person needs a red marker to draw a red bubble that connects to the first action box. We are going to use the example for *Elmer* to help explain the next steps. What the group is going to be thinking about is “Why did Elmer think the other elephants were laughing at him?” **This question goes along with the Mental Plane: the reader is aware of the intellectual actions of the character.** The person with the red marker tells why first, then passing the marker clock-wise, everyone gets to share his or her reason why. When everyone is done sharing, the group synthesizes the information and the person with the red marker writes their response in the red bubble. The next person takes a blue marker and draws a blue bubble that connects to the red bubble. What the group is going to be thinking this time is “was it right or wrong for Elmer to think the other elephants were laughing at him and tell why?” **This question goes along with the Moral Plane: the reader is aware of the character in light of an ethical code.** Repeat the process of sharing and writing shared response in the bubble. The next person takes a green marker and draws a green bubble that connects to the blue bubble. What the group is going to be thinking this time is “What did Elmer get from thinking the other elephants were laughing at him?” **This question goes along with the Psychological Plane: the reader is aware of the psychological forces influencing the character.** It is important to remember that Profundity begins with the actions of the character and always goes back to the actions. It is also important to remember that for the third bubble you must stay specific to the action, you can never go beyond the next action. Students repeat this process for the next two actions on their own. As they are working you wander from group to group monitoring the group discussion, giving advice, modeling discussion behavior, prompting for deeper discussion and giving evaluative feedback that students can use to help monitor their own discussion groups.

Next, the teacher explains to the students that they will understand stories and theme better when they attempt to identify with the characters of the story. Every group now turns over their large sheet of chart paper and makes a list of how these are like a character in the story. Think about the ways you are the same as Elmer to make your list. This typically starts out as a list of physical characteristics; such as, we are both animals. Teachers should get students to think deeper by posing situations from the story to consider while they are filling out the chart. One such situation is pointing out that when Elmer was standing with the herd still, quiet and serious, he yelled, “Booo!” If you would do that then you are like Elmer. Teachers want students to see how their thinking is the same as Elmer’s. Do they do the same things as Elmer? Do they think the same things are right or wrong?

An example of the power identifying with characters has in helping students get to the theme level came about one day as while presenting this activity in a third grade classroom in Memphis, Michigan. We walked into the classroom and were immediately able to identify at least one Elmer, in the room. You can always identify the Elmers in classrooms very quickly. He was a very vivacious, very blond boy seated with a group of about 10 students and he was keeping them very entertained as we were preparing for the activity. He did stop long enough to become thoroughly engaged in the activity. However, when we got to the part where they had to think about “Why did Elmer yell, “Booo!” he stood up, threw his arms in the air, in very Elmer fashion, and announced, “Nobody needs to think, I know the answer, Elmer was addicted to attention, just like me!” It was a very easy jump for him to get from that understanding to the theme of “Be true to yourself.”

Go back to the person with the most buttons and have them turn the chart paper back over to the bubbling side. He or she needs to draw a large brown bubble. What the group is going to be thinking about here is “What is the theme of this story?” **This question goes along with the philosophical plane: the universal truth the author is trying to expound.**

Then you finish up the activity by having everyone draw a square and respond to one of the prompts listed on the three ways reading can transform your thinking page. This illustrates to students that universal truths are generative. This step often takes you beyond the theme level to the ideas in action level. Now that you know this to be true what can or are you going to do about it. This is the social action level that is described well by Terri and Randy Bomer in their book, *Reading and Writing for Social Action*, (1999) and by Paula Rogovin in her book, *The Research Workshop, Bringing the World into Your Classroom* (2001).

Here are some helpful hints to help you manage the activity in the classroom. This activity takes a few hours to do with the children so think of creative ways to break it down and spread the instruction over several days. You could do all the red bubbles one day, the blue bubbles the next day and then the green bubbles another day or you could do the first action one day or you could do the first action one day the second action the next day and then the third action another day. We recommend that the book be reread each day before resuming the activity. Since it takes a great deal of time to complete the activity, be sure to select text carefully. The teachers we have worked with always stress that they would never have students complete this activity with a book they themselves had not personally analyzed. They want to make sure they are able to help students through the tough spots and they want to make sure that the theme the students infer is reasonable and justifiable given the evidence in the story.

Here are some helpful suggestions to help you present this activity in a to, with, and by format. When modeling the activity the teacher will do all the talking and will be demonstrating how to draw the boxes and bubbles and how to think about the questions before filling in the bubbles. A time or two of modeling should be enough for most classes. When sharing the activity the teacher will share the talking and thinking about the questions with the students. The teacher still draws the boxes and bubbles and fills them in with synthesized answers. It looks and sounds like this when a teacher is sharing, the teacher draws the red bubble and poses the question, “Why did Elmer think the other elephants were laughing at him?” He or she then asks for responses from several students. The teacher then shares their own response and shows the children how to synthesize the several responses into a statement that can be written into the bubble. The teacher continues to share the talking and thinking until the activity is completed. Again, a time or two of sharing should be enough for most classes. When independently completing the activity, the students are to work alone. The teacher’s job becomes one of facilitator and evaluator. As they are working, you wander from group to group, monitoring discussion, giving advice, modeling discussion behavior, prompting for deeper discussion, and giving evaluative feedback that students can use to help monitor their own discussion groups. The ultimate goal is to have kids either using the Profundity Scale in small discussion groups or individually to understand text at a deeper level.

It is very helpful to repeat this process with a second thematically related book. A book that I often pair with *Elmer* is *Stand Tall Molly Lou Mellon*, by Patty Lovell. The theme of both stories is “Be true to yourself,” however; both characters accomplish this through entirely different means. By repeating the process with thematically related books students can compare and contrast one character’s understanding of the theme with the other character’s understanding of the theme and with their own understanding of the theme. It also demonstrates to students that theme is inferred. It is the teacher in this case who is inferring the theme of both books, declaring them thematically related and then asking students if they agree or disagree with the theme that the teacher has inferred. To answer that question effectively students will need to provide clear examples from the text to support their position. Looking at two thematically linked books will lead students to a deeper understanding of both texts.

As mentioned before, our ultimate goal is to have kids either using the Profundity Scale in small discussion groups or individually to understand text at a deeper level. We hope, by now, that it is becoming clear to you how useful the Profundity Scale is in helping students discuss and think about text. Hopefully, students will be able to choose text about which they are curious, get with interested others and successfully start and sustain a discussion group around that text. Hopefully, individual students will have enough experience with thinking this way that it will become internalized and students will think this way about all text. One teacher during a workshop remarked, “Now I have all the questions I need to discuss texts with my students.” She was referring to the questions asked at each plane during the bubbling activity.

