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Grades  
3–5

## Overview

Students closely read a set of V-mail letters and answer questions about the text, supporting their answers with references to the texts. Then students write narratives from a soldier's perspective to show how he really felt.

## Standards

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- Understand daily life of a farm family from long ago.

## Materials

- *V-Mail Letter from Bernie* (page 105)
- *V-Mail Letter from Elmer* (page 106)
- *Western Union Telegram* (page 107)
- *Normandy Landing* (page 108)
- *Comparing World War II* (page 109)
- *V-Mail Questions* (page 110)
- *Narrative Writing Rubric 2* (page 300)

# V-Mail Letters

## Teacher Background Information

### V-Mail Letter from Bernie/Elmer

- These are copies of letters from an American soldier who served in World War II. These small notes were called V-Mail, for Victory Mail. At home, families were asked to write short letters, a few times per week to the soldiers. These letters were collected by the post office and photographed onto tiny microfilm. The microfilm was then flown across the ocean to the battlefields. Once at the battlefields, the microfilm was reproduced onto paper, and the letters were delivered to the servicemen and servicewomen. V-mail was a major advance in wartime communication.

### Western Union Telegram

- The Western Union Telegram records the death of an American soldier in France during World War II. The certificate, signed by President Roosevelt, commemorates the death of the soldier. The certificate of award of the Purple Heart honors him as a brave soldier. This soldier, Elmer Tusko, is the same one whose V-mail letters are shared in this lesson. During World War II, the War Department notified families of the deaths of their sons, fathers, daughters, or husbands. These telegrams were delivered by army personnel and not simply mailed. The telegram would be the initial notification. A follow-up letter would arrive, generally written by the soldier's commanding officer. This letter would give details of the soldier's death.

### Normandy Landing Picture

- The invasion of Normandy began at dawn on June 6, 1944. The first men to land on the beaches faced heavy German fire. Thousands of men were killed. The forces kept arriving and eventually overpowered the Germans.

## V-Mail Letters *(cont.)*

### Reading Closely

1. Distribute copies of the *V-Mail Letter from Bernie* to students.
2. Instruct students to read the text silently and make notes in the margins about what they observe in the text as well as what other information they need to know to make the content of the text understandable.
3. Have students reread the text and then underline specific details about the person to understand what he was like and what life was like at the time.
4. Distribute copies of the *V-Mail Letter from Elmer* to students.
5. Have students read the text silently and note where their questions are answered using this second letter. They should also make notes in the margins about what they observe in the text.
6. Have students reread the second text and repeat step 3.

### Using Text-Dependent Questions

7. Use the discussion questions on page 104 to guide a discussion about the two letters.
8. After a few questions have been discussed, stop and reread both V-mail letters aloud to the class. Then, continue discussing the letters using the remaining questions in the first two sections of page 104.
9. Distribute copies of the *Western Union Telegram* and the *Normandy Landing* image. Examine these documents as a class.
10. Have students compare these documents using the *Comparing World War II* graphic organizer.
11. Discuss the questions listed under Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. Then distribute copies of *V-Mail Questions* and have students work in pairs to respond to the questions.

### Writing for Understanding (Narrative)

1. Tell students that they will be using the documents and the discussion about the documents to help them write a narrative from Elmer's perspective. Remind students that the letter Elmer wrote does not really tell the truth of how he felt or what he was facing. He wanted to protect his family. This narrative will fill in the gap between the time Elmer wrote his V-mail letter and the time the Western Union telegram arrived. The narrative should be at least one page in length.
2. Once students have written their narratives, have them share these in small groups.
3. Use *Narrative Writing Rubric 2* to assess student work.

## V-Mail Letters *(cont.)*

### Discussion Questions

#### Key Ideas and Details

- What conclusions can you make about Bernie? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

*Bernie is a kid and most likely a brother to Elmer. He makes references to the carnival and movies as well as calling his parents Mom and Pop when talking to Elmer. Elmer also jokes about Bernie working too hard.*

- Why did Elmer say to fix the money in the bank so that his mother could draw the money too? What did he mean by this?

*Elmer is concerned about his family's finances. He asks if Pop is still working. He also is in a war and could be concerned that he might die, so he wants his parents to be able to draw the money out.*

- From the letters, the reader can conclude that Elmer and Bernie's letters passed in the air. Find evidence to support this conclusion.

