Research Lesson Plan: Life of a Slave
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Targeted Grade Level: 4th-5th Grades
*Revisions made in Red

**Essential Question:** What was life like for the slaves during the Antebellum Period?

**Formative Assessment Prompts:**
**Instructional Chunk #1:** What was life like for a slave before the Civil War?

**Instructional Chunk #2:** What were the slaves living conditions like?

**Standard Addressed:**
History Standard Two: Students will gather, examine, and analyze historical data [Analysis]. 4-5: Students will identify artifacts and documents as either primary or secondary sources of historical data from which historical accounts are constructed.

History Standard Three: Students will interpret historical data [Interpretation]. 4-5: Students will explain why historical accounts of the same event sometimes differ and will relate this explanation to the evidence presented or the point-of-view of the author.

**Problematic Prior Knowledge (PPL) Addressed** (PPL refers to prior knowledge, preconceptions, misconceptions, and misinformation about history in general and American history in particular that are at variance with currently accepted understandings within the history profession or a preponderance of evidence in cases of misinformation, and that slow down or prevent learners from modifying or exchanging the PPL for the accepted understandings.)

**Activating Strategies:**
Strategy 1: Anticipation Guide

Strategy 2: KWL chart: List students’ prior knowledge of slavery in America

**Key Vocabulary to preview**
- Antebellum
- House slave
- Field Slave
- Living conditions
- Working Conditions
- Leisure activities

**Teaching Strategies:**
- Document Analysis
- Whole class discussions
- Synthesizing information
- Modeling
Graphic Organizer(s) Used:
- KWL chart
- Three Column T-Chart

Materials Needed:
- Primary Sources- Photographs
- Resource #1: Slave Narratives
- Chart paper
- RESOURCE #2  Anticipation Guide
- Graphic Organizer- KWL, Good/Bad Continuum
- Pen, Pencil, marker, scissors, and glue

Differentiation Strategies:
- Mixed grouping to support lower level learners.

Instructional Plan:

**Instructional Chunk #1:** What was life like for a slave before the Civil War?

1. **Procedures:** Students will create a KWL chart depicting what life was like prior to the Civil War. They will record their responses on sticky notes and attach to the chart.

2. **Debrief:** ask the students...
   Have a few students respond to the statement: what was life like for Slaves before the start of the Civil War? Was life always good or bad (Good/Bad Continuum)

3. **Check for Understanding/Summarizing Activity:** Review student KWL responses

**Instructional Chunk #2:** What were the slaves’ living conditions like?

1. **Procedures:** Place students in cooperative groups of three to four students. Each group will be provided a folder of pictures and narratives. RESOURCE There will be a variety of folders that will contain either positive, negative, or both positive and negative resources.

2. **Debrief:** ask the students…Based on their specific topics, what was life like as a slave?

3. **Check for Understanding/Summarizing Activity:** Using evidence from their folders, students will draw their own conclusions on what life was like for slaves, prior to the Civil War. Students will record descriptive words on sticky notes and place on the document.
Summarizing Strategy: Exit Ticket

Students will write a paragraph describing whether their prior knowledge about slavery was confirmed or if they altered their perspective. They will also explain why and/or why not.
MARY ANDERSON

My name is Mary Anderson. I was born on a plantation near Franklinton, Wake County, North Carolina, May 10, 1851. I was a slave belonging to Sam Brodie, who owned the plantation at this place. My missus was Evaline. My parents were Bertha and Alfred Brodie.

We had good food, plenty of warm handmade clothes, and comfortable houses. The slave houses were called the quarters, and the house where Marster (Master) lived was called the Great House. There were about one hundred and sixty-two slaves on the plantation. Every Sunday morning all the children had to be bathed, dressed, and their hair combed, and carried down to Marster’s for breakfast. It was a rule that all the little colored children eat at the Great House every Sunday morning in order that Marster and Missus could watch them eat so they could know which ones were sickly and have them doctored.

MARY ARMSTRONG

Miss Olivia takes a likin’ to me and though her papa and mamma so mean, she’s kind to everyone, and they just lover her. She married Mr. Will Adams what was a fine man, and has about five farms and five hundred slaves. He bought me from her parents for twenty-five hundred dollards, and gives him one of his own slaves, to boot. I’se sure happy to be with Miss Olivia and away from Old Cleveland and Old Polly, ‘cause they kilt my little sister.