Another adaptation was to use the Profundity Scale Matrix as shown on the next page. Teachers should read two thematically linked texts. Then on a greatly enlarged version of the matrix they would lead children through a group discussion about each box of the matrix. You complete the matrix one book at a time. When you have completed the matrix for both books you can then lead discussions that compare and contrast the two characters’ understanding of the theme to your own understanding of the theme. Students then can agree or disagree if the theme of both stories really is the same. Of course, to effectively answer that question, they will need to provide clear examples from the texts to support their position. Using this matrix truly helps students develop a deeper understanding of both texts.

## Thematically Related Text Sets

Titles of paired texts	List three important actions of one character	Why did the character act this way?	Was it right or wrong for the character to act this way?	What did the character get from acting this way?	How am I like the characters in this story?	What is the lesson learned from this story?	How has this lesson learned changed the way I think?
<p>From <u>Long Walk to Freedom</u></p> <p>By Nelson Mandela</p>	<p>Mandela joined the African National Congress.</p> <p>Mandela desired freedom for his people.</p> <p>Mandela works to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor.</p>	<p>To commit himself to the struggle for freedom</p> <p>So people could live with dignity and self-respect</p> <p>He wanted to respect and enhance the freedoms of others.</p>	<p>Right, Mandela felt it was his obligation.</p> <p>Wrong, because apartheid was law.</p> <p>Right, everyone deserves to be free</p> <p>Wrong, because Mandela was breaking the law.</p> <p>Right, Mandela was devoted to the cause</p> <p>Wrong, apartheid was law.</p>	<p>A chance to fulfill his obligation</p> <p>A life filled with self-sacrifice</p> <p>World-wide attention to freedom for everyone</p>		<p>No one is truly free if they take away someone else's freedom.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Fighting for freedom is not easy and often requires self-sacrifice</p> <p>Or</p> <p>With freedom comes responsibility</p>	
<p>"Harriet Tubman"</p> <p>Researcher Rachel Sahlman</p>	<p>At 15, Harriet tried to help a runaway slave.</p> <p>Harriet runs away to the North.</p> <p>Harriet returns to the South.</p>	<p>Harriet was defiant and rebellious against slavery.</p> <p>She wanted to be free.</p> <p>To help other slaves escape to freedom</p>	<p>Right, you should stand up against injustice.</p> <p>Right, everyone should be free.</p> <p>Wrong, slavery was allowed by law.</p>	<p>Harriet was hit by her master with a lead weight.</p> <p>Harriet gets freedom for herself.</p> <p>Harriet get self-satisfaction and recognition by helping others escape to freedom.</p>		<p>Fighting for freedom is not easy and often requires self-sacrifice.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>It takes great courage to fight for the rights of others.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>With freedom comes responsibility</p>	

## Thematically Related Text Sets

Titles of paired texts	List three important actions of one character	Why did the character act this way?	Was it right or wrong for the character to act this way?	What did the character get from acting this way?	How am I like the characters in this story?	What is the lesson learned from this story?	How has this lesson learned changed the way I think?
From Long Walk to Freedom  By Nelson Mandela							
"Harriet Tubman" Researcher Rachel Sahlman							

## **CROSS TEXT QUESTIONS FOR “NELSON MANDELA” AND “HARRIET TUBMAN”**

**Q. Did Nelson Mandela and Harriet Tubman do the same kinds of things? How were their actions similar?**

A. The both fought for personal freedom and the freedom of others.

**Q. Did Nelson Mandela and Harriet Tubman get the same thing for their actions? Why or why not?**

A. At great personal risk, they both made self-sacrifices that drew public attention to slavery/apartheid and brought freedom to others.

**Q. If both of the characters learned the same lesson what was the lesson?**

A. Fighting for freedom is not easy and often requires self-sacrifice.

**Q. Do you agree or disagree that the theme of these two stories is “freedom?”**

A. We agree.

# **Related Language Arts Activities:**

## **Before, During and After Prototypes**

## Freedom Extension Activities

The following suggestions provide additional ways to use the theme related text.

- Have students complete the Anticipation Guide for “5 Tests of Your Freedom.” An anticipation guide helps motivate students for reading and builds some background on the topic. After completing the Anticipation Guide, students are to read the magazine article. After reading, have students respond to the “Speak Your Mind” activity. Upon completion of paragraphs, divide the class into different viewpoints and hold a class debate.
- Use “Riding to Freedom” as a Reader’s Theater activity.
- Have students read the excerpts from, *The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank*. This is written in interview style with the interviewer’s questions omitted. Have students read the selection, then write the questions the interviewer asked.
- Have students read the excerpt from, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*. Have students complete the “Know Your Character” activity. After reading this selection, have students respond to the “Speak Your Mind” activity. After students write their paragraphs, divide class into different viewpoints and hold a class debate.
- Before reading, *Letter to Harriet Tubman* review with students the reading strategy page “Margin Comprehension.” After reading have students respond to the questions at the bottom of the page.

## Anticipation Guide For “5 Tests of Your Freedoms”

**Directions:** Respond to each statement by circling yes or no. On the lines, provide your reasons for your position. Compare your answers with a partner and share your reasons.

### Before Reading

### After Reading

Yes	No	1. Does a principal have a right to ban T-shirts with offending messages?	Yes	No
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Yes	No	2. Does the government have the right to form financial partnerships with churches when it benefits the community?	Yes	No
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Yes	No	3. Does the First Amendment protect citizens who post slanderous accusations on the Internet?	Yes	No
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Yes	No	4. Do government officials have the right to establish new rules without public input?	Yes	No
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Yes	No	5. Does the police department have the right to videotape citizens participating in a public protest and keep files on them?	Yes	No
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# Speak Your Mind

After reading the magazine article “5 Tests of Your Freedom” respond to the following question:

**Should American citizens of Iraqi descent be subjected to additional security checks at the airport because of 9-11 and the War with Iraq?**

To respond to this question you must:

1. State your position by restating the question in a positive or negative form.
2. Select a Core Democratic Value and explain how it supports your position.
3. Support you position with economics (money) or civics (government). Ask yourself how is money or government related to this issue?
4. Further support your position with facts and/or personal opinion.

1. State your position:

2. Select a CDV:

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3. Support with economics or civics:

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4. Support with facts:

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5. Conclusion sentence:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_



# Know Your Character

*Harriet Tubman and YOU*



**Directions:** Complete the chart below. In the first column identify three character actions or words. In the second column explain what this tells you about the character. In the third column determine if this action, or words, make you like or unlike this character.