*Elmer makes a statement that he has not heard from Bernie in a while. Bernie writes as though he has not heard from his older brother, asking him about the movies and not answering any of Elmer's questions.*

#### Craft and Structure

- Use the letters to explain the dynamics in this family. Give evidence from the document.

*The children are concerned about their father working, as Bernie mentions how much Pop is getting paid and Elmer asks if he is still working. Bernie and his brother have a good relationship, and the joking in Elmer's letter shows this. The family cares for one another as they talk about how to fix the money so the mother can draw it out too.*

- What does Elmer imply when he says to be sure to fix the money so his mother can withdraw it?

*Elmer is implying that he is going into a dangerous situation in war and might not make it back.*

- What do you think is Elmer's intended message in writing his letter? Justify your thinking using text evidence.

*In a way, Elmer is trying to calm his family's fears by telling them everything is fine and that it is a beautiful day. He is also tying up loose ends so that if anything does happen, his family will be okay financially.*

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

(Show all three documents.)

- How do you know that Elmer understood the realities of war? Give text evidence from several sources to support your thinking.

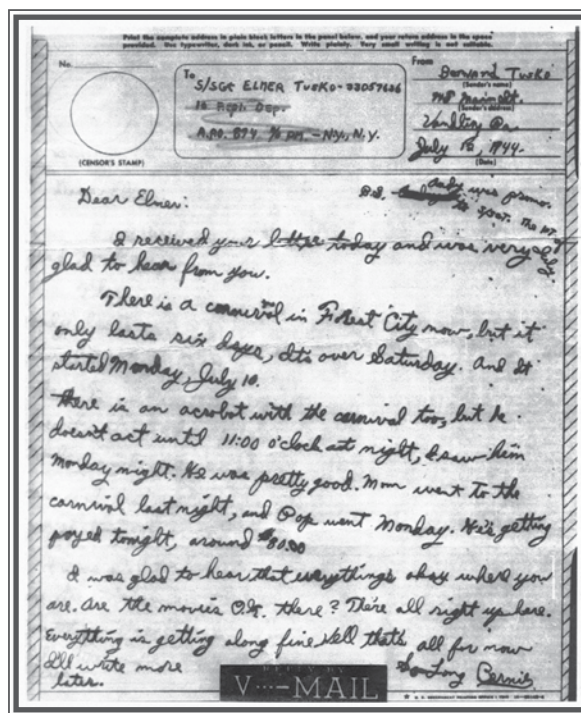
*Men knew the dangers they faced as seen in the Western Union Telegram and the image. Although he did not share specific war information with his family in the letter, it is clear that he was experiencing the hardship of being away from his family and knew that he was going to be facing dangerous situations in the time to come.*

- How are these three texts the same? How are they different?

*The texts all address the realities of war; some are subtle like the letter, and some are explicit like the telegram. The photo shows the realities of what these men faced. These documents are different in how they tell the story of the soldiers. The letter makes the soldier seem very human as he asks about his little brother. The telegram is impersonal and removes the emotion from the man. The photo imposes the harsh realities of war.*



## V-Mail Letter from Bernie



To S/SGT Elmer Tusko  
 From Bernard Tusko  
 748 Main St.  
 Vandling, Pennsylvania  
 July 12, 1944

Dear Elmer,

I received your letter today and was very glad to hear from you.

There is a carnival in Forest City now, but it only lasts six days, It's over Saturday. And it started Monday, July 10.

There is an acrobat with the carnival too, but he doesn't act until 11:00 o'clock at night, I saw him Monday night. He was pretty good. Mom went to the carnival last night, and Pop went Monday. He's getting paid tonight, around \$80.00.

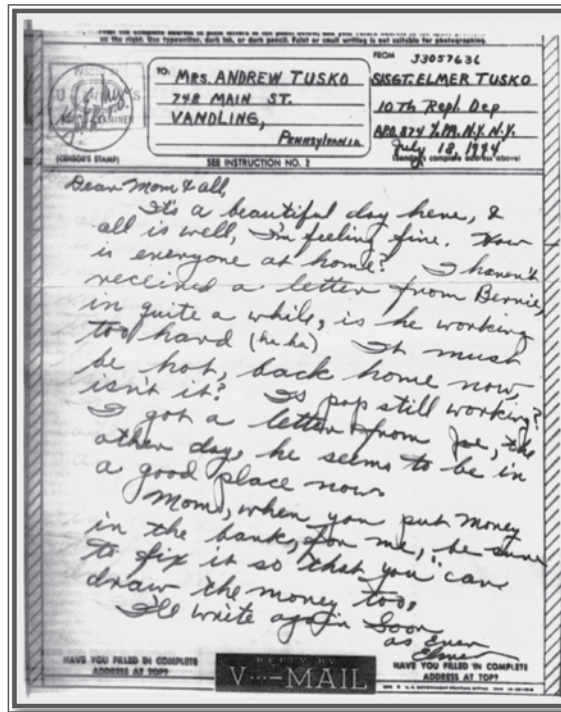
I was glad to hear that everything's okay where you are. Are the movies O.K. there? They're all right up here. Everything is getting along fine. Well that's all for now. I'll write more later.

