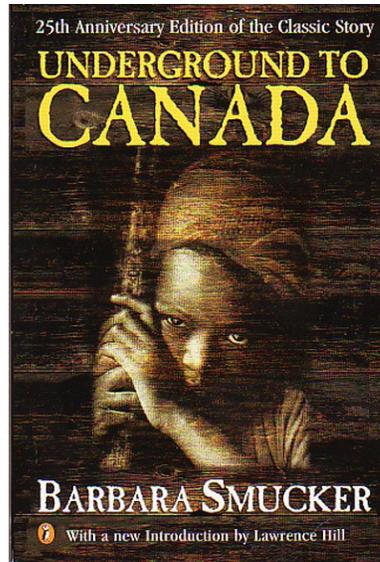


Underground To Canada



By

Barbara Smucker

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

Underground to Canada

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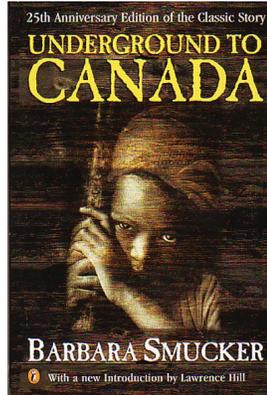


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Suggestions and Expectations

This 55 page curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one or two chapters of *Underground to Canada* and is comprised of four different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language and Extension Activities

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include **loyalty, courage, perseverance** when facing difficult circumstances, **slavery** in the United States, Abolitionists and the Underground Railway, life in North America during the 1850s.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *foreshadowing*.
7. Identify *personification*.
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Listing compound words
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Determining alphabetical order
12. Identification of root words
13. Identify/create *simile*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *sequence chart* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Identify the climax of the novel.

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Relating personal experiences

Creative and Critical Thinking

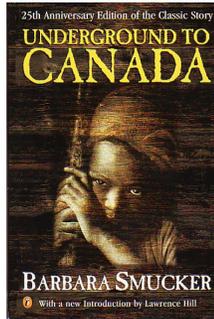
1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Write a friendly letter
4. Complete an Observation Sheet
5. Conduct an interview
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. The 5 W's Chart

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Design an Activity Card

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Synopsis

Ripped from her mother's arms by a ruthless slave trader, all Julilly has left is the dream of freedom. Every day that she spends huddled and starving in the trader's cart travelling south, or working on the brutal new plantation, she thinks about the land where it is possible to be free, a land she and her friend Liza may reach some day. So when workers from the underground railway offer to help the two girls escape, they are ready. But the road is long and hard, and the slave catchers and their dogs will soon be after them . . . [The Publisher]

Author Biography

Barbara Smucker

Barbara Claassen Smucker was born 1 September 1915 in Newton, Kansas. She married Donovan Smucker, college professor and minister, on 21 January 1939. They had two sons, Timothy and Thomas, and a daughter Rebecca. Barbara died in 2003.

Barbara earned a BS (1936) in journalism from Kansas State University at Manhattan. She taught high school English in Harper, Kansas (1937-8), then returned to her home town to work as a reporter for the Evening Kansas Republican (1939-1941).

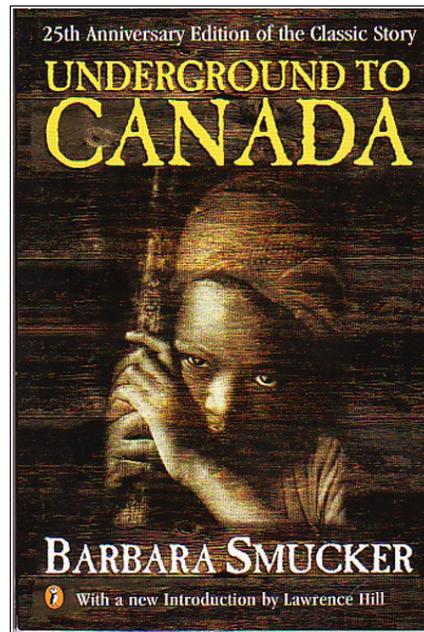


After she and her family moved to Chicago, Barbara wrote her first book of historical fiction for children: *Henry's Red Sea*, the first of twelve books for children.

Smucker's books have been published in 16 countries and translated into French, German, Japanese, Swedish, Spanish, Dutch, and Danish. Her books have received numerous awards.

Underground to Canada was recognized by the Children's Book Center as one of the 50 best books of all time in Canada.

Underground To Canada

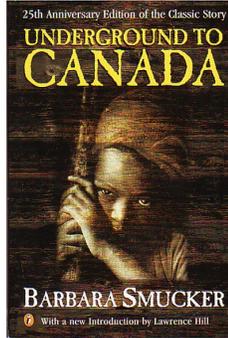


By Barbara Smucker

Name: _____

Underground to Canada

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The protagonist in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The protagonist of *Underground to Canada* is a twelve-year-old slave girl, Julilly. In what ways do you think Julilly’s life might have been especially difficult?

Do you think *Underground to Canada* is an effective title for a novel? Why or why not?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

plantation	fretful	hewn	tote	overseer
fertile	rumor	whimper	oppress	melody

1. Almost everyone in our class heard the _____ about Rachel’s house burning down.
2. The support timbers in the old farmhouse had been _____ from solid oak trees.

3. Although I couldn't remember the lyrics to the song, I will never forget how the _____ goes.
4. Julilly's family had lived on the Hensen's _____ for many years.
5. My grandfather was delighted to discover that the soil was very _____.
6. Rueben Freemont was the _____ of more than fifty slaves.
7. Little April was forced to _____ the heavy bucket all the way to the top of the hill.
8. Not getting the sleep she was used to made the baby very _____.
9. A quiet _____ was the only sign that the old collie dog was in distress.
10. When the owner of the plantation left Silas in charge, he began to _____ the slaves so badly that two of them ran away.

Questions



1. The first paragraph of Chapter One is certainly an attention-grabber, isn't it? What was there about this paragraph that really caught your attention?

2. Describe the **setting** of the story for Chapter One.

coarse tow shirt – a tow shirt is defined as a coarse linen shirt

3. Describe how Julilly got her name.

4. What argument did Mammy Sally make to Mr. Hensen as to why Julilly should not have to work in the fields yet?

5. How did Mr. Hensen treat the slaves? Give one fact from this chapter to prove your answer.

6. Old John, the coachman, brought bad news about the Hensen's situation to the slaves after driving Missy Hensen to town. What two pieces of bad news did he tell the others?

7. How were the Hensens going to solve their problems?

8. As Chapter One ends Julilly and the others are in dread about what the future had in store for them. What in particular made them so afraid?

9. **Foreshadowing** is a literary device defined as *a hint or clue provided by the writer to tip the reader as to what is to come later in the story*. How might the conclusion of Chapter One be considered an example of this? What do you think is going to happen in Chapter Two?



Language Activities

A. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter 1 is “They (whisperings) crept from ear to ear as soundless as the flickering of fireflies.”

What two things are being compared in this example?

--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your imagination:

a) the sound of a cricket

--

b) a crack of thunder

--

B. Copy out any three sentences from these chapters and underline the **nouns**.

C. The word “**fire**” can be used as a **noun** or a **verb** depending on the sentence. Use your imagination and write sentences to illustrate how this word can be used as both a noun and a verb.

FIRE

Noun	
Verb	

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel.

Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of ***Underground to Canada***. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6