	Identify character actions or words.	What does this tell me about the character?	Would you do or say the same thing? Be specific.
1			
2			
3			

# Speak Your Mind

After reading the excerpt from *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*, respond to the following question:

**Should Harriet Tubman have led the slaves to freedom, even though by doing so she was breaking the law?**

To respond to this question you must:

1. State your position by restating the question in a positive or negative form.
2. Select a Core Democratic Value and explain how it supports your position.
3. Support your position with economics (money) or civics (government). Ask yourself how is money or government related to this issue?
4. Further support your position with facts and/or personal opinion.

1. State your position:

2. Select a CDV:

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3. Support with economics or civics:

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4. Support with facts:

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5. Conclusion sentence:

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# Margin Comprehension



## During Reading

Two important reading strategies are **questioning** and **connecting** to your life, other text, and the world. While reading “Letter to Harriet Tubman” respond in the margin with at least two questions and two connections. These strategies will help you as a reader to analyze and better understand the text. Share with a partner your questions and connections.

## After Reading

Respond to the following questions.

What does this letter tell you about Frederick Douglass?

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How would you characterize the relationship between Douglass and Tubman based on this letter?

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This letter describes the meaning of freedom to Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. What would you include in a definition of what freedom means to you?

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## 5 Tests of Your Freedoms

Speech. Religion. Press. Petition. Assembly. You learned all those First Amendment rights in basic civics class. But how well do you really understand them? The results of our scientific poll may surprise you.

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### The amendment says:

**Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.**

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As the country prepares to celebrate its 227th year of independence and as today's Iraqi citizens explore their first, Americans have every reason to embrace their most fundamental freedoms with joy and pride.

The USA, the first nation to be founded on principles of liberty and justice, is fueled by freedom, particularly the rights guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution. But how well do we understand these basic rights? To find out, USA Weekend Magazine and the First Amendment Center commissioned a scientific online poll consisting of a series of hypothetical scenarios. Each was designed to challenge one of the five freedoms set out in the First Amendment: freedom of speech, press and religion, and the right to assemble and to petition government for constructive change.

The poll results clearly show some serious confusion among Americans about their First Amendment protections and how they apply to a diverse and sometimes divided society.

Here, take the poll yourself and test your own answers against the survey respondents' -- and those of Lee C. Bollinger, one of the nation's leading First Amendment experts, president of Columbia University and the author of "The Tolerant Society" and "Eternally Vigilant: Free Speech in the Modern Era".

**1. A high school student wears a T-shirt to public school with the words "International Criminal" framing President Bush's picture on the front. The principal tells the student to put on a different shirt, turn the shirt inside out or go home. If those requests are refused, the student will face immediate suspension.**

**Does the principal have the right to ban the T-shirt?**

<p><b>America says: Yes 62% No 38%</b></p>
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The expert says: The majority has it wrong. Most people may want to ban the offending T-shirt, but they can't in this case. The First Amendment protects the right of "speech" even when it's symbolic, as when the message is in the form of an image on a piece of clothing. And although many may think the constitutional right of freedom of speech does not reach minors, the Supreme Court has held otherwise.

The landmark case on this point (from the 1960s) recognized the free-speech rights of a 13-year-old to wear a black armband in class in protest against the war in Vietnam. As a society,

we have staked our future on a robust right of freedom of expression (even for neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan), and it is inconsistent with that commitment, the court has said, to make it available only when you turn 18 or 21.

Still, nothing in life is absolute, and, contrary to what even a few Supreme Court justices have said, that is true of the First Amendment as well. If a principal can show significant "disruption" as a result of the speech, courts will give more leeway to restrict the speech. The mere fact that other students take offense would not be enough, but spontaneous fighting or outbursts making class discipline impossible very well might be.

A final note: The First Amendment applies only to "state action" and hence to public schools. A principal in a private school can set whatever limits on speech he or she wishes.

**2. A town strapped for funds enters an agreement with the community's largest church by which the church will operate the town's failing convention center. The church agrees to raise the money itself to run the center and promises it will not discriminate against any religious, political, racial or other groups that might want to rent it for a fee.**

**Do you think such an arrangement is allowed under the First Amendment?**

<b>America says: Yes 70% No 30%</b>
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The expert says: The answer is no. This is not a good idea for the town, the public, the church or the First Amendment. The amendment's guarantees of religious freedom and free speech prevent the government from favoring one religion over another, so the choice itself may have involved improper bias against other groups who also sought to operate the center. Beyond that, appearances matter enormously here. Just imagine if Central Park were leased to a particular church to "operate." The First Amendment long has required the state to make available certain public property - most notably, streets and parks - for citizens to exercise their right of free speech. Although reasonable restrictions can be imposed (for instance, the time, place and manner of expression), the state cannot favor particular speakers or points of view over others.

Furthermore, under the Establishment Clause, the Supreme Court has refused to permit relationships between churches and state where there is the appearance of religious endorsement and where the prospects of "entanglement" are great. In this case, despite the church's assurances that it will not discriminate among speakers, we would have to expect an endless series of conflicts and disagreements over whether the church has administered this "public forum" with a religious bias.

What can seem perfectly reasonable in the abstract, as it does to 70% of the respondents, can be filled with latent constitutional problems.

**3. A recent decision by the city council to reduce trash pickup from twice weekly to once a week upset one citizen so much that he has posted comments on a local Internet site, using the alias "Angry Citizen." In his comments, the citizen accuses one council member of being a "lying communist." When the councilman learns the identity of the writer, he contacts "Angry Citizen," who quickly offers to post another comment apologizing for his remark. ("Angry Citizen" says he was just upset at that moment.) Dissatisfied, the accused councilman threatens to sue him for libel.**

**Does the First Amendment protect "Angry Citizen" if the councilman files the lawsuit?**

**America says: Yes 60% No 40%**

The expert says: The majority got it right this time. The First Amendment's guarantee of a free press does not apply only to professional journalists - it protects every citizen.

It is exceedingly difficult for a public official to force a citizen to pay damages for a libelous statement. Under the Supreme Court's verdict in "The New York Times vs. Sullivan," the council member would have to show that the statement is false (Maybe he is a "lying communist"), that the statement was one of fact rather than "opinion" (Would the reasonable reader assume this accusation was just the speaker's interpretation of generally known facts, or perhaps just hyperbole?), that the false statement actually injured the council member's reputation, and that the injurious statement was made with knowledge of its falsity or with "reckless disregard of the truth" (i.e., with "actual malice").

Those criteria are nearly insurmountable barriers to a successful lawsuit for defamation. Is this justified? The court's rationale is not a lack of concern for the reputations of public servants, or a high regard for falsehoods. Rather, the idea is that, because we are committed to living in a democracy where the citizens are sovereign, we need to provide ample space for citizens to engage in public debate without being intimidated about speaking their minds by the prospect of having to defend themselves against lawsuits.

In an imperfect world, someone's rights or interests often have to give way. Here it's the reputation of public officials.