So long,

Bernie

P.S. Andy was promoted to staff sergeant the first of July.

## V-Mail Letter from Elmer



To Mrs. Andrew Tusko  
 748 Main St.  
 Vandling, Pennsylvania

From S/SGT Elmer Tusko  
 10th Repl. Dep  
 APO 874 NY, NY  
 July 18, 1944

Dear Mom and All,

It's a beautiful day here, and all is well, I'm feeling fine. How is everyone at home? I haven't received a letter from Bernie in quite a while, is he working too hard (ha ha). It must be hot back home now, isn't it? Is pop still working? I got a letter from Joe the other day, he seems to be in a good place now.

Mom, when you put money in the bank for me, be sure to fix it so that you can draw the money too. I'll write again soon.

As ever, Elmer.

# Western Union Telegram

<p><b>CLASS OF SERVICE</b></p> <p>This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.</p>	<h2 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h2> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">A. N. WILLIAMS      NEYCOMB CARLTON      J. C. WILLEVER PRESIDENT      CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD      FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">1204</p> <p><b>SYMBOLS</b></p> <p>DL = Day Letter</p> <p>NT = Overnight Telegram</p> <p>LC = Deferred Cable</p> <p>NLT = Cable Night Letter</p> <p>Ship Radiogram</p>
<p>The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination</p>		
<p>11SC JO 43 GOVT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WUX-WASHINGTON DC 1013 PM SEP 11 1944</p> <p>MRS MARY TUSCO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10 CLINTON ST VANDLING PENN</p> <p>THE SECRETARY OF WAR ASKS THAT I ASSURE YOU OF HIS DEEP SYMPATHY IN THE LOSS OF YOUR SON STAFF SERGEANT ELMER T TUSKO REPORT RECEIVED STATES HE DIED TWENTY SEVEN AUGUST IN FRANCE AS RESULT OF WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION LETTER FOLLOWS</p> <p style="text-align: right;">J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1123 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: x-small; margin-top: 20px;">THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE</p>		

11SC JO 43 GOVT

WUX-WASHINGTON DC 1013 PM SEP 11, 1944

MRS MARY TUSCO

10 CLINTON ST VANDLING PENN

THE SECRETARY OF WAR ASKS THAT I ASSURE YOU OF HIS DEEP SYMPATHY IN THE LOSS OF YOUR SON STAFF SERGEANT ELMER T TUSKO REPORT RECEIVED STATES THAT HE DIED TWENTY SEVEN AUGUST IN FRANCE AS RESULT OF WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION LETTER FOLLOWS

