

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Planning Your Classroom Approach & Models of Instruction

MISSION 2: "Flight to Freedom"

The creators of "Flight to Freedom" have designed the game and accompanying classroom materials for educators and students to use in a variety of ways. The game's flexible format allows for use in the classroom, at home, in the library or media center, or anywhere there's a computer with an Internet connection. The game can be played in a one-computer classroom, a multiple-computer classroom, or in a lab setting. Students playing the game can work alone, in pairs, or in groups. Educators using the game can decide just how much classroom time they wish to dedicate to gameplay, in-class activities, and accompanying assignments.

Your students will gain the most from "Flight to Freedom" if their gameplay experiences are supported by classroom activities, discussions, and writing exercises guided by your teaching expertise. The "Flight to Freedom" curriculum available on the MISSION US website provides a wealth of materials to connect the game to your own goals and objectives related to teaching about slavery in America preceding the Civil War.

This document provides you with some planning questions to help you map out your classroom implementation of "Flight to Freedom," as well as three different "models" for low, medium, and high utilization of the game and the accompanying materials.



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The Test of Time

If a student were to sit down at a computer and play "Flight to Freedom" from beginning to end without stopping, the entire gameplay experience would take approximately 90 – 120 minutes. However, we do NOT suggest you use this approach with students. The game is divided into five separate "parts" (think of them as chapters in a historical novel). Your students' learning will be maximized if you take the time to use the gameplay as a "point of departure" or inspiration for classroom instruction.

As a first step: Play the game yourself and briefly review the curricular materials available accompanying "Flight to Freedom" on the MISSION US website. Think about how much classroom time you usually dedicate to the events and concepts presented in the game. What other curricular goals do the game and accompanying materials support? What are the dominant themes of your social studies instruction (vocabulary, writing and reaction, social issues, analysis of primary source documents)?

**Make a rough estimate of how much classroom time you'd like to dedicate to "Flight to Freedom."*

Location, Location, Location

As mentioned above, "Flight to Freedom" can be played in a variety of settings with a variety of technology set-ups. Your students can play as a class, in small groups, in pairs, or individually, or you can mix and match these approaches. Depending on accessibility of technology, students can play in class, at home, or both, since their online accounts will save their game data wherever they play, and allow them to continue playing in any setting where a computer with an Internet connection is available.

As a second step: Consider the technology available to you and your students. Do you want to play the game entirely in class? Assign some sections as homework? Split student play between in-class and at-home? Ask your students to play the game entirely at home, and dedicate class time to activities?

**Determine how and where you and your students will play the different sections of the game.*



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Classroom Activities, Discussion, and Reflection

The classroom activities accompanying "Flight to Freedom" on the MISSION US website offer an extensive set of resources to support instruction. The activities roughly fall into four broad categories:

- Document-Based Activities
- Vocabulary Activities
- Writing Prompts
- Review Questions

Other activities and resources provide additional primary sources, background information on the characters and setting, historical essays, and printable artwork from the game.

As a third step: Review the available classroom materials and activities, and identify those most strongly aligned with your educational objectives and curriculum. Plan to use the activities "as-is," or make adaptations or changes to them. The resources provided may also inspire you to create your own "Flight to Freedom" activities. If you do, please share them with the MISSION US team! Post your ideas, thoughts, and suggestions to the MISSION US Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MissionUS, or to the MISSION US Twitter feed at www.twitter.com/Mission_US.

**Create a preliminary list of the activities you and your students will complete during your use of "Flight to Freedom."*

Planning

Because of their flexibility, teachers may opt for low, medium, or high integration of the game and its accompanying materials. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to use "Flight to Freedom." Below are some ideas on what the different levels of integration might look like in a classroom.

"High" Integration (using the game as context for classroom learning)

Estimated Number of 45-minute class periods: 8-10 (excluding homework time)

- Students play the different parts of "Flight to Freedom" in the classroom or computer lab, individually or in pairs.
- Before, during, and after playing each part of the game, students process what they are doing through discussion, writing, and other activities facilitated by the teacher.



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A teacher working in this mode might *begin* a class by asking students to share what they learned about the main characters in the prior part of the game, what the keywords for the day mean, or what they predict will happen in the episode they are about to play.

During game play, the teacher might walk around and look over students' shoulders, asking them to explain a choice they've made, and perhaps pose a question to the room – "How many people decided to fix Sarah's dress differently than she asked?" "Why would you choose to deliberately disobey her request?" "How does that relate to what we've been discussing about resistance and sabotage?"

Right *after* game play and/or for homework, the teacher would engage students in one of the follow-up activities available on the *MISSION US* website – discussion and writing prompts, vocabulary exercises, primary source analyses, or reviewing cause-and-effect – all of which deepen students' understanding of the period by connecting game experiences to more formal curriculum knowledge and skills. Students might end the unit by making presentations or drawings, writing, or completing other multimedia projects.

Medium Integration (using the game as *supplement* to classroom learning)

Estimated number of 45-minute class periods: 5 (excluding homework time)

- Students split game play between in the classroom or lab and as homework.
- Game play is complemented with in-class and homework activities in which students write and talk about what is happening in the game, using materials from the website.
- Game play alternates with non-game-related classwork.

A teacher working in this mode might introduce students to the game by playing Part 1 on a Friday afternoon, and asking students to play Part 2 for weekend homework.

A portion of the following Monday's class period would focus on students' reactions and thoughts about the game, as well as a brief vocabulary activity or political perspectives activity. Students would be asked to play Part 3 of the game before class on Tuesday.

In Tuesday's class, students would complete a document-based activity related to Part 1, 2, or 3 of the game.

In Wednesday's class, students would be assigned Part 4 and to respond to a writing prompt or review question as homework.



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In Thursday's class, students would play Part 5, and complete one of the activities related to that portion of the game in class.

In Friday's class, students would review terms, phrases, and events from "Flight to Freedom," and be assigned to respond to a writing prompt or review question as homework.

Low Integration (using the game as an *extra* or *enhancement*)

Estimated number of 45-minute class periods: 1 total (excluding homework time)

- Teacher introduces the game to students (perhaps using a projector), and assigns students to play the entire game as homework, giving students several days to complete the task.
- Teacher assigns one or two of the "Flight to Freedom" writing activities to students for homework, and/or holds a class discussion about the events in the game, connecting those events to what students are learning about through traditional study.

Follow MISSION US on Facebook (www.facebook.com/MissionUS) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/Mission_US) to share and discuss your experiences and learn how other educators are using the game in their classrooms across the country.