Neither the fact that this statement was made on the Internet nor the fact that it was made anonymously changes the outcome. Generally speaking, the rules in this area of First Amendment protections do not change, whether you are communicating with millions or speaking across the fence to a neighbor.

**4. County officials recently have been hounded and harassed at commission meetings by a small number of activists who oppose a county tax increase. In response, the officials have established new rules governing all public appearances before the county commission. Specifically, citizens wishing to speak at commission meetings now must apply seven days in advance for permission to do so and must limit their comments to two minutes.**

**Do county officials have the right to establish these new rules?**

**America says: Yes 56% No 44%**

The expert says: Yes, the new rules appear to be fine on their face. Certainly, the county can require speakers to sign up in advance and impose a time limit on each speaker. Nothing in the First Amendment's right to petition for a redress of grievances or freedom of speech prohibits the state from bringing some order to a forum.

What are prohibited, however, are regulations that discriminate against speakers because of the content of their messages. This is where I have concerns. We are not told what the "activists" did that "hounded and harassed" the officials, nor are we told why and how the new rules are a response to that behavior.

So here's the caution: If the activists only criticized the county officials, even if harshly, and if the officials believe that they can use the new rules to treat the "activists" differently because of their criticisms, then we have a very real problem under the First Amendment. The officials may (constitutionally, at least) hope the activists won't have the foresight to apply and to limit their critiques to two minutes at a time -- and thereby give county officials the right to prohibit them from speaking at commission meetings. But they must pursue these wishes in a content-neutral way, applying the same rules to everyone, not just the activists.

**5. A citizen who participates in a neighborhood anti-war march learns that the local police department has secretly videotaped the rally and created a file with the names of everyone who participated. Police officials defend their actions by citing the increased possibility of terrorist threats and the needs of national security.**

**Do you think the police department has the right to videotape the marchers and keep files on them?**

**America says: Yes 54% No 46%**

The expert says: Yes, it is permissible under the First Amendment's rights of free speech and assembly. As citizens, we have the right to march and to express our views -- however sound, however outrageous. But the government may watch and keep information on us, for good or for bad reasons.

That's not to say doing so under any and all circumstances is a good idea. There is much, in fact, to be said against it, not least because it may have a chilling effect on the exercise of constitutional liberties. But not all government actions that chill speech are unconstitutional, and thus far, at least, the Supreme Court has not declared keeping files on marchers to be an abridgment of the First Amendment.

Everything depends on how the government uses the files. A systematic campaign to discredit its opponents through the partisan use of videos and other information selectively gathered, accompanied by baseless intimations of terrorist connections, could raise an interesting new case under the First Amendment. Certainly, it would be a violation of the spirit of democracy.

This survey was conducted April 21-28, 2003. 517 surveys were completed online by adults age 18 or older. The margin of error is +/- 4%.

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*Our poll partner, the First Amendment Center*

*The poll for this story was conducted in tandem with the First Amendment Center's State of the First Amendment -- 2003 survey, to be published in the Aug. 1 issue of "American Journalism Review", co-sponsor of the report. The annual survey of the American public also will be available Aug. 1 at [www.firstamendmentcenter.org](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org). The First Amendment Center works to preserve First Amendment freedoms through information and education. Based at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, it is an operating program of the Freedom Forum.*

Source: [http://www.usaweekend.com/03\\_issues/030629/030629rights.html](http://www.usaweekend.com/03_issues/030629/030629rights.html)

## From The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank,

By Willy Lindwer

*Interview of Hannah Elisabeth Pick-Goslar*

### Background:

A childhood friend Hannah Elisabeth Pick-Goslar was Anne Frank's childhood friend. As friends, Hannah and Anne had much in common. They were the same age, both of their families had fled Nazi Germany in 1933, and both families had settled on the same street in Amsterdam. Anne and Hannah remained close friends throughout their school years.

The two girls' final meeting took place in the Nazi concentration camp Bergen-Belsen. Anne, along with her sister, Margot, died in the camp, but Hannah survived and settled in Israel. In this excerpt, Hannah describes the Franks' escape into hiding and tells about her incredible last meeting with Anne.

Mr. Frank's factory, Opekta, produced a substance for making jam. My mother always got the old packages as a gift. Soon after school let out, my mother sent me to the Franks' house to get the scale because she wanted to make jam. It was a beautiful day.

I went as usual to the Franks' house and rang and rang and rang, but no one opened the door. I didn't know why no one answered. I rang again, and finally, Mr. Goudsmit, a tenant, opened the door.

"What do you want? What have you come for? He asked in astonishment.

"I've come to borrow the scale."

"Don't you know that the entire Frank family has gone to Switzerland?"

I didn't know anything about it.

"Why?" I asked.

He didn't know either.

This was a bolt out of the blue. Why had they gone to Switzerland? The only connection the Frank family had with Switzerland was that Otto Frank's mother lived there.

But later it appeared that, in fact, the family had always reckoned that it would get worse for Jews. They had been preparing for a whole year to go into hiding. We didn't know anything about this. You can't talk about something like that. Because if anyone talked, then the whole affair would go amiss....

I believe that Anne was the first girlfriend that I lost. It was, of course, very frightening, but we began to get use to the idea. When I went back to school after the summer, fewer children came to class every day.

We stayed in Amsterdam almost a full year longer, until June 20, 1943, and all this time things were getting worse and worse. Jews had to wear a yellow star. We had an *Ausweis* (an identification card), with a large "J" on it—for Jew. People were stopped on the street: "May I see your *Ausweis*?" If you were Jewish, you were taken away and never returned home. And a mother waiting for her child would ask herself: Where is my child? Have they taken her away?

It became more dangerous every day. And day by day our classroom became emptier. We arrived in the morning and this boy would no longer be there and that girl wouldn't be there. I shall never forget how Mr. Presser, our history teacher, who later became Professor Presser, gave us a lecture about the Renaissance. He began to read to us about the meeting of Dante and Beatrice in paradise. Suddenly, in the middle of the lesson, he began to cry and ran out of the class.

"What's the matter?"

"Last night they took my wife away." It was terrible. I still get chills when I think about it, seeing that man standing

in front of the class. He had no children, I thought. His wife was everything to him. He went home and his wife wasn't there. That's how it was.

So far, my family had been lucky insofar as we were able to buy South American citizenship through an uncle in Switzerland. We were expatriates. That's why it was possible. We got passports from Paraguay. Laughing, my father said, "You'd better know something about Paraguay in case they ask." So I learned the name of the capital, Asuncion. I didn't know anything else, but no one ever asked me anything.

Because of the passports we could still go out for a while longer without trembling in fear, but you never knew what would happen tomorrow.