J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

1123 PM



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Normandy Landing

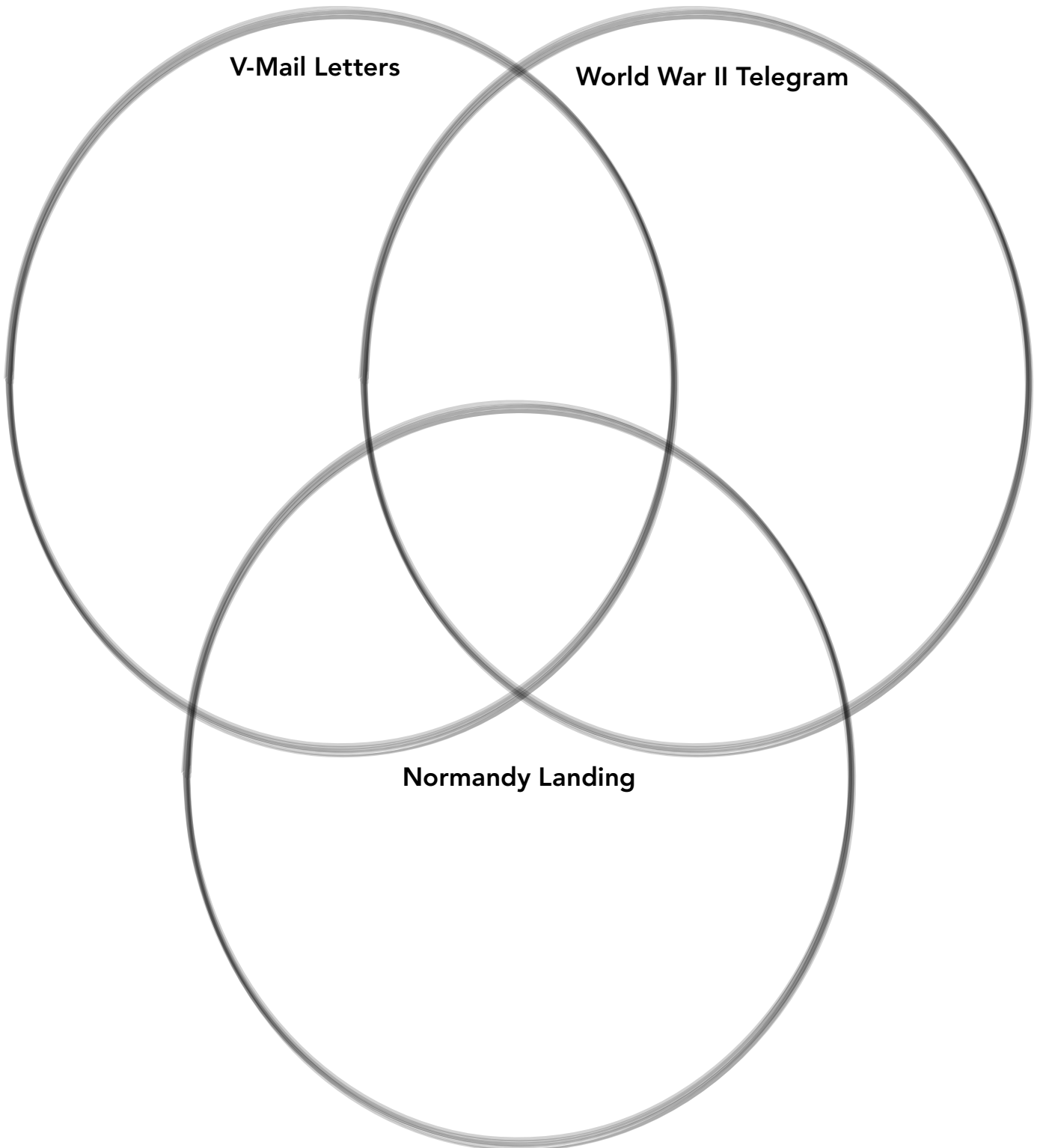
.....



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Comparing World War II

**Directions:** Use this graphic organizer to explore the similarities and differences between the documents.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## V-Mail Questions

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**Directions:** Read the documents and answer the questions below.

1. What conclusions can you make about Bernie? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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2. Why did Elmer say to fix the money in the bank so that his mother could draw the money too? What did he mean by this?

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3. From the letters, the reader can conclude that Elmer and Bernie's letters passed in the air. Find evidence to support this conclusion.

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Grades  
6–8

# Runaway Slaves

## Overview

Students closely read a runaway slave poster and answer questions about the text, supporting their answers with references to the texts. Then students write narratives from the perspectives of the owner or the slave, basing their writing on information found in the texts.

## Standards

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Understand different economic, cultural, and social characteristics of slavery after 1800.

## Materials

- *Dolly Runaway Slave Poster* (page 154)
- *Slave Ship Poster* (page 155)
- *Slave Auction Poster* (page 156)
- *Dolly's Story* (page 157)
- *Slavery Questions* (page 158)
- *Narrative Writing Rubric 3* (page 301)

## Teacher Background Information

### Dolly Runaway Slave Poster

- During the American Revolution, it is estimated that more than 100,000 slaves escaped and either joined the British side or fled to Canada and Florida. Owners worried about their slaves escaping. They posted posters and advertisements in the papers to alert the public to be on the lookout for any runaways and often offered rewards for their return.