We lives in St. Louis on Chinqua Hill, and I’se house girl, and when babies start to come I nurse them and make clothes on the loom. I spins six cuts of thread a week, but I has plent of time for myself and that’s where I larns to dance so good. Lawrd, I sure just crazy about dancing; If I’m eating and hears a fiddle play, I get up and dance.

My mother and grandmother both belonged to the Bost family. My Ol’ massa had two large plantations. Old Missus she was a good woman. She never allowed the massa to buy or sell any slaves. There never was an overseer on the whole plantation. The oldest slave looked after everyone else.

Ole Massa always see that we get plenty to eat. Of course it was no fancy rations. Just corn bread, milk, fat mea, and molasses, but the Lord knows that was lots more than other poor negroes got. Some of them had such bad masters.

We never had a chance to go to Sunday school and church. The white folks feared for us to get any religion and education, but I reckon somthin’ inside just told us about God and that there was a better place hereafter. We would sneak off and have prayer meetings. Sometimes the patte rollers (patrollers that kept watch of slaves in each town) catch us and beat us good but that didn’t keep us from trying.

Slaves were treated in most cases like cattle. A man went about the country buying up slaves like buying up cattle and the like, and he was called a “speculator”. Then he’d sell them to the highest bidder. Oh! It was pitiful to see children taken from their mothers, mothers sold, husbands sold from wives. One woman he was to buy had a baby just before she was bought. Of course, he never did buy that baby.

My uncle was married, but he was owned by one master and his wife was owned by another. He was allowed to visit his wife on Wednesday and Saturday. That’s the only time he could get off. One day my uncle went to go visit his wife, she was sold away, he never ain’t here from her again.

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I didn’t get to handle money when I was young. I worked from sunup to sundown. We never had overseers like some of the slaves. We was give so much work to do in a day and if the white folks went off on a vacation they would give us so much work to do while they was gone and we better have all of that done, too, when they’d come home.

JULIA BROWN

We used herbs a lot in them days. We ain’t have doctors giving out prescriptions as they do today. There was a jimsonweed we’d use for arthritis, and for asthma we’d use tea made of chestnut leaves. We would dry out the leaves in the sun, but certainly kept them from getting wet. We take poke collard roots, boil them, and then take sugar and make a syrup. This was the best thing for asthma. It was known to cure it, too. For cold, we made candy out of brown sugar. They had a remedy if you had stomach problems—take dry cow manure, make a tea of this, and flavor it with mint and give it to the sick person. We didn’t need many doctors then for we didn’t have so much sickness in them days, and naturally they didn’t die so fast. Folks lived a long time then.

Master was a good man, and Old Mistress was de best woman in de world! Master’s name was Levi Dawson, and his plantation was eighteen miles east of Greenville, North Carolina. We grew cotton and tobacco. We also raised corn and oats, and lots of cattle and horses, and plenty of sheep for wool. It was a beautiful place, with all the fences around the Big House and along the front made out of barked poles, rider style, and all whitewashed. The Big house set back from the big road about a quarter mile.

Old Master was a fine Chrisitan. He let us negroes have preachings and prayers and would give us a pass to go ten or fifteen miles to a camp meeting and stay two or three days with nobody but Uncle John to stand for us. Never no work on Sunday, except for the regular chores. The overlooker made everybody clean up and wash de children up, and after the praying we had games—marbles and “I Spy”.

We used herbs and roots for common ailments, like sassafras and boneset and peach tree poulitces. But if any of us slaves got real sick, Old Master sent for a white doctor. I remember that old doctor.

Master made us all eat all we could hold. He would come to the smokehouse and look in and say, “You Negroes ain’t giving yourself enough of that meat. You helped make it, eat it!”

DELIA GARLIC

I had a baby just as the War come, and my baby was snatched from me and sold to speculators. Chillens was separated from sisters and brothers and never saw each other again. It’s bad to belong to folks that own you soul and body, dat can tie you up to a tree, with your face to the tree, and arms fastened tight around it, who take a long curlin’ whip and cut your skin with each whip.

One night the Master came in real mad and set a de table with his head in his hands. He looked up and see me taking care of things on the table. He called the overseer and told him: “Take her out and beat some sense in her.”

I begin to cry and run and run in the night, but finally I run back by my quarters as I heard my Mammy callin me. As soon as I got back a horse was standin’ in front of de house, and I was took dat very night to Richmond and sold. I never saw my mammy anymore.

My new master wasn’t too much different. We didn’t have no parties on our plantation; nothing like some other slaves did. We didn’t have any extra clothes for going round. I never had an undershirt until just before my first child was born. It was made out of the cheapest fabric.

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