And then a second document helped us. My father had been, after all, one of the leaders of the Mizrahi in Germany, and he was also active in the Mizrahi movement in the Netherlands. I believe forty acknowledged lists were drafted and recognized by the Germans, with the names of the most famous Zionists—people who wanted to go to Eretz Israel—and we were second on the list. So we continued to live, with little to eat and with a great deal of fear, but at least we were at home. In October, my mother died during childbirth. The baby was born dead. That was in Anne's diary. Someone told Anne that our baby had died, but not that my mother had died too. They probably didn't have the heart to tell her....

Everything went along fine until June 20, 1943, when there was a big roundup in Amsterdam-South. On that day, the Germans started something new. At five o'clock in the morning while everyone was asleep they blocked off the southern part of Amsterdam. They went from door to door, rang, and asked:

"Do Jews live here?"

"Yes."

"You have fifteen minutes; take a backpack, put a few things in it, and get outside quickly.

That was our neighborhood, so we had to pack too. A passport no longer helped. We had a quarter of an hour, and we had to go with them....

So we were taken to Westerbork. My father ended up in a very large barracks. My sister and I were put in an orphanage, where, they said; there was more to eat. My father had known the director of the orphanage when he was in Germany. My little sister wasn't there very long. She became seriously ill and had to have operations in both ears. She was in the hospital for almost the entire time we were in Westerbork.

I worked there. The toilets were outside, and everyone was very happy when I volunteered to clean them. No one knew why I was so eager to do it. But, now and then, my father was able to come by, and if I was cleaning the toilets just then, I could see him for a moment. That's the reason I did that disgusting work.

It was, in fact, bearable in the orphanage. There were teachers and we still got lessons. There were only youngsters, children of Jews who had been in hiding. The children had been found, but not their parents. It also happened the other way around—that the parents were already gone and the children found later.

Every Friday and Tuesday, trains would come which had to be filled and which then went to Poland. We still had our South American papers and they made it possible for us to stay.

I remember the terrible November night, when it was announced that all of the Palestine lists (lists of people who wanted to go to Israel), only the first two were still valid. All the people on the other lists had to leave that same night. Then the entire orphanage was emptied. I remember Rabbi Vorst, who took all

those children and laid a large *tallit* (prayer shawl) over them and blessed them. Most of the teachers went because they wanted to stay with the children. That was awful. On the Friday afternoon after the train left, the only ones still there were me, my sister in the hospital, and two or three other children. All of the rest who had been on those lists disappeared.

On February 15, 1944, neither our Palestine papers nor our passports could help any more. But the big difference for us was that we weren't sent to Auschwitz. If we had been sent to Auschwitz in 1943, I wouldn't be able to tell you about it now. Because those people who were taken away in the beginning were almost all killed.

But then I didn't know what Auschwitz was. People talked about an *Arbeitslager* (a work camp) in the east. We were going to an *Austauschlager* (exchange camp). I said at the time: "The Germans want to keep us alive so that they can exchange us for German soldiers."

On February 15, 1944, we were transported to Bergen-Belsen. That was a somewhat better camp. What was better about it? In the first place, we were transported in passenger cars and not in cattle cars. And then, when we arrived, our clothes weren't taken away and families weren't separated. My father and my sister stayed with me. We slept in different places, but we could see each other every evening. The trip took—I don't remember precisely—two or three days to get to Bergen-Belsen.

I don't know any longer whether I knew right away what it meant to be in a concentration camp, but I remember very well how, upon our arrival, the German soldiers stood next to each other, with large dogs at their sides. To this day I am afraid of dogs. I don't believe that experience is the real reason; but if someone remarks about it,

then I say, "If you had been there, and if you had seen those dogs, then you'd be afraid, too."

Afterward we still had to walk, walk, and walk still farther, until we saw a large field, with barbed wire here and barbed wire there. There were many different camps. But we didn't know who was in there and where they came from. We saw them for the first time later on. When we went to the shower, which was near the train station—a half-hour or an hour walk—but we never had further contact with them.

We came to a part of the camp that was almost new. There were, at the most, forty or fifty Jews from Greece there. They became, of course, our bosses, because they had already been there for a while. They distributed the food and had all the important jobs. The doctor was a Greek Jew from Salonika. The camp was called Alballalager.

The first few days, we were separated, but later we were able to be together. In the beginning, my father had to go into a quarantined barracks. Our clothes weren't taken away; that was one of the good things about that camp. In Bergen-Belsen, it was very cold in the winter. We soon found that out. Because we had been arrested in June we hadn't thought about winter clothes. Especially me, a young girl, who had to do her own packing. But what I had brought, I kept.

My sister had a large bandage on her head because she had had surgery on her ears in Westerbork. The first day we arrived in Bergen-Belsen, I got jaundice. The policy of the Germans was; whoever got sick had to go to the hospital; otherwise, all the others would be infected. I didn't know what to do with my little sister. My father was confined in another barracks and I couldn't take her to him. He also had to work, so that wouldn't have worked out.

So there I was and I didn't know what to do. This situation showed me that

there were very special people in that camp. I told an old lady that I was at my wits end: "Tomorrow morning, I have to go to the hospital and my little sister is sick."

Two hours later, a woman came, who said, "My name is Abrahams. Mrs. Lange told me you were here and that you don't know what to do with your sister. I have seven children; give her to me; then we'll just have one more little child with us."

And that's how it worked out. The next morning her daughter, who seemed to be about my age, came and took the little girl with her. Meanwhile, my father was able to visit me. We were together with that family until the end. To this day we have stayed on friendly terms with them.

Every day, we were counted. The Germans were afraid that we would run away, but we couldn't go anywhere. Where could you possibly go with a large Star of David on your clothes, without money, and without anything? But that was the craziness of the Germans. We had to stand in rows of five for hours in order to be counted.

One day we looked in the direction where they hadn't been any barracks and saw that tents had suddenly appeared there. It was already quite cold, and we didn't know who was in those tents. Two or three months later, there were very strong windstorms and they were all blown down. On that same day, we received an order: our beds, which were stacked in two levels, one above the other, were taken away, and we got stacks of three beds. Two of us had to sleep in one bed, and half the camp had to be emptied. Then a barbed-wire fence was built through the middle of the camp and filled with straw so that we couldn't see the other side. But we were, of course, very close to each other, because the camp wasn't large. All those people from the tents were taken to the barracks on the other

side. In spite of the German guards on the high watchtowers, we tried to make contact. It was, of course, strictly forbidden to talk to those people, and if the Germans saw or heard someone doing that, that person would have been shot at once. Because of that some of us went to the fence after dark to try to pick up something. I never went there, but we learned that they were all people who had come from Poland—Jews and non-Jews.