### Slave Ship Poster

- Slaves were kidnapped from their villages in Africa and taken aboard slave ships. The living conditions aboard these ships were horrendous. It was up to the captains to decide how tight to pack their ship, and many times slaves were piled on top of each other so that more could be crammed into the space. There was very little ventilation and no sanitation. Captains would allow their crews to bring the slaves up on deck in the morning during good weather. They were fed two meals and given a small amount of water to drink.

### Slave Auction Poster

- Slave auctions took place when slave ships from Africa docked in a town. This poster advertises a slave auction that took place on May 18, 1829. Three slaves were sold and eleven were hired out to the highest bidder. All three of the slaves for sale belonged to people in the community. Alongside these slaves were advertisements for other household goods that were to be sold.



# Runaway Slaves *(cont.)*

## Reading Closely

1. Distribute copies of the *Dolly Runaway Slave Poster* to students. Instruct students to first number each line (1–15) on the poster so that they can refer back to specific text locations during the class discussion.
2. Have students quietly read the poster with a partner and make notes in the margins about what they observe in the text as well as difficult vocabulary and any other information they need to know to make the content of the text understandable.
3. Begin the discussion by asking students to share with their partners what they found to be unusual on this poster. Then, have students share aloud with the entire class.
4. Have students reread the poster and make notes in the margins about their thoughts on the importance of the underlined text and the text in quotation marks.

## Using Text-Dependent Questions

5. Ask students who they think wrote this poster as well as who the intended audience was.
6. Use the discussion questions in the first three sections on page 152 to guide the rest of the whole-class discussion of the poster. Then distribute copies of the *Slavery Questions* to students and have them record responses, using the text for evidence to support their answers.
7. Distribute copies of the *Slave Ship Poster* and the *Slave Auction Poster* to students. Read/ examine these posters as a class and have students make notes in the margins to help them understand the content and intention of the posters.
8. Discuss the questions listed under Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.
9. To further the analysis of the posters, distribute copies of the *Dolly's Story* graphic organizer and have students work in pairs or small groups to find details in these documents that explain "Dolly's story" or perhaps any slave during that period of time.

## Writing for Understanding (Narrative)

1. Tell students that they will select a perspective to write from: either the slave owner Louis Manigault, or Dolly. This narrative should be an explanation of what happened and should use information from the texts to explain their viewpoints. These narratives should be between 1–2 pages in length.
2. Have students share their narratives in small groups. When they are finished, they should reference the texts to explain where they found their information.
3. Use *Narrative Writing Rubric 3* to assess student writing.

# Runaway Slaves *(cont.)*

## Discussion Questions

### Key Ideas/Details

- What do we know about Dolly and her family?

*Dolly is described as being 30 years old, light complexion, hesitates when spoken to, skinny, good looking, and good teeth. Dolly's family is from Charleston and her owner is willing to pay a high price to get her back.*

- What clues tell you about Dolly's life as a slave?

*Dolly has always been a house servant, so she has a more privileged life inside the house as opposed to being in the fields. The family is offering a \$50 reward, which is a lot of money, and she has never changed her owner, so the family that she works for must really want her back. Either she is a great worker and is of high value or the owners have a strong attachment to her since she has always been with them. To them, she is a piece of property as shown in the way that she is described.*

- What is the importance of the underlined and quoted text?

*The writer of this poster wants to draw attention to the \$50 reward as well as the fact that a slave has run away. It is likely that the slave's name, "Dolly," is in quotations because that isn't her real name; it's just what everyone calls her.*

### Language

- What does it mean when the text says she (Dolly) is not a "very healthy person," while the poster also says that she has a "fine set of teeth"?

*The text could be referring to her being prone to sickness, but since teeth are a sign of health and being well taken care of, it is more likely that it is referring to her being skinny, not of a larger, more desirable build.*

### Craft and Structure

- How do we know that this document is historically important?

*The poster is historically important because it has been saved. It tells about Dolly's life and her owner's struggle to get her back. It describes her as a commodity, instead of a person, which is different than how we describe people today.*

- The intended purpose of this poster is to bring this runaway slave back to her family. How do we know this?

*We know this because of the title on the page that reads, "\$50 Reward!!" The words "Ran away" is underlined. The police station posted this notice and a lawyer is handling extra details about this case. The way the owner talks about Dolly with such a description tells us that he wants her found and returned.*

- Why do you think the owner would blame Dolly's disappearance on being "enticed off"? Why wouldn't she run away instead?