About a month later, in early February when there was snow on the ground, one of my acquaintances, an older woman, came up to me one day. "Do you know, there are some Dutch people there. I spoke to Mrs. Van Daan." The woman had known her from before, and she told me that Anne was there. She knew that I knew Anne.

"Go over to the barbed-wire fence and try to talk to her," And, of course, I did. In the evening, I stood by the barbed-wire fence and began to call out. And quite by chance Mrs. Van Daan was there again. I asked her, "Could you call Anne?"

She said, "Yes, yes, wait a minute, I'll go to get Anne. I can't get Margot; she is very, very ill and is in bed."

But naturally, I was much more interested in Anne, and I waited there a few minutes in the dark.

Anne came to the barbed-wire fence—I couldn't see her. The fence and the straw were between us. There wasn't much light. Maybe I saw her shadow. It wasn't the same Anne. She was a broken girl. I probably was, too, but it was so terrible. She immediately began to cry, and she told me, "I don't have any parents anymore."

I remember that with absolute certainty. That was terribly sad, because she couldn't have known anything else. She thought that her father had been gassed right away. But Mr. Frank looked very young and healthy, and of course the Germans

didn't know how old everybody was who they wanted to gas, but selected them on the basis of their appearance. Someone who looked healthy had to work, but another who might even be younger, but who was sick or looked bad, went directly to the gas chamber.

I always think, if Anne had known that her father was still alive, she might have had more strength to survive, because she died very shortly before the end—only a few days before [liberation]. But maybe it was all predestined.

So we stood there, two young girls, and we cried. I told her about my mother. She hadn't known that; she only knew that the baby had died. And I told her about my little sister. I told her that my father was in the hospital. He died two weeks later; he was already very sick. She told me that Margot was seriously ill and she told me about going into hiding because I was, of course, extremely curious.

"But what are you doing here? You were supposed to be in Switzerland, weren't you?" And then she told me what had happened. That they didn't go to Switzerland at all and why they had said that; so that everybody should think that they had gone to their grandmother's.

Then she said, "We don't have anything at all to eat here, almost nothing, and we are cold; we don't have any clothes and I've gotten very thin and they have shaved my hair." That was terrible for her. She had always been very proud of her hair. It may have grown back a bit in the meantime, but it certainly wasn't the long hair she'd had before, which she playfully curled around her fingers. It was much worse for them than for us. I said, "They didn't take away our clothes." That was our first meeting.

Then for the first time—we had already been in the camp for more than a year; we arrived in February 1944,

and this was February 1945—we received a very small Red Cross package: my sister, my father, and I. A very small package, the size of a book, with *knackebrot* (Scandinavian crackers), and a few cookies. You can't imagine how little that was. My son always says, "But Mama, that was something really very special." But in those days we really collected everything, half a cookie, a sock, a glove—anything that gave a little warmth or something to eat. My friends also gave me something for Anne. I certainly couldn't have thrown a large package over a barbed wire fence; not that I had one, but that wouldn't have been possible at all.

We agreed to try to meet the next evening at eight o'clock—I believe I still had a watch. And, in fact, I succeeded in throwing the package over.

But I heard her screaming, and I called out, "What happened?"

And Anne answered, "Oh, the woman standing next to me caught it, and she won't give it back to me."

Then she began to scream.

I calmed her down a bit and said, "I'll try again but I don't know if I'll be able to." We arranged to meet again, two or three days later, and I was actually able to throw over another package. She caught it; that was the main thing.

After these three or four meetings at the barbed-wire fence in Bergen-Belsen, I didn't see her again, because the people in Anne's camp were transferred to another section in Bergen-Belsen. That happened around the end of February.

That was the last time I saw Anne alive and spoke to her...\*

**From *Harriet Tubman:  
Conductor on the Underground  
Railroad***

By Ann Petry

**The Railroad Runs to Canada**

Along the Eastern shore of Maryland, in Dorchester County, in Caroline County, the masters kept hearing whispers about the man named Moses, who was running off slaves. At first they did not believe in his existence. The stories about him were fantastic, unbelievable. Yet they watched for him. They offered rewards for his capture.

They never saw him. Now and then they heard whispered rumors to the effect that he was in the neighborhood. The woods were searched. The roads were watched. There never was anything to indicate his whereabouts. But a few days afterward, a goodly number of slaves would be gone from the plantation. Neither the master nor the overseer had heard or seen anything unusual in the quarter. Sometimes one or the other would vaguely remember having heard a whippoorwill call somewhere in the woods, close by, late at night. Though it was the wrong season for whippoorwills.

Sometimes the masters thought they had heard the cry of a hoot owl, repeated, and would remember having thought that the intervals between the low, moaning cry were wrong, that it had been repeated four times in succession instead of three. There was never anything more than that to suggest that all was not well in the quarter. Yet when morning came, they invariably discovered that a group of the finest slaves had taken to their heels.

Unfortunately, the discovery was almost always made on a Sunday. Thus a whole day was lost before the machinery of pursuit could be set in motion. The posters offering rewards

for the fugitives could not be printed until Monday. The men who made a living hunting for runaway slaves were out of reach, off in the woods with their dogs and their guns, in pursuit of four-footed game, or they were in camp meetings saying their prayers with their wives and families beside them.

Harriet Tubman could have told them that there was far more involved in this matter of running off slaves than signaling the would-be runaways by imitating the call of a whippoorwill or a hoot owl, far more involved than a will or a hoot owl, far more involved than a matter of waiting for a clear night when the North Star was visible.

In December 1851, when she started out with the band of fugitives that she planned to take to Canada, she had been in the vicinity of the plantation for days, planning the trip, carefully selecting the slaves that she would take with her.

She had announced her arrival in the quarter by singing the forbidden spiritual—"Go down Moses, ' way down to Egypt Land"—singing it softly outside the door of a slave cabin late at night. The husky voice was beautiful even when it was barely more than a murmur borne on the wind.

Once she had made her presence known, word of her coming spread from cabin to cabin. The slaves whispered to each other, ear to mouth, mouth to ear, "Moses is here." "Moses has come." "Get ready. Moses is back again." The ones who had agreed to go north with her put ashcake and salt herring in an old bandanna, hastily tied it into a bundle, and then waited patiently for the signal that meant it was time to start.

There were eleven in this party, including one of her brothers and his wife. It was the largest group that she had ever conducted, but she was determined that more and more slaves should know what freedom was like.

She had to take them all the way to Canada. The Fugitive Slave Law was no longer a great many incomprehensible words written down on the country's law books. The new law had become a reality. It was Thomas Sims, a boy, picked up on the streets of Boston at night and shipped back to Georgia. It was Jerry and Shadrach, arrested and jailed with no warning.

She had never been in Canada. The route beyond Philadelphia was strange to her. But she could not let the runaways who accompanied her know this. As they walked along, she told them stories of her own first flight; she kept painting vivid word pictures of what it would be like to be free.