*Perhaps Dolly's owner thinks that she is not brave enough, as seen in the phrase "hesitates when spoke to," to run off on her own. We can imply that the owner feels that there had to be an accomplice to get her to run away, especially since she is a stranger to the city.*

# Runaway Slaves *(cont.)*

## Discussion Questions *(cont.)*

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

(Use all three documents.)

- This reward poster was produced in 1863. What was happening in US history in 1863?

*Answers will vary, but students might say the Civil War was going on and the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in January of 1863. If Dolly knew of this, it could have encouraged her to leave.*

- What does the poster tell us about the people and events during the time in which it was created?

*This poster tells us that people still had slaves and saw them as property. It tells us that her owner did not see the Emancipation Proclamation as a threat to what he owned and how he lived.*

- In what ways do these texts tell Dolly's story?

*These texts tell how Dolly's relatives came to the United States as slaves from Africa, leaving their children behind. It shows how they were inhumanely packed on ships. It tells how some slaves were sold at auction along with everyday items and entertainment.*

- How can you use the posters to support the idea that laws have to be written before people's minds will change?

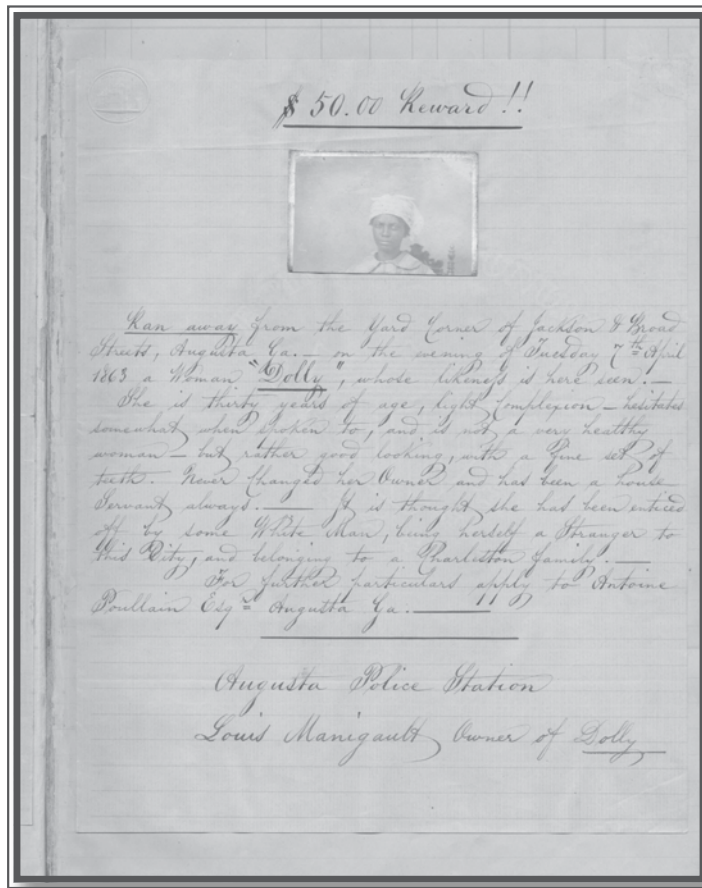
*Answers will vary. Students might say that Louis Manigault, Dolly's owner, had no intention of following the Emancipation Proclamation, even though it was newly written. It often takes a long time before people's minds will change, even when new laws are in place. Knowing what we know from history, people's minds did change eventually because of the laws.*

- What leads you to believe that Dolly wanted freedom—whether she really acted on it or not? Cite text evidence from these selected primary sources to support your thinking.

*Answers will vary. Seeing the inhumane ways that slaves were treated and viewed from the posters gives us glimpses into slaves' lives, and this could be the reason why Dolly chose to leave home. Perhaps the white man was an abolitionist and persuaded her to go, or maybe she left on her own to be her own master.*



## Dolly Runaway Slave Poster



\$50.00 Reward!!

Ran away from the Yard Corner of Jackson and Broad Streets, Augusta Ga. on the evening of Tuesday 7th April 1863 a Woman "Dolly", whose likeness is here seen. She is thirty years of age, light Complexion—hesitates somewhat when spoken to, and is not a very healthy woman—but rather good looking, with a fine set of teeth. Never Changed her Owner and has been a house Servant always. It is thought she has been enticed off by some White Man, being herself a Stranger to this City, and belonging to a Charleston family. For further particulars apply to Antoine Poullain Esqr Augusta Ga.