But there were so many of them this time. She knew moments of doubt when she was half-afraid and kept looking back over her shoulder, imagining that she heard the sound of pursuit. They would certainly be pursued. Eleven of them. Eleven thousand dollars' worth of flesh and bone and muscle that belonged to Maryland planters. If they were caught, the eleven runaways would be whipped and sold south, but she—she would probably be hanged.

They tried to sleep during the day, but they could never wholly relax into sleep. She could tell by the positions they assumed, by their restless movements. And they walked at night. Their progress was slow. It took them three nights of walking to reach the first stop. She had told them about the place where they would stay, promising warmth and good food, holding these things out to them as an incentive to keep going.

When she knocked on the door of a farmhouse, a place where she and her parties of runaways had always been welcome, always been given shelter and plenty to eat, there was no answer. She knocked again, softly. A voice from

within said, "Who is it?" There was fear in the voice.

She knew instantly from the sound of the voice that there was something wrong. She said, "A friend without friends," the password on the Underground Railroad.

The door opened, slowly. The man who stood in the doorway looked at her coldly, looked with unconcealed astonishment and fear at the eleven disheveled runaways who were standing near her. Then he shouted, "Too many, too many. It's not safe. My place was searched last week. It's not safe!" and slammed the door in her face.

She turned away from the house, frowning. She had promised her passengers food and rest and warmth, and instead of that there would be hunger and cold and more walking over the frozen ground. Somehow she would have to instill courage into these eleven people, most of them strangers, would have to feed them on hope and bright dreams of freedom instead of the fried pork and corn bread and milk she had promised them.

They stumbled along behind her, half-dead for sleep, and she urged them on, though she was as tired and as discouraged as they were. She had never been in Canada, but she kept painting wondrous word pictures of what it would be like. She managed to dispel their fear of pursuit so that they would not become hysterical, panic-stricken. Then she had to bring some of the fear back so that they would stay awake and keep walking though they

Yet during the day, when they lay down deep in a thicket, they never really slept, because if a twig snapped or the wind sighed in the branches of a pine tree, they jumped to their feet, afraid of their own shadows, shivering and shaking. It was very cold, but they dared not make fires because someone would see the smoke and wonder about it.

She kept thinking. Eleven of them. Eleven thousand dollars' worth of slaves. And she had to take them all the way to Canada. Sometimes she told them about Thomas Garrett, in Wilmington. She said he was their friend even though he did not know them. He was the friend of all fugitives. He called them God's poor. He was a Quaker and his speech was a little different from that of other people. His clothing was different, too. He wore the wide-brimmed hat that the Quaker wears.

She said that he had thick white hair, soft, almost like a baby's, and the kindest eyes she had ever seen. He was a big man and strong, but he had never used his strength to harm anyone, always to help people. He would give them all a new pair of shoes. Everybody. He always did. Once they reached his house in Wilmington, They would be safe. He would see to it that they were.

She described the house where he lived, told them about the store where he sold shoes. She said he kept a pail of milk and a loaf of bread in the drawer of his desk so that he would have food ready at hand for any of God's poor who should suddenly appear before him, fainting with hunger. There was a hidden room in the store. A whole wall swung open, and behind it was a room where he could hide fugitives. On the walls there were shelves filled with small boxes—boxes of shoes—so that you would never guess that the wall actually opened.

While she talked, she kept watching them. They did not believe her. She could tell by their expressions. They were thinking, New shoes, Thomas Garrett, Quaker, Wilmington—what foolishness was this? Who knew if she told the truth? Where was she taking them anyway?

That night they reached the next stop—a farm that belonged to a

German. She made the runaways take shelter behind trees before she knocked at the door. She hesitated before she approached the door, thinking, Suppose that he, too, should refuse shelter, suppose—Then she thought, Lord I'm going to hold steady on to You, and You've got to see me through—and knocked softly.

She heard the familiar guttural voice say, "Who's there?"

She answered quickly, "A friend with friends."

He opened the door and greeted her warmly. "How many this time?" he asked.

"Eleven," she said and waited, doubting, wondering.

He said, "Good. Bring them in."

He and his wife fed them in the lamp-lit kitchen, their faces glowing as they offered food and more food, urging them to eat, saying there was plenty for everybody, have more milk, have more bread, have more meat.

They spent the night in the warm kitchen. They really slept, all that night until dusk the next day. When they left, it was with reluctance. They had all been warm and safe and well-fed. It was hard to exchange the security offered by that clean, warm kitchen for the darkness and the cold of a December night.

### **"Go on or Die"**

Harriet had found it hard to leave the warmth and friendliness, too. But she urged them on.

For a while, as they walked, they seemed to carry in them a measure of contentment; some of the serenity and the cleanliness of that big, warm kitchen lingered on inside them. They fell silent, sullen, suspicious. She waited for the moment when some one of them would turn mutinous. It did not happen that night.

Two nights later she was aware that the feet behind her were moving slower and slower. She heard the irritability in their voices, knew that soon someone would refuse to go on.

She started talking about William Still and The Philadelphia Vigilance Committee. No one commented. No one asked any questions. She told them the story of William and Ellen Craft and had they escaped from Georgia. Ellen was so fair that she looked as though she was white, and so she dressed up in a man's clothing, and she looked like a wealthy young planter. Her husband, William, who was dark, played the role of her slave. Thus they traveled from Macon, Georgia, to Philadelphia, riding in the trains, staying at the finest hotels. Ellen pretended to be very ill—her right arm was in a sling, and her right hand was bandaged, because she was supposed to have rheumatism. Thus she avoided having to sign the register at the hotels, for she could not read or write. They finally arrived safely in Philadelphia and then went on to Boston.

No one said anything. Not one of them seemed to have heard her.

She told them about Frederick Douglass, the most famous of the escaped slaves, of his eloquence, of his magnificent appearance. Then she told them of her own first, vain effort of running away, evoking the memory of that miserable life she had led as a child, reliving it for a moment in the telling.

But they had been tired too long, hungry—too long, afraid too long, footsore too long. One of them suddenly cried out in despair, "Let me go back. It is better to be a slave than to suffer like this in order to be free."

She carried a gun with her on these trips. She had never used it—except as a threat. Now as she aimed it, she experienced a feeling of guilt, remembering that time, years ago, when

she had prayed for the death of Edward Brodas, the Master, and then not too long afterward had heard the great wailing cry that came from the throats of the field hands, and knew from the sound that the Master was dead.

One of the runaways said, again, "Let me go back. Let me go back," and stood still and then turned around and said, over his shoulder, "I am going back."

She lifted the gun, aimed it at the despairing slave. She said, "Go on with us or die." The husky, low-pitched voice was grim.