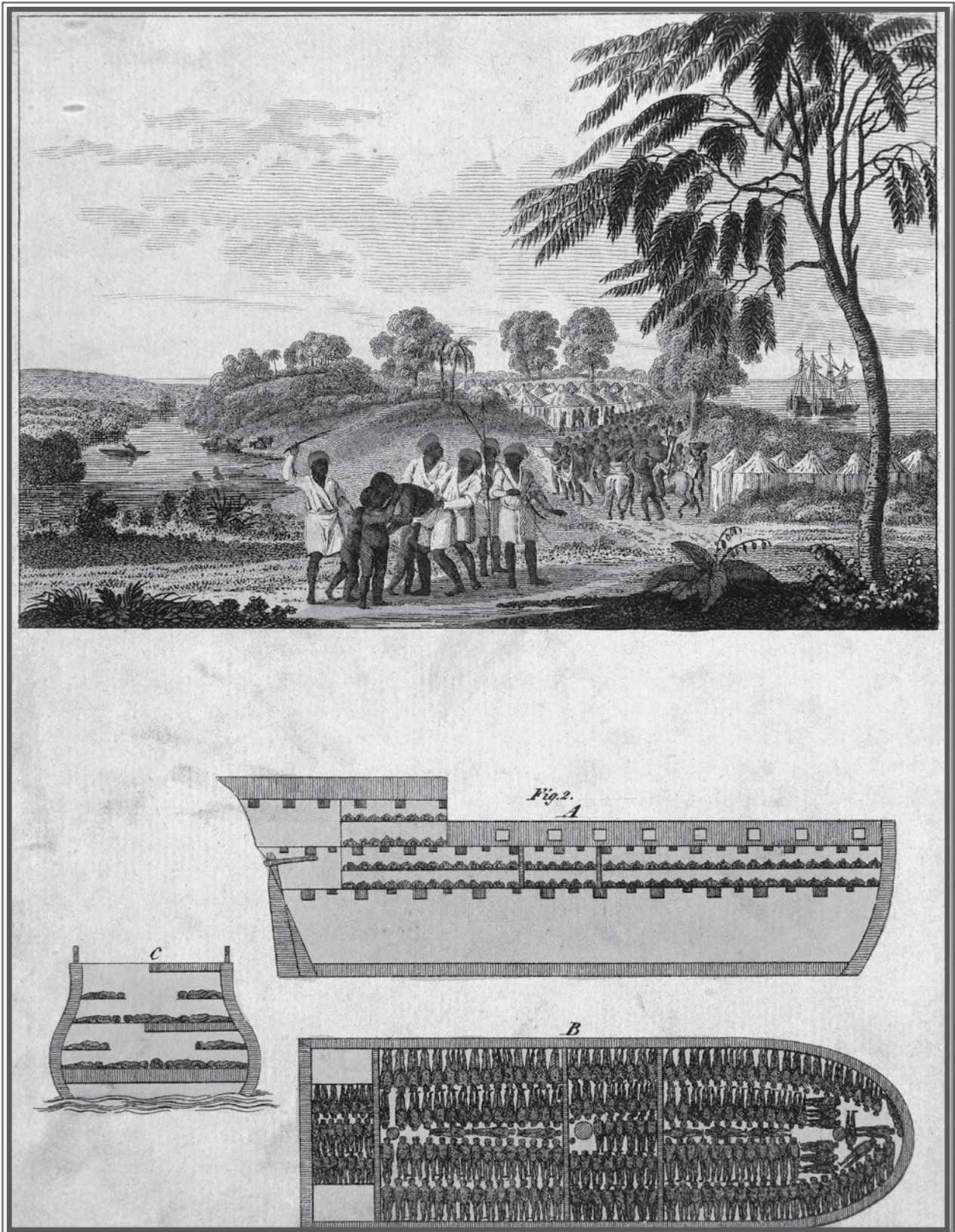
Poullain Esqr Augusta Ga.

Augusta Police Station

Louis Manigault, Owner of Dolly



# Slave Ship Poster





# Slave Auction Poster

# TO BE SOLD & LET

## BY PUBLIC AUCTION,

### On *MONDAY* the 18th of *MAY*, 1829,

UNDER THE TREES.

### FOR SALE,

### THE THREE FOLLOWING

# SLAVES,

VIZ.

HANNIBAL, about 30 Years old, an excellent House Servant, of Good Character.

WILLIAM, about 35 Years old, a Labourer.

NANCY, an excellent House Servant and Nurse.

The MEN belonging to "LEECH'S" Estate, and the WOMAN to Mrs. D. SMIT

### TO BE LET,

On the usual conditions of the Hirer finding them in Food, Clo<sup>t</sup> in<sup>g</sup>, and Medical <sup>ance,</sup>  
THE FOLLOWING

### MALE and FEMALE

# SLAVES,

OF GOOD CHARACTER.

ROBERT BAGLEY, about 20 Years old, a good House Servant.

WILLIAM BAGLEY, about 18 Years old, a Labourer.

JOHN ARMS, about 18 Years old.

JACK ANTONIA, about 40 Years old, a Labourer.

PHILIP, an Excellent Fisherman.

HARRY, about 27 Years old, a good House Servant.

LUCY, a Young Woman of good Character, used to House Work and the Nursery.

ELIZA, an Excellent Washerwoman.

CLARA, an Excellent Washerwoman.

FANNY, about 14 Years old, House Servant.

SARAH, about 14 Years old, House Servant.

### Also for Sale, at Eleven o'Clock,

### Fine Rice, Gram, Paddy, Books, Muslins,

### Needles, Pins, Ribbons, &c. &c.

AT ONE O'CLOCK, THAT CELEBRATED ENGLISH HORSE

# BLUCHER,

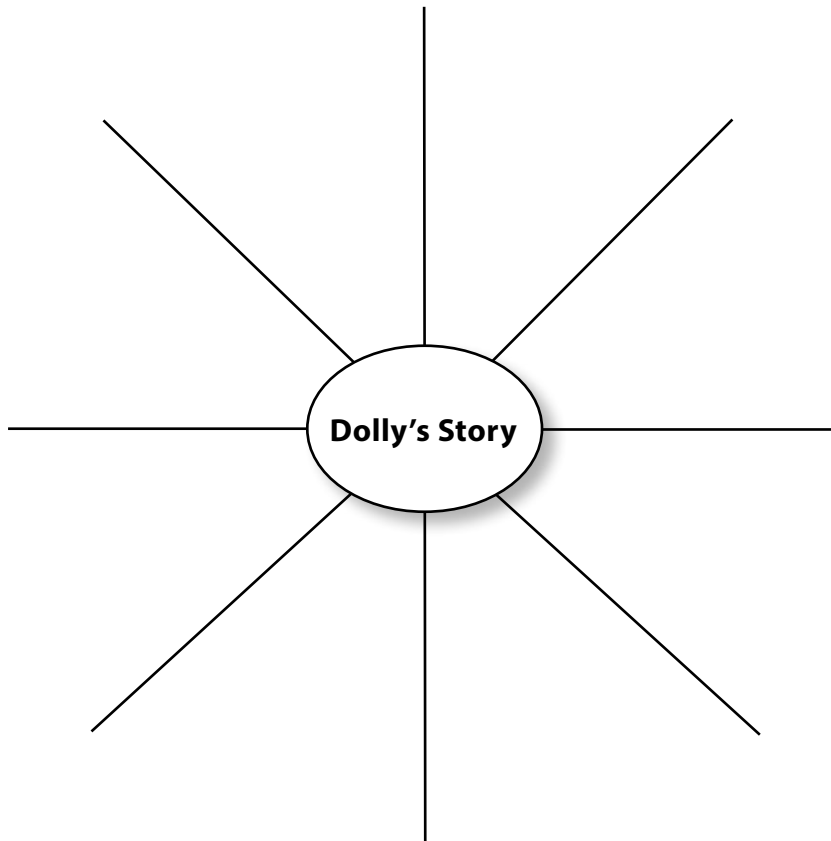
ADDISON PRINTER GOVERNMENT OFFICE.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dolly's Story

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**Directions:** Use this web to explore how the documents tell Dolly's story.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Slavery Questions

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**Directions:** Read the three primary sources and answer the questions.

1. In what ways do these texts tell Dolly's story?

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2. How can you use the poster and related texts to support the idea that laws have to be written before people's minds will change?

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3. What leads you to believe that Dolly wanted freedom—whether she really acted on it or not? Cite text evidence from these primary sources to support your thinking.

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