He hesitated for a moment, and then he joined the others. They started walking again. She tried to explain to them why none of them could go back to the plantation. If a runaway returned, he would turn traitor; the master and the overseer would force him to turn traitor. The returned slave would disclose the stopping places, the hiding places, the corn stacks they had used with the full knowledge of the owner of the farm, the name of the German farmer who had fed and sheltered them. These people who had risked their own security to help runaways would be ruined, fined, imprisoned.

She said, "We got to go free or die. And freedom's not bought with dust."

This time she told them about the long agony of the Middle Passage on the old slave ships, about the black horror of the hold, about the chains and the whips. They too knew these stories. But she wanted to remind them of the long, hard way they had come, about the long, hard way they had yet to go. She told them about Thomas Sims, the boy picked up on the streets of Boston and sent back to Georgia. She said when they got him back to Savannah, got him in prison there, they whipped him until a doctor who was standing by watching said, "You will kill him if you strike him again!" His master said, "Let him die!"

Thus she forced them to go on. Sometimes she thought she had become nothing but a voice speaking in the darkness, cajoling, urging, threatening. Sometimes she told them things to make them laugh; sometimes she sang to them and heard the eleven voices behind her blending softly with hers, and then she knew that for the moment all was well with them.

She gave the impression of being a short, muscular, indomitable woman who could never be defeated. Yet at any moment she was liable to be seized by one of those curious fits of sleep, which might last for a few minutes or for hours.

Even on this trip, she suddenly fell asleep in the woods. The runaways, ragged, dirty, hungry, cold, did not steal the gun, as they might have, and set off by themselves or turn back. They sat on the ground near her and waited patiently until she awakened. They had come to trust her implicitly, totally. They, too, had come to believe her repeated statement, "We got to go free or die." She was leading them into freedom, and so they waited until she was ready to go on.

Finally, they reached Thomas Garrett's house in Wilmington, Delaware. Just as Harriet had promised, Garrett gave them all new shoes and provided carriages to take them on to the next stop.

By slow stages they reached Philadelphia, where William Still hastily recorded their names and the plantations whence they had come and something of their life they had led in slavery. Then he carefully hid what he had written, for fear it might be discovered. In 1872 he published this record in book form and called it *The Underground Railroad*. In the foreword to this book he said: "While I knew the danger of keeping strict records, and while I did not dream that in my day slavery would be blotted out, or that the

time would come when I could publish these records, it used to afford me great satisfaction to take them down, fresh from the lips of fugitives on the way to freedom, and to preserve them as they had given them."

William Still, who was familiar with all the station stops on the Underground Railroad, supplied Harriet with money and sent her and her eleven fugitives on to Burlington, New Jersey.

Harriet felt safer now, though there were danger spots ahead. But the biggest part of her job was over. As they went farther and farther north, it grew colder; she was aware of the cold damp in New York. From New York they went on to Syracuse, where the temperature was even lower.

In Syracuse she met the Reverend J.W. Loguen, known as "Jarm" Loguen. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. Both Harriet and Jarm Loguen were to become friends and supporters of Old John Brown.

From Syracuse they went north again, into a colder, snowier city—Rochester. Here they almost certainly stayed with Frederick Douglass, for he wrote in his autobiography: "On one occasion I had eleven fugitives at the same time under my roof, and it was necessary for them to remain with me until I could collect sufficient money to get them to Canada. It was the largest number I ever had at any one time, and I had some difficulty in providing so many with food and shelter, but as may well be imagined, they were not very fastidious in either direction, and were well content with very plain food, and a strip of carpet on the floor for a bed, or a place on the straw in the barn loft."

Late in December 1851, Harriet arrived in St. Catharines, Canada West (now Ontario), with eleven fugitives. It had taken almost a month to complete this journey; most of the time had been spent getting out of Maryland.

The first winter in St. Catharines was a terrible one. Canada was a strange, frozen land, snow everywhere, ice everywhere, and a bone-biting cold the like of which none of them had ever experienced before. Harriet rented a small frame house in the town and set to work to make a home. The fugitives boarded with her. They worked in the forests, felling trees, and so did she. Sometimes she took other jobs, cooking or cleaning house for people in the town. She cheered on these newly arrived fugitives, working herself, finding work for them, praying for them, sometimes begging for them.

Often she found herself thinking of the beauty of Maryland, the mellowness of the soil, the richness of the plant life there. The climate itself made for an ease in living that could never be duplicated in this bleak, barren countryside.

In spite of the severe cold, the hard work, she came to love St. Catharines and the other towns and cities in Canada where black men lived. She discovered that freedom meant more than the right to change jobs at will, more than the right to keep money that one earned. It was the right to vote and to sit on juries. It was the right to be elected to office. In Canada there were black men who were county officials and members of school boards. St. Catharines had a large colony of ex-slaves, and they owned their own homes, kept them neat and clean and in good repair. They lived in whatever part of town they chose and sent their children to the schools.

When spring came, she decided that she would make this small Canadian city her home—as much as any place could be said to be home to a woman who traveled from Canada to the Eastern Shore of Maryland as often as she did.

In the spring of 1852, she went back to Cape May, New Jersey. She spent

the summer there, cooking in a hotel. That fall she returned, as usual, to Dorchester County and brought out nine more slaves, conducting them all the way to St. Catharines, in Canada West, to the bone-biting cold, the snow-covered forests—and freedom.

She continued to live in this fashion, spending the winter in Canada and the spring and summer working in Cape May, New Jersey, or in Philadelphia. She made two trips a year into slave territory, one in the fall and another in the spring. She now had a definite, crystallized purpose, and in carrying it out, her life fell into a pattern, which remained unchanged for the next six years.

## Letter to Harriet Tubman By Frederick Douglass

Rochester, August 29, 1868

Dear Harriet,

I am glad to know that a kindly lady has written the story of your eventful life, and that the same is soon to be published. You ask for what you do not need when you call upon me for a word of commendation. I need such words from you far more than you can need them from me, especially where your superior labors and devotion to the cause of the lately enslaved of our land are known as I know them.

The difference between us is very marked. Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public, and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way. You, on the other hand, have labored in a private way. I have wrought in the day -- you in the night. I have had the applause of the crowd and the satisfaction that comes of being approved by the multitude, while the most that you have done has been witnessed by a few trembling, scarred, and foot-sore bondmen and women, whom you have led out of the house of bondage, and whose heartfelt "God bless you" has been your only reward. The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism. 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 you have. Much that you have done would seem improbable to those who do not know you as I know you. It is to me a great pleasure and a great privilege to bear testimony to your character and your works, and to say to those to whom you may come, that I regard you in every way truthful and trustworthy.

Your friend,  
Frederick Douglass